

John of Salisbury

THE
METALOGICON

A TWELFTH-CENTURY

DEFENSE OF THE

VERBAL AND

LOGICAL ARTS OF

THE TRIVIUM



TRANSLATED BY
DANIEL D. MCGARRY

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER 1. *The false accusation that has evoked this rejoinder to Cornificius.*

The malicious wrangler [to whom we have referred] has stirred up against one of the most extraordinary gifts of mother nature and grace, the embers of an outdated charge,¹ long since discredited and dismissed as false and groundless by our ancestors. Barring no means in his effort to console himself for his own want of knowledge, he has contrived to improve his own reputation by making many others ignoramuses like himself. For inflated arrogance is marked by an overweening proclivity both to magnify its own good points, if it has any, and to belittle those of others, so that, measuring itself in comparison, it may count the shortcomings of others as signs of its own proficiency. All who possess real insight agree that nature, the most loving mother and wise² arranger of all that exists, has, among the various living creatures which she has brought forth, elevated man by the privilege of reason, and distinguished him by the faculty of speech. She has thus effected, by her affectionate care and well-ordered plan, that, even though he is oppressed and handicapped by the burden of his earthy nature and the sluggishness of his physical body, man may still rise to higher things. Borne aloft, so to speak, on wings of reason and speech, he is thus enabled, by this felicitous shortcut, to outstrip all other beings, and to attain the crown of true happiness. While grace fructifies [human] nature, reason looks after the observation and examination of facts, probes the secret depths of nature, and estimates all utility and worth. In the meantime, the love of good, inborn in all of us, seeks, as our natural appetite asserts

¹ See *Met.*, Prologue, above. John's opponent, Cornificius, claimed that logical studies are useless. Cf. also later, in this chapter.

² *dispositissima*; cf. Boethius, *Arithm.*, i, 27 (Friedlein, p. 55), and *Consol. Philos.*, iv, pr. i.

itself, what alone or particularly seems best adapted to the attainment of happiness.³ Since one cannot even imagine how any kind of happiness could exist entirely apart from mutual association and divorced from human society, whoever assails what contributes to establish and promote rightful order⁴ in the latter [human society] (in a way the sole and unique fraternity among the children of nature), would seem to obstruct the way to beatitude for all. Having blocked the road to peace, he incites the forces of nature to concur for the destruction of the world. This is "To sow discord among brothers,"⁵ "to supply arms"⁶ to those at peace, and last, but not least, to establish a new and "great chasm" between God and man.⁷ The creative Trinity, the one true God, has so arranged the parts of the universe that each requires the help of the others, and they mutually compensate for their respective deficiencies, all things being, so to speak, "members one of another."⁸ All things lack something when isolated, and are perfected on being united, since they mutually support one another. What is more reliable, helpful, and efficacious for the acquisition of happiness than virtue, which is practically the sole means grace has provided for the attainment of beatitude? Those who attain blessedness without meriting it by virtue, arrive at this state by being drawn thither, rather than by going there themselves. I consequently wonder (though not sufficiently, as it is beyond me) what is the real aim of one who denies that eloquence should be studied; who asserts that it comes as a natural gift to one who is not mute, just as sight does to one who is not blind, and hearing to one who is not deaf; and who further maintains that although nature's gift is strengthened by exercise, nothing is to be gained by learning the art [of eloquence], or at least that the benefit accruing is not worth the effort that must be expended. Just as eloquence, unenlightened by reason, is rash and blind, so wisdom, without the power of expression, is feeble and maimed. Speechless wisdom may sometimes increase one's personal satisfaction, but it rarely and only

³ *beatitudo*, beatitude: perfect or complete happiness.

⁴ *ius*, right, law, rightful order.

⁵ Proverbs, vi, 19.

⁶ Vergil, *Aen.*, i, 150.

⁷ Luke, xvi, 26.

⁸ Romans, xii, 5.

slightly contributes to the welfare of human society. Reason, the mother, nurse, and guardian of knowledge, as well as of virtue, frequently conceives from speech, and by this same means bears more abundant and richer fruit. Reason would remain utterly barren, or at least would fail to yield a plenteous harvest, if the faculty of speech did not bring to light its feeble conceptions, and communicate the perceptions of the prudent exercise of the human mind. Indeed, it is this delightful and fruitful copulation of reason and speech which has given birth to so many outstanding cities, has made friends and allies of so many kingdoms, and has unified and knit together in bonds of love so many peoples. Whoever tries to "thrust asunder what God has joined together"⁹ for the common good, should rightly be adjudged a public enemy. One who would eliminate the teaching of eloquence from philosophical studies, begrudges Mercury [Eloquence]¹⁰ his possession of Philology,¹¹ and wrests from Philology's arms her beloved Mercury.¹² Although he may seem to attack eloquence alone, he undermines and uproots all liberal studies, assails the whole structure of philosophy, tears to shreds humanity's social contract, and destroys the means of brotherly charity and reciprocal interchange of services. Deprived of their gift of speech, men would degenerate to the condition of brute animals, and cities would seem like corrals for livestock, rather than communities composed of human beings united by a common bond for the purpose of living in society, serving one another, and cooperating as friends. If verbal intercommunication were withdrawn, what contract could be duly concluded, what instruction could be given in faith and morals, and what agreement and mutual understanding could subsist among men? It may thus be seen that our "Cornificius,"¹³ ignorant and malevolent foe of studies pertaining to elo-

⁹ Matthew, xix, 6.

