

<https://www.attalus.org/cicero/deoratore1B.html>

{26.} [118] "But as our inquiry regards the **complete orator**, we must imagine, in our discussion, an orator from whom every kind of fault is abstracted, and who is adorned with every kind of merit. For if the multitude of suits, if the variety of cases, if the rabble and barbarism of the forum¹, afford room for even the most wretched speakers, we must not, for that reason, take our eyes from the object of our inquiry. In those arts, in which it is not indispensable usefulness that is sought, but liberal amusement for the mind, how nicely, how almost fastidiously, do we judge! For there are no suits or controversies which can force men, though they may tolerate indifferent orators in the forum, to endure also bad actors upon the stage.

[119] The orator therefore must take the most studious precaution not merely to satisfy those whom he necessarily must satisfy, but to seem worthy of admiration to those who are at liberty to judge impartially. If you would know what I myself think, I will express to you, my intimate friends, what I have hitherto never mentioned, and thought that I never should mention. To me, those who speak best, and speak with the utmost ease and grace, appear, if they do not commence their speeches with some timidity, and show some confusion in the exordium², to have almost lost the sense of shame, though it is impossible that such should not be the case; **³

¹ Forum Romanum

² Einleitung, Proem gr. prooimion

³ Tametsi id accidere non potest. 'Quamvis id fieri non possit, ut qui optime dicit, in exordio non perturbetur.' Proust.