

## CHAPTER XXX

LOWER GRAMMAR SCHOOL: SHAKSPERE'S  
LATIN SPEAKING

WHILE SHAKSPERE WAS LEARNING HIS GRAMMAR, using Cato, Aesop, etc. on which to learn to construe, memorizing Withals, Stanbridge, or another to acquire a vocabulary, and using the Bible, as possibly also some sentential collection to learn to write Latins, he ought besides to have been learning to speak Latin by means of colloquies. Baynes shows that Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, and others converse after the fashion of, and in conventional phrases from, the manuals.

*Hol.* . . . *anne intelligis, domine?* . . .

*Nath.* *Laus Deo bone intelligo.*

*Hol.* *Bone? bone, for bene:* Priscian a little scratched; 'twill serve.

*Enter Armado, Moth, and Costard.*

*Nath.* *Videsne quis venit?*

*Hol.* *Video, et gaudeo.*<sup>1</sup>

As Baynes points out,

These scraps of Latin dialogue exemplify the technical Latin intercourse between master and pupils in the school work, as well as the formal colloquies the latter were required to prepare as exercises in the second stage of their course. In one of the manuals of the latter, entitled "*Familiares Colloquendi Formulae in Usus Scholarum Concinnatae*," I find under the first section, headed, "*Scholasticae* Belonging to the School," the following: "Who comes to meet us? *Quis obviam venit?* He speaks improperly, *Hic incongruè loquitur*; He speaks false Latin, *Diminuit Prisciani caput*; 'Tis barbarous Latin, *Olet barbariem*." In the scene just quoted from it will be remembered Holofernes, in reply to Costard's "*Ad dunghill* at the fingers' ends, as they say," says, "O I smell false Latin, 'dunghill' for *unguem*."<sup>2</sup>

The earliest copy of the collection mentioned by Baynes which I have seen is *Familiares Colloquendi Formulae, In Usus Scholarum Concinnatae . . . Editio Sexta . . . Londini, 1685*, in the British Museum, the only edition of this work which I have located in that repository. The Library of the University of Illinois has a copy of the seventh edition, 1687; my own copy is of the twenty-fifth edition, 1743. This manual is thus not earlier than the seventeenth century, though it is itself avowedly a compilation from earlier manuals. Presumably Shakspeare's phrases have come from one or more of

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Labor's Lost* (Oxford Shakespeare), V, 1, 28-34.

<sup>2</sup> Baynes, *Shakespeare*, p. 181.