

summer. On Fridays he shall take renderings of all the week's lessons; and as they said memoriter and construed nightly before, soe he shall now see them done perfectly, without stopping or stammering, and in every wise at all times marke that one scholler prompt not another. Againe, on this daye he must receive their exercises, be they short or long, and amend the faults in them.²

At Gloucester, we have not only some indication of routine but also an interesting picture of how an exact contemporary of Shakspeare fared in a far poorer school than the latter "enjoyed." R. Willis, who was born about 1564, in his *Mount Tabor* (1639) furnishes some interesting reminiscences of his grammar school days at "Christ schoole in the City of Gloucester." Willis prides himself that with only a grammar school education he came to be secretary

to the Lord *Brooke*, Chancellor of the Exchequer; and after that to my much honoured Lord, the Earle of Middlesex, Lord high Treasurer of England; and lastly to the most worthy, my most noble Lord, the Lord Coventry, Lord-keeper of the great Seale.

The training which enabled him to do this was given him, he says, by "Mastery *Gregory Downhale* of *Pembrook Hal* in Cambridge, after I had lost some time under his predecessor." Downhall was "after a Lord Chancellors Secretary."

Before Master *Downhale* came to be our Master in Christ-school, an ancient Citizen of no great learning was our schoolmaster; whose manner was to give us out severall lessons in the evening by construing it to every forme, and in the next morning to examine us thereupon, by making all the boyes in the first forme, to come from their seates and stand on the outsides of their desks, towards the middle of the schoole, and so the second forme and the rest in order, whiles himselfe walked up and down by them, and hearing them construe their lesson one after another; and then giving one of the words to one, and another to another (as he thought fit) for parsing of it. Now when the two highest formes were dispatched, some of them whom we called prompters would come and sit in our seates of the lower formes, and so being at our elbowes would put into our mouths answers to our masters questions, as he walked up and downe by us; and so, by our prompters help, we made shift to escape correction; but understood little to profit by it, having this circular motion, like the Mil-horse that travels all day, yet in the end finds himselfe not a yard further then when he began.

But one day Willis fell out with a member of the highest form, who in revenge had all the prompters refrain from giving Willis help, and so (as he thought) I must necessarily be beaten. When I found my selfe

² *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, Vol. I, p. 394.