¹⁰ Mercury: god of eloquence (among other things); artful eloquence personified.

¹¹ *Philologia*, philosophy, or literary learning in general, personified.

¹² See Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis*.

¹³ "Cornificius" is the *nom de plume* given by John to the adversary of "logic," the spokesman of those who advocated less attention to "logical" studies (i.e., grammar, rhetoric, and logic). Cornificius was a detractor of Vergil, mentioned in an apparent interpolation in the *Vita Vergilii* by Donatus (in *Vitae Vergilianae*, ed. Jacob Brummer, pp. 10-11, 30-32, note to line 193). The real name of John's "Cornificius" is uncertain.

quence, attacks not merely one, or even a few persons, but all civilization and political organization.

CHAPTER 2. *A description of Cornificius, without giving his name.*

I would openly identify Cornificius and call him by his own name, I would reveal to the public his bloated gluttony, puffed-up pride,¹⁴ obscene mouth, rapacious greed; irresponsible conduct, loathsome habits (which nauseate all about him), foul lust, dissipated appearance, evil life, and ill repute, were it not that I am restrained by reverence for his Christian name. In view of my profession and our brotherly communion in the Lord, I have thought it better to be lenient with the person, without ceding any quarter to his error. I would reverence God, by sparing the nature, which comes from Him, but attacking the vice, which is opposed to Him, since it corrupts the nature of which He is Author.¹⁵ It is but right, in resisting an opinion, to avoid defaming the person who has sponsored it. Nothing is more despicable than to attack the character of the proponent of a doctrine simply because his views are not to our liking. It is far better that a false opinion be temporarily spared out of consideration for the person who holds it, provided his error is at all tolerable, than that the person be calumniated because of his opinion. All cases should be judged on their own merits, and retribution should correspond to deserts, but in such a way that gentle mercy prevails over strict severity. In view of the aforesaid, and lest I seem to be slandering a personal enemy, rather than seeking the correction of error, I have omitted mention of the name by which Cornificius is regularly known. To tell the truth, nothing is farther from fact [than to presume that I am more interested in discrediting a personal foe than in establishing the truth]. As far as a Christian may licitly

¹⁴ *tumorem uentris et mentis*, the swollen or bloated condition of his belly and mind: his gluttony and pride.

¹⁵ Cf. Augustine, *De C.D.*, xii, 3.

do so, I would despise both the person and his opinion. But let him snore away till midday, become drunk in his daily carousals, and squander his time by wallowing in carnal excesses which would shame even an Epicurean pig,¹⁶ as much as his heart desires. I will confine myself to attacking his opinion, which has ruined many, as not a few believe what he says. Despite the fact that this new Cornificius is less clever than the old one, a host of fools follow him. It is a motley crowd, made up mostly of the lazy and dull, who are trying to seem, rather than to become wise.

CHAPTER 3. *When, how, and by whom Cornificius was educated.*

I am not at all surprised that Cornificius, although he has been hired at a high price, and has been thrashing the air for a long time, has taught his credulous listeners to know nothing. For this was the way in which he himself was "untaught" by his own masters. Verbose, rather than eloquent, he is continually tossing to the winds verbal leaves that lack the fruit of meaning.¹⁷ On the one hand, he assails with bitter sarcasm the statements of everyone else, without any concern as to who they may be, in the effort to establish his own views and overthrow the opinions of others. On the other hand, he carefully shuns engaging in hand-to-hand combat, and avoids basing his arguments on reason or consenting to walk together in the field of the scriptures.¹⁸ Really, I cannot imagine what extraordinary thing, hidden from all the wise, Cornificius has conceived in the swollen bellows of his windy lungs, wherefore he disdains to answer or to listen with patience to anyone else. No matter what proposition

¹⁶ *porcum Epicuri*, a pig or hog of Epicurus, or of the Epicurean herd; Horace, *Ep.*, i, 4, 16.

¹⁷ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.*, iii, 444 ff.; vi, 74 f. The Sibyl in the cave is said to inscribe notes and names on leaves, which are subsequently swirled about and mixed by winds howling through the cave.

