

CHAPTER XLIII

UPPER GRAMMAR SCHOOL: SHAKSPERE'S
LATIN POETS; VIRGIL

NEXT TO OVID IN GRAMMAR SCHOOL FAVOR came Virgil. The *Bucolics* and *Georgics* were likely to be among the first poems read, and the *Aeneid* regularly follows *Metamorphoses*. Because of his moral weight, Virgil was preferred by many to Ovid, who won first place with the schoolmasters chiefly because of his technical range—"smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy." Virgil early attained a succession of English imprints, evidently intended for grammar school consumption, and so throwing some light as to how it was expected Virgil should be taught.

English-printed Virgils are at bottom the edition prepared by Paulus Manutius for the Aldine press in 1558.¹ The earliest known of these in England is that printed by Henry Bynneman in 1570,

De Integro Collatis probatissimae fidei exemplaribus, q̄ diligentissimè restituta, ac doctissimis scholijs & annotationibus Pauli Manutij margine ascriptis, illustrata.

This is not directly from the Aldine editions, however, as shown by the phraseology of the title and the brief preliminary matter. It is evidently from some slightly adapted continental edition. The edition of 1572 by Bynneman, and that of 1577 by Kingston (Herbert) seem to have been reprints of that of 1570.

In 1580, Henry Middleton printed a slightly different form of Virgil for John Harrison. It has again the marginal notes of Paulus Manutius, but adds "Georgii Fabricii Chemnicensis obseruationes Virgilianae Lectionis," and certain preliminary matter. It is close kin to the Virgil printed by Plantin in 1566, and to that printed by Gryphius in 1571, and may be taken from some later edition by one of these presses. At any rate, it is only a reprint of some continental edition. This form is known to have been reprinted in 1583 and 1591.

The chances are thus fair that Shakspeare's Virgil was that edited by Paulus Manutius, and that it was in an English-printed edition. But, of course, his copy might have been a "hand-me-down" from the earliest days of printing. Still, through his own book, through

¹ The edition of 1555 had not the notes.