

CHAPTER V

ERASMUS LAID THE EGG; HIS TEXTBOOKS AND APPROVED AUTHORS

IN THE TREATISE *De Ratione Studii* by Erasmus is the fundamental philosophy of the grammar school in England. On these general principles it was organized and by these methods it was taught. What is more, the strategic textbooks in the system were suggested, prepared, or approved by Erasmus. He was at the beginnings of the authorized grammar, which was constructed upon his specifications, and taught by his methods. When the final form of this essay was published in 1512, he had for some time been connected with Dean Colet, and had been helping with his plans for Paul's school. Apparently in 1510, before the first form of this essay by Erasmus was published in 1511, Dean Colet voiced the same fundamental position on grammar as Erasmus, in a prefatory letter to a little treatise in English on the eight parts of Latin speech; that is, the *accidence* proper, which he had prepared for his school at Paul's. The earliest known surviving form of it is the *Ioannis Coleti . . . aeditio, una cum quibusdam G. Liliij Grammatices rudimentis*, 1527, preserved at Peterborough and reprinted by Blach in Vols. XLIV and XLV of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*. Wolsey also reprinted this work in 1529 with instructions attached for his masters at Ipswich, the title being *Rudimenta Grammatices et Docendi methodus*, a copy of which is preserved in the British Museum. This work, expanded and revised, received by 1548 the standardized title *A shorte introduction of grammar*, and formed the first part of the authorized grammar. To it was regularly attached a considerable amount of moral material, including Lily's *Carmen de Moribus*.

As the title of the edition of 1527 makes clear, the work consists of two parts, the *Aeditio* of Colet and the *Rudimenta* of Lily; and these two parts are still demarcated. At the end of the treatment of the eight parts of speech occurs, "Explicit Coleti aeditio."¹ Then begins, "Guillelmi Liliij Angli Rudimenta."² Thus the work consists of an

¹ Blach, S., "Shakespeares Lateingrammatik," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XLV, p. 55.

² Two copies of this work of Lily's, apparently printed separately, are listed in S.T.C. Mr. Plimpton had a copy of *Guillelmi Liliij Angli Rudimenta*, which he says "was printed by Richard Pynson in 1512 or 1513" (Plimpton, G. A., *The Education of Shakespeare*, p. 87), and of