¹⁸ John says that Cornificius refuses to come down to earth and argue out questions, either on the basis of reason or of revelation. Cf. Jerome, *Ep.*, lxxxii, 1 (in Migne, *P.L.*, XXII, 736). The word *scripturarum* might also mean "what has been written" in general.

is advanced, he rejects it as false, or laughs it to scorn. If you expect him to prove his propositions, he puts you off, and when the day has ended, you find you have been defrauded of what you were awaiting. For he does not want to cast his pearls, so he says, before strange swine.¹⁹ Meanwhile he pastures his [sheepish] listeners on fictions and foibles. He boasts that he has a shortcut whereby he will make his disciples eloquent without the benefit of any art, and philosophers without the need of any work. He himself learned from his own teachers what he is today passing on to his pupils. He is ladling out the very same kind of instruction that he himself received. He will make his disciples his equals in philosophy. What more [could they wish]? Will they not thus, in accordance with the saying, be perfect? Do we not read in the Gospel: "Every disciple who becomes like his master is perfect?"²⁰ What he now teaches, Cornificius learned at a time when there was no "letter"²¹ in liberal studies, and everyone sought "the spirit," which, so they tell us, lies hidden in the letter. He has carefully preserved this, to be heard only by the fortunate and by "the ears of Jove" (as the saying goes).²² When Cornificius went to school, it was a dominant principle that "Hercules begets Hyllus":²³ namely, that the strength and vigor of the disputant add up to a valid argument, and that sovereignty resides in the five vowel sounds.²⁴ At that time this was considered the proper way to teach everything. The philosophers of that day argued interminably over such questions as whether a pig being taken to market is held by the man or by the rope; and whether one who buys a whole cape also simultaneously purchases the hood. Speech in which the words "consistent" and "inconsistent," "argument" and "reason" did not resound, with negative particles multiplied and transposed through

¹⁹ Cf. Matthew, vii, 6.

²⁰ Luke, vi, 40.

²¹ *littera*, the letter as opposed to the spirit, the literal sense, or perhaps learning.

²² Cf. Horace, *Ep.*, i, 19, 43.

²³ In classical mythology, Hyllus was the son of Hercules and Deianira. Cf. Ovid, *Her.*, ix; and *Metam.*, ix, 279. Evidently the meaning here is that a robust father begets a hearty son.

²⁴ Literally: "the five vowel sounds are five rights of sovereignty"; cf. Ragewinus, *Gest. Friderici Imp.*, iii, 47: "*Regalia* [rights belonging to the crown] *velut monetam, theloneum, pedaticum, portus, comitatus*," in which the second syllables of the five nouns contain the five vowels: *a, e, i, o, u*.

assertions of existence and non-existence,²⁵ was entirely unacceptable. So true was this that one had to bring along a counter whenever he went to a disputation, if he was to keep apprized of the force of affirmation or negation. For generally a double negative is equivalent to affirmation, whereas the force of a negation is increased if it is repeated an uneven number of times. At the same time, a negation repeated over and over usually loses its effect, and becomes equivalent to contradiction, as we find stated in the rules. In order, therefore, to discriminate between instances of even and uneven numbers, it was then the custom of those who had prudent foresight to bring a bag of beans and peas²⁶ to disputations as a reasonable expedient. Even though one might try to get to the root of a question, noisy verbosity would suffice to win the victory, regardless of the kind of arguments advanced.²⁷ Poets who related history were considered reprobate, and if anyone applied himself to studying the ancients, he became a marked man and the laughingstock of all. For he was deemed both slower than a young Arcadian ass,²⁸ and duller than lead or stone. Everyone enshrined his own and his master's inventions. Yet even this situation could not abide. Students were soon swept along in the current, and, like their fellows in error, came to spurn what they had learned from their teachers, and to form and found new sects of their own. Of a sudden, they blossomed forth as great philosophers. Those newly arrived in school, unable to read or write, hardly stayed there any longer than it takes a baby bird to sprout its feathers. Then the new masters, fresh from the schools, and fledglings, just leaving their nests, flew off together, after having stayed about the same length of time in school and nest. These "fresh-baked" doctors had spent more hours sleeping than awake in their study of philosophy, and had been educated with less expenditure of effort than those who, according to mythology, after sleeping on [Mount] Parnassus,²⁹ immediately became prophets. They had been trained more rapidly than those who, after imbibing from the Castalian

²⁵ *multiplicatis negatiuis particulis et traiectis per esse et non esse.*

²⁶ Pulse and pease, or beans and peas, with which to keep track of the number of negations.

²⁷ That is, independently of whether or not the arguments really applied.

²⁸ Cf. Persius, *Sat.*, iii, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, prol., 1 ff.

Fountain of the Muses, directly obtained the gift of poetry;³⁰ or those who, after setting eyes on Apollo, merited not only to be classed as musicians, but even to be accepted into the company of the Muses. What, now, did they teach? How could they allow anything to remain crude and unpolished, old and obsolete? Behold, all things were "renovated."³¹ Grammar was [completely] made over; logic was remodeled; rhetoric was despised. Discarding the rules of their predecessors, they brought forth new methods for the whole Quadrivium from the innermost sanctuaries³² of philosophy. They spoke only of "consistence" or "reason," and the word "argument" was on the lips of all. To mention "an ass," "a man," or any of the works of nature was considered a crime, or improper, crude, and alien to a philosopher. It was deemed impossible to say or do anything "consistently" and "rationally,"³³ without expressly mentioning "consistence" and "reason." Not even an argument was admitted unless it was prefaced by its name. To act with reference to an art and according to the art were (for them) the same. They would probably teach that a poet cannot write poetry unless he at the same time names the verse he is using; and that the carpenter cannot make a bench unless he is simultaneously forming on his lips the word "bench" or "wooden seat."³⁴ The result is this hodgepodge of verbiage,³⁵ revealed in by a foolish old man, who rails at those who respect the founders of the arts, since he himself could see nothing useful in these arts when he was pretending to study them.

