



The Education of an Orator

Quintilian

Book I

1. Early Education

Let a father, then, as soon as his son is born, conceive, first of all, the best possible hopes of him; for he will thus grow the more solicitous about his improvement from the very beginning; since it is a complaint without foundation that “to very few people is granted the faculty of comprehending what is imparted to them, and that most, through dullness of understanding, lose their labor and their time.” For, on the contrary, you will find the greater number of men both ready in conceiving and quick in learning; since such quickness is natural to man; and as birds are born to fly, horses to run, and wild beasts to show fierceness, so to us peculiarly belong activity and sagacity of understanding; whence the origin of the mind is thought to be from heaven.

But dull and unteachable persons are no more produced in the course of nature than are persons marked by monstrosity and deformities; such are certainly but few. It will be a proof of this assertion, that, among boys, good promise is shown in the far greater number; and, if it passes off in the progress of time, it is manifest that it was not natural ability, but care, that was wanting.

But one surpasses another, you will say, in ability. I grant that this is true; but only so far as to accomplish more or less; whereas there is no one who has not gained something by study. Let him who is convinced of this truth, bestow, as soon as he becomes a parent, the most vigilant possible care on cherishing the hopes of a future orator.

Before all things, let the talk of the child’s nurses not be ungrammatical. Chrysippus wished them, if possible, to be women of some knowledge; at any rate he would have the best, as far as circumstances would allow, chosen. To their morals, doubtless, attention is first to be paid; but let them also speak with propriety. 6. It is they that the child will hear first; it is their words that he will try to form by imitation. We are by nature most tenacious of what we have imbibed in our infant years; as the flavor, with which you scent vessels when new, remains in them; nor can the colors of wool, for which its plain whiteness has been exchanged, be effaced; and those very habits, which are of a more objectionable nature, adhere with the greater tenacity; for good ones are easily changed for the worse, but when will you change bad ones into good? Let the child not be accustomed, therefore, even while he is yet an infant, to phraseology which must be unlearned.

In parents I should wish that there should be as much learning as possible. Nor do I speak, indeed, merely of fathers; for we have heard that Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi (whose very learned writing in her letters has come down to posterity), contributed greatly to their eloquence; the daughter of Laelius is said to have exhibited her father’s elegance in

her conversation; and the oration of the daughter of Quintus Hortensius, delivered before the Triumviri, is read not merely as an honor to her sex. 7. Nor let those parents, who have not had the fortune to get learning themselves, bestow the less care on the instruction of their children, but let them, on this very account, be more solicitous as to other particulars.

Of the boys, among whom he who is destined to this prospect is to be educated, the same may be said as concerning nurses.

Of *paedagogi* this further may be said, that they should either be men of acknowledged learning, which I should wish to be the first object, or that they should be conscious of their want of learning; for none are more pernicious than those who, having gone some little beyond the first elements, clothe themselves in a mistaken persuasion of their own knowledge; since they disdain to yield to those who are skilled in teaching, and, growing imperious, and sometimes fierce, in a certain right, as it were, of exercising their authority (with which that sort of men are generally puffed up), they teach only their own folly. 9. Nor is their misconduct less prejudicial to the manners of their pupils; for Leonides, the tutor of Alexander, as is related by Diogenes of Babylon, tinctured him with certain bad habits, which adhered to him, from his childish education, even when he was grown up and become the greatest of kings.

If I seem to my reader to require a great deal, let him consider that it is an orator that is to be educated; an arduous task, even when nothing is deficient for the formation of his character; and that more and more difficult labors yet remain; for there is need of constant study, the most excellent teachers, and a variety of mental exercises. 11. The best of rules, therefore, are to be laid down; and if any one shall refuse to observe them, the fault will lie, not in the method, but in the man.

