

CHAPTER XXVIII

LOWER GRAMMAR SCHOOL: SHAKSPERE'S CONSTRUCTIONS; *TERENCE*, *MANTUAN*, *PALINGENIUS*

THE NEXT SUBJECT FOR CONSTRUCTIONS after Aesop would in Shakspeare's time have been Terence, except in the Winchester system, where Terence was retarded by a stage to the upper school. In the Paul's system, Terence belonged to lower school entirely. In the Eton system, Terence might be begun in the second form and continued into the fourth, which was the pivotal form between lower and upper school. Terence is thus almost universally a lower school author. Terence fails to appear in only one of the more than two dozen probably complete lists for the sixteenth century that I have collected. If Shakspeare completed his grammar, he could not have escaped Terence, even in the Winchester system. If, therefore, our previous evidence holds that Shakspeare had his grammar, we are entitled to assume that he had Terence.

But we do not need to assume it. In a work upon *Shakspeare's Five-Act Structure, Shakspeare's Early Plays on the Background of Renaissance Theories of Five-Act Structure from 1470*, I have had occasion to examine in detail the mode of teaching Terence, since it was around Terence and chiefly for pedagogical uses in the grammar school that the theory of five-act structure was perfected. Erasmus had stated in 1511, as we have seen, that the first operation on the play proper was to teach its structure—incidentally, Erasmus selected Terence for illustration because he was the first classical author to be studied—, and Melanchthon about 1524 had worked out the great pedagogical edition of the century showing how this application was to be made. Since the material is too voluminous, I can hardly give a summary of it here. I believe it is clear from the evidence there collected that Shakspeare had Udall's *Floures* as well as the plays of Terence. The evidence is conclusive, I believe, that Shakspeare along with every other "learned grammarian" of his day got the first smatterings of five-act structure and many other things dramatic in connection with his Terence in grammar school. At least, his plays are constructed on the formula by which boys were supposed to be guided in studying the plays of Terence. If Shakspeare completed the lower school, he certainly began to acquire his smat-