³⁰ Cf. Persius, *loc. cit.*; Ovid, *Am.*, i, 15, 36; Martial, *Epigr.*, iv, 14, 1; xii, 3, 13. The Castalian fountain was on Mount Parnassus, near Delphi, sacred to the Muses and to Apollo.

³¹ Cf. Apocalypse, xxi, 5.

³² *ex aditis*: for *ex adytis*, from the inmost sacred places. Cf. Macrobius, *De. S.S.*, i, 12, 18.

³³ "conuenienter" et ad "rationis" normam.

³⁴ *lignum*, literally, wood.

³⁵ *sartago loquendi*; cf. Persius, *Sat.*, i, 80.

CHAPTER 4. *The lot of his companions in error.*

After wasting their time, squandering their means, and disappointing hopes doomed to be frustrated, members of this sect have met various lots. Some have forsaken the world to become monks or clerics. Of these, several have subsequently recognized and corrected their error, realizing and publicly admitting that what they had learned was "vanity of vanities," and the utmost vanity.³⁶ I say "several," because even some of them have persisted in their insanity, and, puffed up with their old perversity, have preferred remaining foolish to learning the truth from the humble, to whom God gives grace.³⁷ Having prematurely seated themselves in the master's chair, they blush to descend to the pupil's bench.³⁸ If you do not believe me, enter the cloisters and look into the ways of the brothers. You will discover there the haughtiness of Moab,³⁹ so extremely intensified that Moab's courage is swallowed up in arrogance. Benedict is shocked, and laments that, partly through his own fault,⁴⁰ [voracious] wolves lurk under the skins of lambs.⁴¹ He remonstrates that the tonsure and sombre [religious] habit⁴² are inconsistent with pride; or, to put it more precisely, he denounces haughtiness as alien to the shaven head and the [drab] garb of a monk. Observance of rules has come to be contemned, while a spirit of false intoxication has insinuated itself [into the cloisters] under the guise of philosophy. This is a common and well-known fact in all the monastic orders.⁴³ Others, becoming cognizant of their inadequate grounding in philosophy, have departed to Salerno or to Montpellier,⁴⁴ where

³⁶ Ecclesiastes, i, 2; xii, 8.

³⁷ James, iv, 6; I Peter, v, 5.

³⁸ *formam discipuli*, the disciple's or pupil's form, class, or bench.

³⁹ Jeremiah, xlvi, 29.

⁴⁰ Because these monks professed to follow the Rule of St. Benedict.

⁴¹ Matthew, vii, 15.

⁴² *pullam uestem*, the blackish or dark-colored habit of the monks.

⁴³ Literally: in every [monastic] habit and [form of] profession.

⁴⁴ Salerno was the site of a famous old medical school, while Montpellier had a growing medical school of more recent origin.

they have become medical students. Then suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, they have blossomed forth as the same kind of physicians that they had previously been philosophers. Stocked with fallacious empirical rules [for handling various cases] they return after a brief interval to practice with sedulity what they have learned. Ostentatiously they quote Hippocrates and Galen, pronounce mysterious words, and have [their] aphorisms ready to apply to all cases. Their strange terms serve as thunderbolts which stun the minds of their fellow men. They are revered as omnipotent, because this is what they boast and promise. However, I have observed that there are two rules that they are more especially prone to recall and put into practice. The first is from Hippocrates (whom they here misinterpret): "Where there is indigence, one ought not to labor."⁴⁵ Verily they have judged it unfitting, and foreign to their profession, to attend the needy and those who are either loath or unable to pay the full price, if it be only for their words. Their second maxim does not come, as I recollect, from Hippocrates, but has been added by enterprising doctors: "Take [your fee] while the patient is in pain."⁴⁶ When a sick person is tortured by suffering, it is a particularly auspicious time for demanding one's price. For then the anguish of the illness and the avarice of the one affecting to cure it collaborate. If the patient recovers, the credit will go to the doctor, whereas if he grows worse, the medico's reputation will still be enhanced, since he has already predicted such an outcome to his intimates. The wily physician has, indeed, made it impossible for his predictions not to be realized. To one he has foretold that the patient's health will be restored; while to another he has declared that it is impossible for the sick man to recover. If a patient has the good fortune to survive, he does so easily, except so far as the bungling medico may delay his recovery. But if he is fated to succumb, then, as Sollius Sidonius remarks, "he is killed with full rites."⁴⁷ How could it be otherwise? Can the secret and hidden recesses⁴⁸ of nature be charted

⁴⁵ Hippocrates, *Aph.*, ii, 16. What Hippocrates actually says is that a fasting man should not labor.

