

CHAPTER XLIV

UPPER GRAMMAR SCHOOL: SHAKSPERE'S LATIN POETS; HORACE

IN CONNECTION WITH HORACE, one significant fact appears at once. For while numerous parallels have been noticed between Shakspeare and Horace, they are not usually from the *Satires*, but especially from the *Odes* and also the *Epistles*, including the *Ars Poetica*. If Shakspeare had picked up fragments from the air, presumably he should have found as many fragments there from the *Satires* as from the other sections. This is the more significant because the *Odes*, which Shakspeare reflects most, had not been translated into English, while the *Satires* and *Epistles* had been. It is thus strongly probable that in some way Shakspeare had a certain direct familiarity with the *Odes* and the *Epistles*, including the *Ars Poetica*.

This range of Shakspeare's knowledge conforms rather significantly to that supposed ordinarily to be acquired in grammar school. Usually the curricula simply require Horace, without specifying the sections to be read, but there are enough specific instances to indicate current practice. Out of the more than two dozen curricula that I have seen before 1600, only three fail to specify Horace in some form. Wolsey in 1528 mentions the *Epistles* specifically for the seventh form at Ipswich, evidently to serve in connection with the writing of epistles. Rivington in 1570-76 required the *Odes*. Sandwich in 1580 specifies "the *Epistles* of Horace, and certen of his chaste *Odes* chosen." The practice at Norwich was probably to read the *Odes* and *Satires*. For Sir Edward Coke

went to the fine old Grammar School at Norwich . . . A pleasant memorial of his schooldays has survived at *Holkham* in the shape of his wellused copy of Horace, an octavo of the fine French edition of H. Stephen. He had studied the "Odes" and the "Satires," making numerous notes in a neat, incredibly small script.¹

So Gabriel Harvey, writing in or before 1581, mentions all three—*Odes*, *Epistles*, *Satires*,—as possible subjects for the reading of the learned grammarian.² And we shall see that Richard Edwards in 1571 refers to the *Ars Poetica* as being taught in school. William Hayne had provided at Merchant Taylors' before 1611 a construe of

¹ James C. W., *Chief Justice Coke*, p. 4.

² See Vol. I, p. 436.