

their Declamations in writing, and others that shall be thought meet shall exhibit verses upon the same Theme to the Master, that he may peruse them, and teach them to amend the Faults, and during the reciting of the said Declamations, the rest of the Scholars shall be attentive.⁴⁷

For the encouragement of the boys in well doing, it was provided at Sandwich in 1580 that

everie yere once, *viz.*, the Tewesdaie nexte after the Feaste of St. Mychaell th' archangell, there be kept in the Schole disputacions, upon *questions provided by the Master*, from Seven or Eight of the Clock in the forenone till Nine or Ten of the Clock followinge; at which disputacions, I ordeine, that the Master desire the Parsons and Vicars of the Towne, with one or two other of knowledge or more dwelling nighe, to be present in the Schole if it please them to hear the same. The disputacion ended, to determine which three of the hole number of several forms have done best by the judgements of the *Master* and learned hearers: and I ordeine, that the first allowed have a *Penn* of Silver *whole guilte* of the price of 2s. 6d.; the second, a *Penn* of Silver *parcell guilte* of the value of 2s.; the third, a *Penn* of silver of 20d., for their rewardes: and then I will, that the hole company goe in order decentlie by two and two unto the *Parish Church* of Our Ladye aforesaid, the three victors to come laste nexte to the Master and Ussher, and ither of them having a *Garland* on their heads provided for the purpose, and in the *Church* then and there to kneele or stand in some convenient place to be apointed by the discreacion of the *Governours and Master* of the Schole, and to saie or singe some convenient Psalme or Himpne, with a Collet having some convenient remembraunce and making mencion of the *Church, the Realme, the Prince, the Towne and the Fownder, as shal be apointed and devised by the Master.*⁴⁸

One wonders if William Shakspeare ever went in such a procession crowned and silver-penned as victor. But that marvellously gifted butcher's boy, of whom Aubrey heard, would certainly have vanquished him!

William Shakspeare was trained in the heroic age of grammar school rhetoric in England, and he shows knowledge of the complete system, in its most heroic proportions. He shows a grasp of the theory as presented by the various texts through Quintilian. He shows a corresponding grasp upon all the different compositional forms of prose for which the theory prepared. And this is true whether or not Shakspeare ever went to school a day. Manifestly, the sensible thing to do is to permit him to complete Stratford grammar school, as there is every reason to believe that he did. The school and schoolmasters who gave Shakspeare this training and prepared

⁴⁷ Carlisle, *Grammar Schools*, Vol. I, p. 161.

⁴⁸ Carlisle, *Grammar Schools*, Vol. I, p. 604.