

history ought to be directed to this moral end—not that this attitude was original with him!

One would need then to begin history along with the poets in order to get subject matter for themes both in verse and in prose, beginning with epistles. Accordingly, at Eton in 1530, the boys of the fifth form were reading Ovid's *Epistolae Heroidum* and Sallust, as well as Cicero's *Epistles*, while they learned prosody and wrote epistles. They studied epistles, both in prose and in verse, and used history for further subject matter—all as Erasmus directs. Throughout the century, this remains the approximate position of history in the grammar school scheme.

The historians prescribed are in order of frequency Sallust, Caesar, Livy, Justin, Valerius Maximus (so classed), and Florus. We may regard Sallust and Caesar as universal. One or the other is mentioned in twenty-six out of the twenty-nine curricula I have tabulated. They appear together in fourteen of the twenty-six. Sallust is mentioned in nine others without Caesar, making a total of twenty-three mentions out of the twenty-six. Caesar is mentioned in three without Sallust, making a total of seventeen mentions out of the twenty-six. But this comparison is not fair to Caesar. For Sallust precedes and Caesar comes only in the last form or forms. Since the statements for these last forms are regularly indefinite, Caesar has probably failed of several mentions on this account. Thus Sallust is nearly always required, and Caesar was no doubt as nearly universal. We may regard these two as furnishing the backbone of history for the curricula.

That we may better understand the situation, Ascham will be delighted to present to us the great grammar school triumvirate in prose.

Four men onely when the Latin tong was full ripe, be left vnto vs, who in that tyme did flourish, and did leaue to posteritie, the fruite of their witte and learning: *Varro, Salust, Caesar, and Cicero*.<sup>6</sup>

The poets of the age, Lucretius, Catullus, Virgil, and Horace, Ascham tosses aside—even Virgil. But since of the four prose writers Varro's works were mostly lost, Ascham and his age turned to the prose triumvirate, Sallust, Caesar, and Cicero. Ascham gives Sir John

<sup>6</sup> Ascham, *Scholemaster* (1570), p. 63r. Compare Bacon's statement, "there lived the best poet, Virgilius Maro; the best historiographer, Titus Livius; the best antiquary, Marcus Varro; and the best, or second orator, Marcus Cicero, that to the memory of man are known" (Spedding, *Works of Francis Bacon* (1900), Vol. VI, p. 105). The man who wrote Shakspeare's plays did not believe that Virgil was the best poet.