⁴⁶ *Dum dolet accipe*; cf. *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* (ed. Daremberg), p. 252.

⁴⁷ Sollius Sidonius, *Ep.*, ii, 12, § 3.

⁴⁸ *cuniculos*, subterranean caves or passages, depths or innermost recesses.

by one who is utterly ignorant of all philosophy? Can they be understood by one who knows neither how to speak correctly, nor to comprehend what is written or spoken? There are practically as many sets of terminology as there are branches of learning, and often authors differ as much in their use of language as they do in physical appearance. One man may resemble another; but not even twins are identical in all respects. Occasionally one voice sounds like another, but not even sisters, nor, if you will, the Muses themselves, have exactly the same tone of speech. Although voices may harmonize, they yet remain distinct, individual entities, and this variety, when properly blended in due proportion, provides a symphony, which is, in a way, more welcome to the ear than would have been the case had similarity meant sameness. Tongues each possess their own idioms, and everyone has his own way of expressing himself. One who fails to take cognizance of this, cannot philosophize any more easily than he could make a magpie that is parroting human words be equivalent to a man.⁴⁹ Others have, like myself, fettered themselves to the trifling concerns of court.⁵⁰ Borne along by the favor of the great, they can aspire to wealth, which they recognize is not rightfully theirs, and which they know, and admit in their own conscience, they do not deserve, no matter what they may outwardly pretend. I will not here discuss their ways, for my *Policraticus* delves into the latter at length, although it cannot hope to ferret out all their tricks, which would be beyond the powers of any mere human. Still others have, as Cornificius, gravitated to common, worldly occupations. They pay no heed to what philosophy teaches, and what it shows we should seek or shun. They have only one concern: to "Make money, by fair means, if possible, but otherwise in any way at all."⁵¹ They lend out cash at interest,⁵² alternately accumulating uneven round-numbered sums and increasing these to even multiple round numbers by their additions.⁵³ They deem nothing sordid and

⁴⁹ Cf. Persius, *Sat.*, prol., 9-10.

⁵⁰ *nugis curialibus*, the trifles of the court, or official position; cf. John's *Policraticus*.

⁵¹ Horace, *Ep.*, i, 1, 65, 66.

⁵² *fenebrem pecuniam*, money loaned at interest, or usurious money; see Suetonius, *Cal.*,

41.

⁵³ This is evidently a reference to Horace, where he speaks of "rounding off," in succession, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, and four thousand talents; cf. Horace, *Ep.*, i, 6, 34.

inane, save the straits of poverty. Wisdom's only fruit, for them, is wealth. They hold as a maxim those lines of the moral poet:

Queen Money has within her power the bestowal of both good name
and beauty,

While the Goddesses of Persuasion⁵⁴ and Charm⁵⁵ are consorts of the
man of means.⁵⁶

At the same time, of course, they do not realize he said it, for they will have none of him.

All the aforesaid fellows have emerged from this "quasi-Quadrivium,"⁵⁷ which is indispensable in their eyes, as philosophers baked over night.⁵⁸ Like Cornificius, they had come to despise not only our Trivium, but also the whole Quadrivium. Subsequently, as we have said above, they have either merged into the cloisters under the cloak of religion; or, have sought refuge in medicine, with the pretext of philosophizing and working for the common good; or have insinuated themselves into illustrious houses, behind a veil of honor, whereby they would shine and be exalted; or finally, have been sucked into the abyss of avaricious money-making,⁵⁹ pleading need and duty, but really thirsting for lucre. This is so true that, in comparison with such "proficient philosophers" (or to be more precise, "deficient philosophers"), any vulgar villain would seem but an amateur in crime.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *Suadela*: the goddess of persuasion or eloquence.

⁵⁵ *Venus*: the goddess of love, beauty, or charm.

⁵⁶ Horace, *Ep.*, i, 6, 37, 38.

⁵⁷ John here evidently refers to the four alternative pursuits mentioned above as open to students of "the Quadrivium according to Cornificius," namely: service of the Church as monks or clerics, the medical profession, official position at court, and ordinary money-making business.

⁵⁸ *repentini*, literally, all of a sudden.

⁵⁹ See Valerius Maximus, *Fact. et Dict.*, ix, 4. Also cf. Horace, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁰ *rudis ad flagitia*.

