

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE RHETORICAL TRAINING OF SHAKSPERE: TULLY'S RHETORIC; I.E., *AD HERENNIUM*

NOW THAT WE HAVE EXAMINED THE BACKGROUND of theory upon rhetoric and logic in sixteenth century England we may next turn to the more specific problem of seeing exactly how rhetoric and logic were organized and taught in the grammar schools. Here we need to remember first the general scheme of Erasmus. To Erasmus, composition both oral and written was the prime objective of grammar school. The boys must learn to speak and write Latin correctly, fluently, and with literary finish. The best of the Latin authors were to serve as models to teach the boys literary Latin. These authors taught grammatical correctness, the formal grammar merely serving to introduce the boys to the fundamentals and to proper modes of observation. Grammatical correctness attained by the boys, the authors next taught them rhetorical and logical correctness, again with formal rhetoric and logic merely serving to introduce the boys to the fundamentals and to proper modes of observation. Thus imitative composition was the fundamental objective in the Erasmian system for grammar school. But the imitation was free imitation, not a "cutting over" patterns as Kempe and Brinsley desired in their applications of Ascham's theories.

The consequent scheme for written composition was simple and consistent. The boys began on easy "sentences" to learn to write Latin grammatically. Two or more "sentences" on some subject constituted an elementary theme, which the beginners would need to learn how eventually to weave together into a consistent and artistic whole. The principles of rhetoric and logic would enable the boys to imitate the best Latin authors in this process. The theme might be either in verse or prose. In verse, it might be any of the various verse forms. In prose likewise, the theme might take numerous forms. Aphthonius was the ultimate authority on themes, because he summed up all the minor prose forms, these together with the oration giving the various types. The epistles might employ any of these types of theme. The boy thus began with a simple *sententia*, and proceeded through simple themes to the formal types of Aph-