If however it should not be the good fortune of children to have such nurses as I should wish, let them at least have one attentive *paedagogus*, not unskilled in language, who, if anything is spoken incorrectly by the nurse in the presence of his pupil, may at once correct it, and not let it settle in his mind. But let it be understood that what I prescribed at first is the right course, and this only a remedy.

I prefer that a boy should begin with the Greek language, because he will acquire Latin, which is in general use, even though we tried to prevent him, and because, at the same time, he ought first to be instructed in Greek learning, from which ours is derived. Yet I should not wish this rule to be so superstitiously observed that he should for a long time speak or learn only Greek, as is the custom with most people; for hence arise many faults of pronunciation, which is viciously adapted to foreign sounds, and also of language, in which when Greek idioms have become inherent by constant usage, they keep their place most pertinaciously even when we speak a different tongue. The study of Latin ought therefore to follow at no long interval, and soon after to keep pace with the Greek; and thus it will happen, that, when we have begun to attend to both tongues with equal care, neither will impede the other.

Some have thought that boys, as long as they are under seven years of age, should not be set to learn, because that is the earliest age that can understand what is taught, and endure the labor of learning. Of which opinion a great many writers say that Hesiod was, at least such writers as lived before Aristophanes the grammarian, for he was the first to deny that the *Hypothecae*, in which this opinion is found, was the work of that poet. 16. But other writers likewise, among whom is Erastothenes, have given the same advice. Those, however, advise better, who, like Chrysippus, think that no part of a child's life should be exempt from tuition; for Chrysippus, though he has allowed three years to the nurses, yet is of opinion that the minds of children may be imbued with excellent instruction even by them.

And why should not that age be under the influence of learning, which is now confessedly subject to moral influence? I am not indeed ignorant that, during the whole time of which I am

speaking, scarcely as much can be done as one year may afterwards accomplish, yet those who are of the opinion which I have mentioned, appear with regard to this part of life to have spared not so much the learners as the teachers. What else, after they are able to speak, will children do better, for they must do something? Or why should we despise the gain, how little soever it be, previous to the age of seven years? For certainly, small as may be the proficiency which an earlier age exhibits, the child will yet learn something greater during the very year in which he would have been learning something less. This advancement extended through each year, is a profit on the whole; and whatever is gained in infancy is an acquisition to youth. The same rule should be prescribed as to the following years, so that what every boy has to learn, he may not be too late in beginning to learn. Let us not then lose even the earliest period of life, and so much the loss, as the elements of learning depend on the memory alone, which not only exists in children, but is at that time of life even most tenacious.

Yet I am not so unacquainted with differences of age, as to think that we should urge those of tender years severely, or exact a full complement of work from them; for it will be necessary, above all things, to take care lest the child should conceive a dislike to the application which he cannot yet love, and continue to dread the bitterness which he has once tasted, even beyond the years of infancy. Let his instruction be an amusement to him; let him be questioned, and praised; and let him never feel pleased that he does not know a thing; and sometimes, if he is unwilling to learn, let another be taught before him, of whom he may be envious. Let him strive for victory now and then, and generally suppose that he gains it; and let his powers be called forth by rewards, such as that age prizes.

We are giving small instructions, while professing to educate an orator; but even studies have their infancy; and as the rearing of the very strongest bodies commenced with milk and the cradle, so he, who was to be the most eloquent of men, once uttered cries, tried to speak at first with a stuttering voice, and hesitated at the shapes of the letters. Nor, if it is impossible to learn a thing completely, is it therefore unnecessary to learn it at all. 22. If no one blames a father, who thinks that these matters are not to be neglected in regard to his son, why should he be blamed who communicates to the public what he would practice to advantage in his own house? And this is so much the more the case, as younger minds more easily take in small things and as bodies cannot be formed to certain flexures of the limbs unless while they are tender, so even strength itself makes our minds likewise more unyielding to most things.