CHAPTER 5. *What great men that tribe dares defame, and why they do this.*

Master Gilbert,⁶¹ who was then chancellor at Chartres, and afterwards became the reverend Bishop of Poitiers, was wont to deride or deplore, I am not sure which, the insanity of his time. When he would observe the aforesaid individuals scurrying off to the above-mentioned studies, he used to predict that they would end up as bakers—the one occupation, which, according to him, usually received all those among his people⁶² who were unemployed and lacked any particular skill. For baking is an easy trade, subsidiary to the others, and especially suited to those who are more interested in bread than in skilled workmanship. Others, who were [real] lovers of learning,⁶³ set themselves to counteract the error. Among the latter were Master Thierry,⁶⁴ a very assiduous investigator of the arts; William of Conches,⁶⁵ the most accomplished grammarian since Bernard of Chartres;⁶⁶ and the Peripatetic from Pallet,⁶⁷ who

⁶¹ In 1137 Gilbert de la Porrée held the office of chancellor at Chartres, in which position he possibly remained until 1139. John, who was in the school at Chartres from 1137 to 1140, came to know him there, and in 1140 again sought him out in Paris, where he listened to him "on logical and divine subjects." (Cf. *Met.*, ii, 10.) Gilbert became Bishop of Poitiers in 1142, and lived until 1154. He wrote a *Liber de sex principijs*, which was appended to earlier editions of Aristotle's *Organon*, and a *Commentarium in Boethii Librum de Trinitate* (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXIV, 1255 ff.).

⁶² In Poitou.

⁶³ *litterarum*, of letters, literature, or learning.

⁶⁴ Theodoric or Thierry of Chartres, brother of Bernard of Chartres, was a teacher at Chartres when Bernard was chancellor there. Thierry may have succeeded Gilbert of Poitiers as chancellor at Chartres. Cf. Clerval, *Les Écoles de Chartres*, pp. 169 ff., 254 ff.; and *Met.*, iii, 5; iv, 24.

⁶⁵ William of Conches was a disciple of Bernard of Chartres (cf. *Met.*, i, 24). He wrote a little book called *Philosophia*, as well as the *Dragmaticon*, a work composed in dramatic style in the form of a dialogue, glosses on Plato's *Timaeus*, and a commentary on Boethius' *De Consolatione philosophiae*. William taught Henry II of England, as is evident from what he says in the preface to his *Dragmaticon*, addressed to Henry's father, Geoffrey (ed. Argentoratum, 1567, pp. 3, 4).

⁶⁶ Bernard taught at Chartres in 1115, and was chancellor there in 1124; he died in 1130. Cf. *Met.*, i, 24. See Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval Thought*, App., v, vi, vii.

⁶⁷ *Peripateticus Palatinus*, Peter Abelard.

won such distinction in logic over all his contemporaries that it was thought that he alone really understood Aristotle. But not even all these [great scholars] were able to cope with the foolish ones. They themselves became [temporarily] insane while combating insanity, and for quite a time floundered in error while trying to correct it. The fog, however, was soon dispelled. Thanks to the work and diligence of these masters, the arts regained their own, and were reinstated in their pristine seat of honor. Their popularity and good fame were even increased after their exile, as by the right of those who return home after having been held captive by the enemy.⁶⁸ Cornificius begrudged the arts their good fortune. Jealously feeling it would be a disgrace for one advanced in years to go to school, and for an old man to be shown up as but a boy in understanding, he set himself to carping on what he despaired of learning. He criticized everyone else's views, since he saw that all thought differently from himself. Even so the fox growls at the cherries⁶⁹ that he despairs of reaching, and, in the words of the rustic proverb, he "slurs as useless what he cannot have." This is the [true] explanation of the wrath, the tears,⁷⁰ and the indignation which the Cornificians have conceived against the students of the aforesaid wise men. Here is [the real reason] why they gnash their teeth and "break," as is said, "their jaw tooth"⁷¹ on the soundness of these masters. They even presume (though on the sly, because they would not dare do this openly) to extinguish those most brilliant lights of the Gauls, the brother theologians Anselm⁷² and Rudolph,⁷³ who have lent luster to Laon, and whose memory is happy and blessed.⁷⁴ They do this despite the fact that no man has with impunity wounded the aforesaid, who have displeased only heretics⁷⁵ and those enmeshed in

⁶⁸ *iure postliminii*, "the right of postliminium": the right of one returning to the Empire after having been held captive by the enemy; cf. Justinian, *Instit.*, i, 12, § 5; *Dig.*, xlix, 15, § 5; *Cod.*, viii, 50, § 19.

⁶⁹ *cerasa*, cherries; also used in lieu of grapes by Abelard, when he quotes this well-known fable in his *Invectiva in quendam ignarum dialectices* (*Opp.* ed. Cousin, I, 695).

⁷⁰ *hinc lacrimae*: Terence, *Andr.*, i, 1, 99.

⁷¹ Persius, *Sat.*, i, 115.

⁷² Anselm of Laon, teacher and dean of the school at Laon, died in 1117.

⁷³ Rudolph of Laon, brother of Anselm, was his successor in the school at Laon.

⁷⁴ *Ecclesiasticus*, xlv, 1.

