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Book One, Chapter 10

For there are other subjects of education which must be studied simultaneously with literature. These being independent studies are capable of completion without a knowledge of oratory, while on the other hand they cannot by themselves produce an orator. The question has consequently been raised as to whether they are necessary for this purpose. What, say some, has the knowledge of the way to describe an equilateral triangle on a given straight line got to do with pleading in the law-courts or speaking in the senate? Will an acquaintance with the names and intervals of the notes of the lyre help an orator to defend a criminal or direct the policy of his country? They will perhaps produce a long list of orators who are most effective in the courts but have never sat under a geometrician and whose understanding of music is confined to the pleasure which their ears, like those of other men, derive from it. To such critics I reply, and Cicero frequently makes the same remark in his Orator, that I am not describing any orator who actually exists or has existed, but have in mind an ideal orator, perfect down to the smallest detail.

On learning diverse subjects:

I may draw a parallel from the use of antidotes and other remedies applied to the eyes or to wounds. We know that these are composed of ingredients which produce many and sometimes contrary effects, but mixed together they make a single compound resembling no one of its component parts, but deriving its peculiar properties from all: so too dumb insects produce honey, whose taste is beyond the skill of man to imitate, from different kinds of flowers and juices. Shall we marvel then, if oratory, the highest gift of providence to man, needs the assistance of many arts, which, although they do not reveal or intrude themselves in actual speaking, supply hidden forces and make their silent presence felt? "But" it will be urged "men have proved fluent without their aid." Granted, but I am in quest of an orator. "Their contribution is but small." Yes, but we shall never attain completeness, if minor details be lacking. And it will be agreed that though our ideal of perfection may dwell on a height that is hard to gain, it is our duty to teach all we know, that achievement may at least come somewhat nearer the goal. But why should our courage fail? The perfect orator is not contrary to the laws of nature, and it is cowardly to despair of anything that is within the bounds of possibility.

Music:

Who is ignorant of the fact that music, of which I will speak first, was in ancient times the object not merely of intense study but of veneration: ...the supreme poet manifests most clearly that music is united with the knowledge even of things divine.
Music has two modes of expression in the voice and in the body (*for the Romans, music included dancing); for both voice and body require to be controlled by appropriate rules. Now I ask you whether it is not absolutely necessary for the orator to be acquainted with all these methods of expression which are concerned firstly with gesture, secondly with the arrangement of words and thirdly with the inflexions of the voice, of which a great variety are required in pleading. Otherwise we must assume that structure and the euphonious combination of sounds are necessary only for poetry, lyric and otherwise, but superfluous in pleading, or that unlike music, oratory has no interest in the variation of arrangement and sound to suit the demands of the case.

I think I ought to be more emphatic than I have been in stating that the music which I desire to see taught is not our modern music, which has been emasculated by the lascivious melodies of our effeminate stage and has to no small extent destroyed such manly vigour as we still possessed. No, I refer to the music of old which was employed to sing the praises of brave men and was sung by the brave themselves. I will have none of your psalteries and viols, that are unfit even for the use of a modest girl. Give me the knowledge of the principles of music, which have power to excite or assuage the emotions of mankind.

**Geometry:**
As regards geometry, it is granted that portions of this science are of value for the instruction of children: for admittedly it exercises their minds, sharpens their wits and generates quickness of perception. But it is considered that the value of geometry resides in the process of learning, and not as with other sciences in the knowledge thus acquired.

But geometry soars still higher to the consideration of the system of the universe: for by its calculations it demonstrates the fixed and ordained courses of the stars, and thereby we acquire the knowledge that all things are ruled by order and destiny, a consideration which may at times be of value to an orator.

**Book One, Chapter 11**

**Acting:**
The comic actor will also claim a certain amount of our attention, but only in so far as our future orator must be a master of the art of delivery. What then is the duty of the teacher whom we have borrowed from the stage? In the first place he must correct all faults of pronunciation, and see that the utterance is distinct, and that each letter has its proper sound. He will also insist that the speaker faces his audience, that the lips are not distorted nor the jaws parted to a grin, that the face is not thrown back, nor the eyes fixed on the ground, nor the neck slanted to left or right. For there are a variety of faults of facial expression. I have seen many, who raised their eyebrows whenever the voice was called upon for an effort, others who wore a perpetual frown, and yet others who could not keep their eyebrows level, but raised one towards the top of the head and depressed the other till it almost closed the eye. These are details, but as I shall shortly show, they are of enormous importance, for nothing that is unbecoming can have a pleasing effect.

**Gymnastics:**
I will not blame even those who give a certain amount of time to the teacher of gymnastics. I am not speaking of those, who spend part of their life in rubbing themselves
with oil and part in wine-bibbing, and kill the mind by over-attention to the body: indeed, I would have such as these kept as far as possible from the boy whom we are training. But we give the same name to those who form gesture and motion so that the arms may be extended in the proper manner, the management of the hands free from all trace of rusticity and inegance, the attitude becoming, the movements of the feet appropriate and the motions of the head and eyes in keeping with the poise of the body... We are told that the Spartans even regarded a certain form of dance as a useful element in military training. Nor again did the ancient Romans consider such a practice as disgraceful: this is clear from the fact that priestly and ritual dances have survived to the present day, while Cicero in the third book of his de Oratore quotes the words of Crassus, in which he lays down the principle that the orator "should learn to move his body in a bold and manly fashion derived not from actors or the stage, but from martial and even from gymnastic exercises." And such a method of training has persisted uncensured to our own time.

**Book One, Chapter 12**

**On the difficulty of proper education:**

The question is not infrequently asked, as to whether, admitting that these things ought to be learned, it is possible for all of them to be taught and taken in simultaneously. There are some who say that this is impossible on the ground that the mind is confused and tired by application to so many studies of different tendencies: neither the intelligence nor the physique of our pupils, nor the time at our disposal are sufficient, they say, and even though older boys may be strong enough, it is a sin to put such a burden on the shoulders of childhood. These critics show an insufficient appreciation of the capacities of the human mind, which is so swift and nimble and versatile, that it cannot be restricted to doing one thing only, but insists on devoting its attention to several different subjects not merely in one day, but actually at one and the same time... We need have no fear at any rate that boys will find their work too exhausting: there is no age more capable of enduring fatigue. The fact may be surprising, but it can be proved by experiment. For the mind is all the easier to teach before it is set.

**Quintilian on whether rhetoric is useful:**

There follows the question as to whether rhetoric is useful. Some are in the habit of denouncing it most violently and of shamelessly employing the powers of oratory to accuse oratory itself. "It is eloquence" they say "that snatches criminals from the penalties of the law, eloquence that from time to time secures the condemnation of the innocent and leads deliberation astray, eloquence that stirs up not merely sedition and popular tumult, but wars beyond all expiation, and that is most effective when it makes falsehood prevail over the truth."

Doctors have been caught using poisons, and those who falsely assume the name of philosopher have occasionally been detected in the gravest crimes. Let us give up eating, it often makes us ill; let us never go inside houses, for sometimes they collapse on their occupants; let never a sword be forged for a soldier, since it might be used by a robber. And who does not realize that fire and water, both necessities of life, and, to leave merely earthly things, even the sun and moon, the greatest of the heavenly bodies, are occasionally capable of doing harm.