Would Philip, king of Macedonia, have wished the first principles of learning to be communicated to his son Alexander by Aristotle, the greatest philosopher of that age, or would Aristotle have undertaken that office, if they had not both thought that the first rudiments of instruction are best treated by the most accomplished teacher, and have an influence on the whole course? Let us suppose, then, that Alexander were committed to me, and laid in my lap, an infant worthy of so much solicitude (though every man thinks his own son worthy of similar solicitude), should I be ashamed, even in teaching him his very letters, to point out some compendious methods of instruction?

For that at least, which I see practiced in regard to most children, by no means pleases me, namely, that they learn the names and order of the letters before they learn their shapes. This method hinders their recognition of them, as, while they follow their memory that takes the lead, they do not fix their attention on the forms of the letters. This is the reason why teachers, even when they appear to have fixed them sufficiently in the minds of children, in the straight order in which they are usually first written, make them go over them again the contrary way, and confuse them by variously changing the arrangement, until their pupils know them by their shape, not by their place. It will be best for children, therefore, to be taught the appearances and names of the letters at once, as they are taught those of men. 26. But that which is hurtful with

regard to letters, will be no impediment with regard to syllables. I do not disapprove, however, the practice, which is well known, of giving children, for the sake of stimulating them to learn, ivory figures of letters to play with, or whatever else can be invented, in which that infantine age may take delight, and which may be pleasing to handle, look at, or name.

But as soon as the child shall have begun to trace the forms of the letters, it will not be improper that they should be cut for him, as exactly as possible, on a board, that his style (pencil) may be guided along them as along grooves, for he will then make no mistakes, as on wax (since he will be kept in by the edge on each side, and will be unable to stray beyond the boundary); and, by following these sure traces rapidly and frequently, he will form his hand, and not require the assistance of a person to guide his hand with his own hand placed over it. The accomplishment of writing well and expeditiously, which is commonly disregarded by people of quality, is by no means an indifferent matter; for as writing itself is the principal thing in our studies, and that by which alone sure proficiency, resting on the deepest roots, is secured, a too slow way of writing retards thought, a rude and confused hand cannot be read; and hence follows another task, that of reading off what is to be copied from the writing. At all times, therefore, and in all places, and especially in writing private and familiar letters, it will be a source of pleasure to us, not to have neglected even this acquirement.

For learning syllables there is no short way; they must all be learned throughout; nor are the most difficult of them, as is the general practice, to be postponed, that children may be at a loss, forsooth, in writing words. Moreover, we must not even trust to the first learning by heart; it will be better to have syllables repeated, and to impress them long upon the memory; and in reading too, not to hurry on, in order to make it continuous or quick, until the clear and certain connection of the letters become familiar, without at least any necessity to stop for recollection. Let the pupil then begin to form words from syllables, and to join phrases together from words. It is incredible how much retardation is caused to reading by haste; for hence arise hesitation, interruption, and repetition, as children attempt more than they can manage; and then, after making mistakes, they become distrustful even of what they know. Let reading, therefore, be at first sure, then continuous, and for a long time slow, until, by exercise, a correct quickness is gained. For to look to the right, as everybody teaches, and to look forward, depends not merely on rule, but on habit, since, while the child is looking to what follows, he has to pronounce what goes before, and, what is very difficult, the direction of his thoughts must be divided, so that one duty may be discharged with his voice, and another with his eyes.

When the child shall have begun, as is the practice, to write words, it will cause no regret if we take care that he may not waste his efforts on common words, and such as perpetually occur. For he may readily learn the explanations of obscure terms, which the Greeks call *glosses*, while some other occupation is before him, and acquire, amidst his first rudiments, a knowledge of that which would afterwards demand a special time for it. Since, too, we are still attending to small matters, I would express a wish that even the lines, which are set him for his imitation in writing, should not contain useless sentences, but such as convey some moral instruction. The remembrance of such admonitions will attend him to old age, and will be of use even for the formation of his character. It is possible for him, also, to learn the sayings of eminent men, and select passages, chiefly from the poets (for the reading of poets is more pleasing to the young), in his play-time; since memory (as I shall show in its proper place) is most necessary to an orator, and is eminently strengthened and nourished by exercise; and, at the age of which we are now speaking, and which cannot, as yet, produce anything of itself, it is almost the only faculty that can be improved by the aid of teachers. It will not be improper, however, to require of boys of this age (in order that their pronunciation may be fuller and their speech more distinct) to roll forth, as rapidly as possible, certain words and lines of studied difficulty, composed of several