⁷⁵ *hereticis*, may refer to Abelard (cf. *Hist. Cal.*, chaps. 3, 4).

wickedness. They speak plainly and in no proverbs,⁷⁶ however, about Alberic of Rheims⁷⁷ and Simon of Paris.⁷⁸ They not only deny that the followers of the latter are philosophers; they will not even admit they are clerics. They will hardly concede that they are men, but rather ridicule them as "Abraham's oxen" or "Balaamite asses,"⁷⁹ and call them by the most sarcastic and insulting names they can find. William of Champeaux,⁸⁰ according to them, is convicted of error by his own writings.⁸¹ Master Hugh of St. Victor⁸² barely escapes, being spared more in consideration of his religious habit, than out of admiration for his learning or doctrines, as they defer not to him, but to God in him. Robert Pullen,⁸³ whom all good men hold in happy memory, would be called "an ass's foal,"⁸⁴ were they not held back by their deference for the Apostolic See, which raised this former scholastic doctor⁸⁵ to the office of chancellor. Indeed, in order that his sect may have greater license to slander others, the father of the [Cornifician] family externally professes the religious life (though the Lord knows and will judge his [secret] intentions). He

⁷⁶ Cf. John, xvi, 29.

⁷⁷ John here apparently refers to that Alberic of Rheims mentioned by Abelard in his *Hist. Cal.*, chaps. 4, 9; by St. Bernard in his *Ep.*, 13; and by John himself in his *Hist. Pont.*, chap. 8. Alberic for some time directed the schools of Rheims as archdeacon. He was promoted to the archbishopric of Bourges in 1137; and died in 1141. He was a disciple of William of Champeaux, and an opponent of Abelard.

⁷⁸ *Symone Parisiense* may very well be the same as the *Simon Pexiacensis*, who lectured on theology at Paris, according to John, *Met.*, ii, 10.

⁷⁹ Cf. Genesis, xxi, 27.

⁸⁰ William of Champeaux was a disciple of Anselm of Laon, and an archdeacon of the church of Paris. He went to the old hermitage of St. Victor in the vicinity of Paris in 1108. There, after taking the canonical habit, he founded the famous monastery of that name, where Hugh of St. Victor later became a teacher. The story of the controversy between William and Abelard, at one time William's disciple, is told in Abelard's *Hist. Cal.*, chap. 2. William was consecrated Bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne in 1113, blessed St. Bernard as Abbot of Clairvaux in 1115, and died in 1122.

⁸¹ Cf. Abelard, *Hist. Cal.*, chap. 2.

⁸² Hugh of St. Victor, a famous theologian and scholar, was canon in the Abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles, and afterward canon and teacher in the Abbey of St. Victor at Paris. He died in 1141.

⁸³ Robert Pullen was archdeacon of Rochester from 1138 to 1143. St. Bernard, in his *Ep.*, 205 (in Migne, *P.L.*, CLXXXII, 372), writing to the Bishop of Rochester, says: "I have urged Robert Pullen to spend some time in Paris, because of his recognized sound teaching." Robert was called to Rome in 1144, where he became a cardinal, and held the office of chancellor until 1146. Cf. *Met.*, ii, 10.

⁸⁴ *filius subiugalis*, literally a "foal used to the yoke." See Matthew, xxi, 5, where this refers to a young ass (*pullus asine*). This is evidently a play on Robert's cognomen, *Pullus* or Pullen.

⁸⁵ Or: Master of the Schools.

has cultivated the friendship of the Cistercians, the Cluniacs, the Premonstratensians, and others of even better reputation, to the end of acquiring reflected luster. I am resigned to suffering detraction at the hands of his breed with composure. I admit that I have studied under some of the aforesaid masters,⁸⁶ as well as under their disciples; and acknowledge that from them I have learned what little I know. For I have not taught myself as has Cornificius. I have little concern about what nonsense Cornificius caws⁸⁷ into the ears of his followers. One who will not acknowledge the author of his own progress in ungrateful and perverse. But enough of this. Disregarding the personal faults of Cornificius, let us refute his erroneous doctrine.

CHAPTER 6. *The arguments on which Cornificius bases his contention.*

In the judgment⁸⁸ of Cornificius (if a false opinion may be called a judgment), there is no point in studying the rules of eloquence, which is a gift that is either conceded or denied to each individual by nature. Work and diligence are superfluous where nature has spontaneously and gratuitously bestowed eloquence, whereas they are futile and silly where she has refused to grant it. Generally the maxim that "A person can do just as much as nature allows," is accepted as an axiom.⁸⁹ Thus prudent and reliable historians are sure that Daedalus did not really fly, for nature had denied him wings, but say, rather, that he evaded the wrath of the tyrant by quickly departing aboard a ship.⁹⁰ The device of learning precepts in order to become eloquent fails to accomplish its object. Even the

⁸⁶ Namely, Thierry of Chartres, William of Conches, Abelard, and others.

⁸⁷ *cornicetur*, apparently a pun on the name Cornificius.

⁸⁸ *sententia*, judgment, doctrine.

⁸⁹ *maximarum propositionum*, the highest propositions, first principles; cf. Boethius, *Comm. in Top. Cic.*, i (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXIV, 1051): "By the highest and greatest propositions we mean those propositions which are universal, and are so well known and evident that they need no proof, but instead themselves prove things that are in doubt."

