

school, devoted to grammar proper, in three or four years. The key text on which the lower school was founded is Lily's Latin grammar. Shakspeare shows knowledge of both the *Shorte Introduction*, or the "accydence²& princypalles of gramer" in English, and the *Brevissima Institutio*, or the grammar proper in Latin. The *Shorte Introduction* in English he should have mastered by the end of the first year in grammar school. The *Brevissima Institutio*, with exception of prosody and figures, he should have mastered by the end of the third year, with some review perhaps in the fourth. So by the end of 1575 at furthest Shakspeare should have had a thorough mastery of his Latin grammar.

The instructions prefixed to the Latin grammar³ indicate the general methods by which it was to be taught. They provide that the boy first should master thoroughly the declensions and the conjugations in the *Shorte Introduction*. This should not take more than a quarter of a year, we are told. Then the boy must master the Concords, which follow in the *Shorte Introduction*. Stockwood very aptly puts the purpose of the rules of construction as

To teach which of these eight parts of speech may most aptly and fitly in making of Latin, or construing of Autors be ioined together, and agree the one with the other in some certaine properties, or else be gouerned and as it were ruled the one of the other.⁴

The boy first learned his parts, and must thenceforth be able to parse anything. Then he learned construction, both concords and rules of government, which enabled him to construe his Latin for translation into English, or to translate his English into Latin. Here are all the fundamental processes in their necessary relationships. So the instructions to the grammar provide that the boy shall continue to rehearse his grammar parts, "espe[cia]lly the daily declynng of a verbe, and tournyng hym into [al]l fashions." With parts mastered and Concords learned, the boy must begin making Latin to illustrate these his English rules. He will not then continue the same method in memorizing the rules of construction in the *Shorte Introduction* in English nor the *Brevissima Institutio*, the second part of the grammar, in Latin. Instead, he now begins making Latins, and memorizes each

² We may permit Minshew, John, *The Guide Into Tongues* (1627, personal) to define "Accidence, or Introduction for Grammar, so called à Lat. *Accidentia*, quia in ea tractantur quaecunque *accidunt* Nomini, Pronomini, Verbo, Participio, & caeteris orationis partibus: vt Nomini *accidunt* Species, Figura, Numerus, Casus, Genus, Declinatio, Comparatio. Pronomini *accidunt* Species, Numerus, Casus, Genus, Declinatio, Persona, Figura. Verbo *accidunt*, Genus, Modus, Tempus, Figura, Species, Persona, Numerus, Conjugatio, &c. vocatur etiam *Introductio Grammaticae*." ³ See above, pp. 204-5.

⁴ Stockwood, John, *A Plaine And easie Laying open*, etc. (1590), p. B1r.