syllables, and those roughly clashing together, and, as it were, rugged-sounding; the Greeks call them *χαλεποι*. This may seem a trifling matter to mention, but when it is neglected, many faults of pronunciation, unless they are removed in the years of youth, are fixed by incorrigible ill habit for the rest of life.

2. Formal Education

But let us suppose that the child now gradually increases in size, leaves the lap, and applies himself to learning in earnest. In this place, accordingly, must be considered the question, whether it be more advantageous to confine the learner at home, and within the walls of a private house, or to commit him to the large numbers of a school, and, as it were, to public teachers. The latter mode, I observe, has had the sanction of those by whom the polity of the most eminent states was settled, as well as that of the most illustrious authors.

Yet it is not to be concealed, that there are some who, from certain notions of their own, disapprove of this almost public mode of instruction. These persons appear to be swayed chiefly by two reasons: one, that they take better precautions for the morals of the young, by avoiding a concourse of human beings of that age which is most prone to vice; (from which cause I wish it were falsely asserted that provocations to immoral conduct arise;) the other, that whoever may be the teacher, he is likely to bestow his time more liberally on one pupil, than if he has to divide it among several. The first reason indeed deserves great consideration; for if it were certain that schools, though advantageous to studies, are pernicious to morals, a virtuous course of life would seem to me preferable to one even of the most distinguished eloquence. But in my opinion, the two are combined and inseparable; for I am convinced that no one can be an orator who is not a good man; and, even if any one could, I should be unwilling that he should be. On this point, therefore, I shall speak first.

People think that morals are corrupted in schools; for indeed they are at times corrupted; but such may be the case even at home. Many proofs of this fact may be adduced; proofs of character having been vitiated, as well as preserved with the utmost purity, under both modes of education. It is the disposition of the individual pupil, and the care taken of him, that make the whole difference. Suppose that his mind be prone to vice, suppose that there be neglect in forming and guarding his morals in early youth, seclusion would afford no less opportunity for immorality than publicity; for the private tutor may be himself of bad character; nor is intercourse with vicious slaves at all safer than that with immodest free-born youths. But if his disposition be good, and if there be not a blind and indolent negligence on the part of his parents, it will be possible for them to select a tutor of irreproachable character, (a matter to which the utmost attention is paid by sensible parents,) and to fix on a course of instruction of the very strictest kind; while they may at the same time place at the elbow of their son some influential friend or faithful freedman, whose constant attendance may improve even those of whom apprehensions may be entertained.

The remedy for this object of fear is easy. Would that we ourselves did not corrupt the morals of our children! We enervate their very infancy with luxuries. That delicacy of education, which we call fondness, weakens all the powers, both of body and mind. What luxury will he not covet in his manhood, who crawls about on purple! He cannot yet articulate his first words, when he already distinguishes scarlet, and wants his purple. We form the palate of children before we form their pronunciation. They grow up in sedan chairs; if they touch the ground, they hang by the hands of attendants supporting them on each side. We are delighted if they utter any thing immodest. Expressions which would not be tolerated even from the effeminate youths of Alexandria, we hear from them with a smile and a kiss. Nor is this wonderful; we have taught

them; they have heard such language from ourselves. They see our mistresses, our male objects of affection; every dining-room rings with impure songs; things shameful to be told are objects of sight. From such practices springs habit, and afterwards nature. The unfortunate children learn these vices before they know that they are vices; and hence, rendered effeminate and luxurious, they do not imbibe immorality from schools, but carry it themselves into schools.

