CHAUCER AND THE 'ALMAGEST.'

IN his 'Studies in Chaucer,' ii, 396, Professor Lounsbury writes: 'All this makes somewhat perplexing the references to the same writer and work (Ptolemy's "Almagest") in the prologue to the tale of the "Wife of Bath." Of these there are two. In both instances a proverbial philosophy, very much in the style of Dionysius Cato, is expressed. The first of them reads as follows:

'Whoso that nil be war by other men,
By him shul othere men conceted be.
The same wonder wryteth Ptholomee;
Reade in his Almageste, and take it there.
(D. 180-3).

'Tyrwhitt, who took the trouble to search, was unable to read this sentiment in the "Almagest" or to find anything like it. Nor was he more successful with the second quotation, which the "Wife of Bath" purported to take from the same work. This is contained in the following lines:

'Of alle men yblessed moot he be
The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,
That seith this proverbe in his Almageste
Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,
That rekketh never who hath the world in hande.
(D. 323-7).

244 CHAUCER AND THE 'ALMAGEST.'

'Where Tyrwhitt failed, others can feel safe in excusing themselves from seeking the proverbial pearls of this nature that may be lying concealed in the thirteen books which make up the "Almagest." But it no easy matter to suggest an adequate motive for their assignment to the work, unless Chaucer actually supposed that they were there. This is, itself, something hard to reconcile with the knowledge he displays of it elsewhere, or at any rate displays about it.'

Tyrwhitt may perhaps be excused for trying to verify Chaucer's quotations in a printed book, and a renaissance translation, instead of looking for the translation that Chaucer used, but neither Lounsbury nor Skeat had his excuse. The only translation of Ptolemy in existence in the fourteenth century was that of Gerard of Cremona, and the two quotations are found in the introductory note by the translator, which hardly any medieval reader would distinguish in quotation from the text itself.' Apart from that the words are attributed to Ptolemy in the introduction among a number of other gnomic sentences.

The introduction of Gerard of Cremona seems to have been printed in the 1515 Venice edition of the Arabic-Latin version of the 'Almagest,' and was reprinted from it in 1810 in the *Museum der Alterthumswissenschaft* (II, 501). His authority was 'Quidam princeps, nomine Albugaife in libro suo quem "Scientiarum Electionem et Verborum pulchritudinem" nominavit . . .,' that is, Abul Wafa al Mobashshir ibn Fatik's 'Selection of Sentences and Sayings' which was the principal source of Hunain ibn Ishak's Sayings of Philosophers and of the 'Bocados

del Oro' published by Knust in his 'Mittheilungen aus dem Eskurial,' 1879. But these sentences ought to have been recognised by the earliest students of Chaucer, since they are found in Walter Burley's 'De vita et moribus philosophorum,' which was printed in the fifteenth century.

As they appear in Chaucer, the sentences differ slightly from those in the *Almagest* and correspond with Burley. The first of them 'Qui per alios non corrigitur, alii per ipsum non corrigentur' in the manuscripts, is in Burley 'Qui per alios non corrigitur, per ipsum alii corrigentur.' The second 'Inter homines altior existit, qui non curat in cuius manu sit mundus' substitutes 'altos' for 'homines' in Burley.

The text of the sentences as given in a manuscript of the '*Almagest*' in the British Museum is as follows:

Haec sunt de disciplinis et sapientiis Ptholomei hujus :

- 1 Conveniens est intelligentiis pro deo verecundari, cum ea que ei sunt grata cogitat.
- 2 Intelligens est, qui semper linguam suam refrenat, nisi ad hoc, ut de deo loquatur. Insipiens est quis sui ipsius ignorat quantitatem.
- 3 Cum aliquis sibi placet, ad hoc deductus est, ut ira dei sit super ipsum.
- 4 In bono quod deus operatur, quasi bonitatem largi datoris attendere debes, et in malis adversis quasi purgationis et eterne remunerationis bonitatem.
- 5 Quanto plus fini appropinquas, bonum cum augmento operare.
- 6 Hominis disciplina sui intellectus socius est, et apud
17* homines intercessor.

246 CHAUCER AND THE 'ALMAGEST.'

- 7 Non fuit mortuus, qui scientiam vivificavit, nec fuit pauper, qui intellectui dominatus est.
- 8 Qui inter sapientes humilior est, sapientior existit, sicut locus profundior magis abundat aquis aliis lacunis.
- 9 Non disseras nisi cum eo qui veritatem concedit; nec respondeas nisi a te querenti consilium et cupide recipienti.
- 10 Tuum consilium non committas nisi qui (ipsum) celaverit.
- 11 Qui in mundo permanere voluerit, cor patiens adversitatibus preparet.
- 12 Parva domus est dolor minor.
- 13 Plus gaudeas, quod non dixisti errorem, quam quod bene dicendo non tacuisti.
- 14 Cum irasceris non extendas manum ad peccandum; et cum dimissio vindicte non fuerit debilitas, parce.
- 15 Ultime hominis promissiones cavi sunt.
- 16 Justorum corda secretorum sunt monumenta.
- 17 Qui per alios non corrigitur, alii per ipsum non corrigentur.
- 18 Manus intellectuum animarum tenet habenas.
- 19 Vulgi habenas regere melius est, quam multos habere milites.
- 20 Fiducia est socius consolans, quam licet non consequaris, eam tamen angariasti.
- 21 Securitas solitudinis dolorem removet, et pavor multitudinis consolationem aufert.
- 22 Inter homines altior existit qui non curat in cuius manu sit mundus.
- 23 Invidio videtur, quod ablatio boni alterius sit sibi bonum.
- 24 Homines lucentur census, et census lucentur homines.

CHAUCER AND THE 'ALMAGEST.' 247

- 25 Qui scientiam suam ultra astutiam qui in ipso est
 extendit, est sicut pastor debilis cum multis ovibus.
- 26 Qui in dignitate sua multum extollitur, in amissione
 ejus multum deprimitur.
- 27 Qui male operando vult celari, satis discoopertus est.
- 28 Qui in mendacio confidit, tempestive deficiet ei.
- 29 Meditatio veritatis existit clavis.
- 30 Intercessor est petentis ala.
- 31 Anima non egredietur a fiducia usque ad mortem.
- 32 Anima ignorans suo socio magis inimicatur.
- 33 Quidam rex invitavit Ptolemeum ad prandium; qui
 rogans fore se excusatum, dixit: Regibus con-
 tingit fere quod contingit considerantibus picturas,
 que cum a longe videntur placent, propinque vero
 non dulcescunt.

R. STEELE.