But, it is said, one tutor will have more time for one pupil. First of all, however, nothing prevents that one pupil, whoever he may be, from being the same with him who is taught in the school. But if the two objects cannot be united, I should still prefer the day-light of an honorable seminary to darkness and solitude; for every eminent teacher delights in a large concourse of pupils, and thinks himself worthy of a still more numerous auditory. But inferior teachers, from a consciousness of their inability, do not disdain to fasten on single pupils, and to discharge the duty as it were of *paedagogi*.

But supposing that either interest, or friendship, or money, should secure to any parent a domestic tutor of the highest learning, and in every respect unrivalled, will he however spend the whole day on one pupil? Or can the application of any pupil be so constant as not to be sometimes wearied, like the sight of the eyes, by continued direction to one object, especially as study requires the far greater portion of time to be solitary. For the tutor does not stand by the pupil while he is writing, or learning by heart, or thinking; and when he is engaged in any of those exercises, the company of any person whatsoever is a hindrance to him. Nor does every kind of reading require at all times a praelector or interpreter; for when, if such were the case, would the knowledge of so many authors be gained? The time, therefore, during which the work as it were for the whole day may be laid out, is but short.

Thus the instructions which are to be given to each, may reach to many. Most of them, indeed, are of such a nature that they may be communicated to all at once with the same exertion of the voice. I say nothing of the topics and declamations of the rhetoricians, at which, certainly, whatever be the number of the audience, each will still carry off the whole. For the voice of the teacher is not like a meal, which will not suffice for more than a certain number, but like the sun, which diffuses the same portion of light and heat to all. If a grammarian, too, discourses on the art of speaking, solves questions, explains matters of history, or illustrates poems, as many as shall hear him will profit by his instructions. But, it may be said, number is an obstacle to correction and explanation. Suppose that this be a disadvantage in a number, (for what in general satisfies us in every respect?) we will soon compare that disadvantage with other advantages.

Yet I would not wish a boy to be sent to a place where he will be neglected. Nor should a good master encumber himself with a greater number of scholars than he can manage; and it is to be a chief object with us, also, that the master may be in every way our kind friend, and may have regard in his teaching, not so much to duty, as to affection. Thus we shall never be confounded with the multitude. Nor will any master, who is in the slightest degree tinctured with literature, fail particularly to cherish that pupil in whom he shall observe application and genius, even for his own honor. But even if great schools ought to be avoided (a position to which I cannot assent, if numbers flock to a master on account of his merit), the rule is not to be carried so far that schools should be avoided altogether. It is one thing to shun schools, another to choose from them.

If I have now refuted the objections which are made to schools, let me next state what opinions I myself entertain. First of all, let him who is to be an orator, and who must live amidst the greatest publicity, and in the full day-light of public affairs, accustom himself, from his boyhood, not to be abashed at the sight of men, nor pine in a solitary and as it were recluse way of life. The mind requires to be constantly excited and roused, while in such retirement it

either languishes, and contracts rust, as it were, in the shade, or, on the other hand, becomes swollen with empty conceit, since he who compares himself to no one else, will necessarily attribute too much to his own powers. Besides, when his acquirements are to be displayed in public, he is blinded at the light of the sun, and stumbles at every new object, as having learned in solitude that which is to be done in public. I say nothing of friendships formed at school, which remain in full force even to old age, as if cemented with a certain religious obligation; for to have been initiated in the same studies is a not less sacred bond than to have been initiated in the same sacred rites. That sense, too, which is called common sense, where shall a young man learn when he has separated himself from society, which is natural not to men only, but even to dumb animals?

Add to this, that, at home, he can learn only what is taught himself; at school, even what is taught others. He will daily hear many things commended, many things corrected; the idleness of a fellow student, when reproved, will be a warning to him; the industry of any one, when commended, will be a stimulus; emulation will be excited by praise; and he will think it a disgrace to yield to his equals in age, and an honor to surpass his seniors. All these matters excite the mind; and though ambition itself be a vice, yet it is often the parent of virtues.

I remember a practice that was observed by my masters, not without advantage. Having divided the boys into classes, they assigned them their order in speaking in conformity in the abilities of each; and thus each stood in the higher place to declaim according as he appeared to excel in proficiency. Judgments were pronounced on the performances; and great was the strife among us for distinction; but to take the lead of the class was by far the greatest honor. Nor was sentence given on our merits only once; the thirtieth day brought the vanquished an opportunity of contending again. Thus he who was most successful, did not relax his efforts, while uneasiness incited the unsuccessful to retrieve his honor. I should be inclined to maintain, as far as I can form a judgment from what I conceive in my own mind, that this method furnished stronger incitements to the study of eloquence, than the exhortations of preceptors, the watchfulness of *paedagogi*, or the wishes of parents.

But as emulation is of use to those who have made some advancement in learning, so, to those who are but beginning, and are still of tender age, to imitate their school-fellows is more pleasant than to imitate their master, for the very reason that it is more easy; for they who are learning the first rudiments will scarcely dare to exalt themselves to the hope of attaining that eloquence which they regard as the highest; they will rather fix on what is nearest to them, as vines attached to trees gain the top by taking hold of the lower branches first. This is an observation of such truth, that it is the care even of the master himself, when he has to instruct minds that are still unformed, not (if he prefer at least the useful to the showy) to overburden the weakness of his scholars, but to moderate his strength, and to let himself down to the capacity of the learner. For as narrow-necked vessels reject a great quantity of the liquid that is poured upon them, but are filled by that which flows or is poured into them by degrees, so it is for us to ascertain how much the minds of boys can receive, since what is too much for their grasp of intellect will not enter their minds, as not being sufficiently expanded to admit it. It is of advantage therefore for a boy to have school-fellows whom he may first imitate, and afterwards try to surpass. Thus will he gradually conceive hope of higher excellence.

To these observations I shall add, that masters themselves, when they have but one pupil at a time with them, cannot feel the same degree of energy and spirit in addressing him, as when they are excited by a large number of hearers. Eloquence depends in a great degree on the state of the mind, which must conceive images of objects, and transform itself, so to speak, to the nature of the things of which we discourse. Besides, the more noble and lofty a mind is, by the more powerful springs, as it were, is it moved, and accordingly is both strengthened by praise,

and enlarged by effort, and is filled with joy at achieving something great. But a certain secret disdain is felt at lowering the power of eloquence, acquired by so much labor, to one auditor; and the teacher is ashamed to raise his style above the level of ordinary conversation. Let any one imagine, indeed, the air of a man haranguing, or the voice of one entreating, the gesture, the pronunciation, the agitation of mind and body, the exertion, and, to mention nothing else, the fatigue, while he has but one auditor; would not he seem to be affected with something like madness? There would be no eloquence in the world, if we were to speak only with one person at a time.

3. Assessing Student Potential

Let him that is skilled in teaching, ascertain first of all, when a boy is entrusted to him, his ability and disposition. The chief symptom of ability in children is memory, of which the excellence is twofold, to receive with ease and retain with fidelity. The next symptom is imitation; for that is an indication of a teachable disposition, but with this provision, that it express merely what it is taught, and not a person's manner or walk, for instance, or whatever may be remarkable for deformity. The boy who shall make it his aim to raise a laugh by his love of mimicry, will afford me no hope of good capacity; for he who is possessed of great talent will be well disposed; else I should think it not at all worse to be of a dull, than of a bad, disposition; but he who is honorably inclined will be very different from the stupid or idle.

Such a pupil as I would have, will easily learn what is taught him, and will ask questions about some things, but will still rather follow than run on before. That precocious sort of talent scarcely ever comes to good fruit. Such are those who do little things easily, and, impelled by impudence, show at once all that they can accomplish in such matters. But they succeed only in what is ready to their hand; they string words together, uttering them with an intrepid countenance, not in the least discouraged by bashfulness; and do little, but do it readily. There is no real power behind, or any that rests on deeply fixed roots; but they are like seeds which have been scattered on the surface of the ground and shoot up prematurely, and like grass that resembles corn, and grows yellow, with empty ears, before the time of harvest. Their efforts give pleasure, as compared with their years; but their progress comes to a stand, and our wonder diminishes.

When a tutor has observed these indications, let him next consider how the mind of his pupil is to be managed. Some boys are indolent, unless you stimulate them; some are indignant at being commanded; fear restrains some, and unnerves others; continued labor forms some; with others, hasty efforts succeed better. Let the boy be given to me, whom praise stimulates, whom honor delights, who weeps when he is unsuccessful. His powers must be cultivated under the influence of ambition; reproach will sting him to the quick; honor will incite him; and in such a boy I shall never be apprehensive of indifference.

Yet some relaxation is to be allowed to all; not only because there is nothing that can bear perpetual labor, (and even those things that are without sense and life are unbent by alternate rest, as it were, in order that they may preserve their vigor,) but because application to learning depends on the will, which cannot be forced. Boys, accordingly, when re-invigorated and refreshed, bring more sprightliness to their learning, and a more determined spirit, which for the most part spurns compulsion. Nor will play in boys displease me; it is also a sign of vivacity; and I cannot expect that he who is always dull and spiritless will be of an eager disposition in his studies, when he is indifferent even to that excitement which is natural to his age.

There must however be bounds set to relaxation, lest the refusal of it beget an aversion to study, or too much indulgence in it a habit of idleness. There are some kinds of amusement,

too, not unserviceable for sharpening the wits of boys, as when they contend with each other by proposing all sorts of questions in turn. 12. In their plays, also, their moral dispositions show themselves more plainly, supposing that there is no age so tender that it may not readily learn what is right and wrong; and the tender age may best be formed at a time when it is ignorant of dissimulation, and most willingly submits to instructors; for you may break, sooner than mend, that which has hardened into deformity. 13. A child is as early as possible, therefore, to be admonished that he must do nothing too eagerly, nothing dishonestly, nothing without self-control and we must always keep in mind the maxim of Virgil, “of so much importance is the acquirement of habit in the young.”

But that boys should suffer corporal punishment, though it be a received custom, and Chrysippus makes no objection to it, I by no means approve; first, because it is a disgrace, and a punishment for slaves, and in reality (as will be evident if you imagine the age changed) an affront; secondly, because, if a boy’s disposition be so abject as not to be amended by reproof, he will be hardened, like the worst of slaves, even to stripes; and lastly, because, if one who regularly exacts his tasks be with him, there will not be the least need of any such chastisement. At present, the negligence of *paedagogi* seems to be made amends for in such a way that boys are not obliged to do what is right, but are punished whenever they have not done it. Besides, after you have coerced a boy with stripes, how will you treat him when he becomes a young man, to whom such terror cannot be held out, and by whom more difficult studies must be pursued?

Add to these considerations, that many things unpleasant to be mentioned, and likely afterwards to cause shame, often happen to boys while being whipped, under the influence of pain or fear; and such shame enervates and depresses the mind, and makes them shun people’s sight and feel a constant uneasiness. If, moreover, there has been too little care in choosing governors and tutors of reputable character. I am ashamed to say how scandalously unworthy men may abuse their privilege of punishing, and what opportunity also the terror of the unhappy children may sometimes afford to others. I will not dwell upon this point; what is already understood is more than enough. It will be sufficient therefore to intimate, that no man should be allowed too much authority over an age so weak and so unable to resist ill treatment.

Quintilian. *Institutes of Oratory*. 4 vols. Trans. H.E. Butler. London: William Heinemann, 1920.

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