⁹⁰ Cf. Servius, *Ad. Verg. Aen.*, vi, 14.

most diligent study of rules cannot possibly make one eloquent. The use of language and speech suffices for intercourse among fellow countrymen, whereas he who most assiduously employs his faculty of speech becomes most fluent. This is evident with the Greeks and Latins; the Gauls and Britons will also bear witness to it; nor is it otherwise among the Scythians and Arabs. Everywhere it is true that "Practice makes perfect,"⁹¹ and "Persevering application surmounts all obstacles,"⁹² for assiduous devotion to an art produces the master workman. Even though rules may be of some help in acquiring eloquence, still they involve more trouble than they are worth, and the return never compensates for the investment. The Greeks and Hebrews use their languages to advantage without bothering about rules; and the peoples of Gaul and Britain, as well as others, learn how to talk in their nurses' arms [long] before they receive instruction from doctors who occupy official chairs. The way one talks in manhood often smacks of the manner of speech of one's nurse. Sometimes the [most] strenuous efforts of teachers cannot extricate one from habits imbibed at a tender age. How well and effectively do all the peoples speak in the languages they have been granted by divine providence! Did they first have to await the art of verbal expression⁹³ or the rules of eloquence? Finally [Cornificius argues], what can eloquence and philosophy possibly have in common? The former relates to language, but the latter seeks after, investigates, and applies itself to learning the ways of wisdom, which it sometimes efficaciously apprehends by its study. Clearly the rules of eloquence confer neither wisdom nor love of wisdom. More often than otherwise, they are not even helpful for the acquisition of wisdom. Philosophy (or wisdom, its object) is concerned not with words, but with facts. From what has been said [if we are to believe Cornificius], it is evident that philosophy eliminates the rules of eloquence from its activities.

⁹¹ *usus magistrum reddit*; cf. Cicero, *De Orat.*, i, 4, § 15.

⁹² Vergil, *Georg.*, i, 145.

⁹³ *artem orationis*, the art of speech, verbal or oral expression, oratory or rhetoric.

CHAPTER 7. *Praise of Eloquence.*

The foolish flock of Cornificians caws away⁹⁴ (in a language all their own), evidencing that they have contemned every rule of speech. For, as they themselves inform us, they cannot simultaneously take care to make sense and also to worry about the troublesome agreement of tenses and cases. We refrain from comment. The sect may still perceive the truth, even while it is lying, but this condition surely cannot endure. A man who is a liar in word and spirit will come to believe the falsehood he peddles. According to the Cornificians, "Rules of eloquence are superfluous, and the possession or lack of eloquence is dependent on nature." What could be farther from the truth? What is eloquence but the faculty of appropriate and effective verbal expression?⁹⁵ As such, it brings to light and in a way publishes what would otherwise be hidden in the inner recesses of man's consciousness.⁹⁶ Not everyone who speaks, nor even one who says what he wants to in some fashion, is eloquent. He alone is eloquent who fittingly and efficaciously⁹⁷ expresses himself as he intends. This appropriate effectiveness⁹⁸ postulates a faculty (so called from facility), to follow our wont of imitating the concern of the Stoics about the etymologies of words as a key to easier understanding of their meanings. One who can with facility and adequacy verbally express his mental perceptions is eloquent. The faculty of doing this is appropriately called "eloquence." For myself, I am at a loss to see how anything could be more generally useful: more helpful in acquiring wealth, more reliable for winning favor, more suited for gaining fame, than is eloquence. Nothing, or at least hardly anything, is to be preferred to this [precious] gift of nature and grace.

⁹⁴ *Cornicator*, above, chap. 5.

⁹⁵ Literally: "of fittingly saying what our mind wants to express"; cf. Cicero, *De Orat.*, i, 6, § 21, *passim*.

⁹⁶ Literally: "the heart," as the supposed seat of consciousness.

⁹⁷ *commode*, fittingly, appropriately, and effectively.

⁹⁸ *commoditas*, fitness, appropriate effectiveness, easy adequacy.

Virtue and wisdom, which perhaps, as Victorinus believes,⁹⁹ differ in name rather than in substance, rank first among desiderata, but eloquence comes second. Third is health, and after this, in fourth place, the good will of one's associates and an abundance of goods, to provide the material instruments of action. The moralist lists things to be desired in this order, and aptly epitomizes the sequence:

What more could a fond nurse wish for her sweet charge,
Than that he be wise and eloquent,
And that friends, fame, health, good fare,
And a never failing purse be his without stint? ¹⁰⁰

If man is superior to other living beings in dignity because of his powers of speech and reason, what is more universally efficacious and more likely to win distinction, than to surpass one's fellows, who possess the same human nature, and are members of the same human race, in those sole respects wherein man surpasses other beings? Moreover, while eloquence both illumines and adorns men of whatever age, it especially becomes the young. For youth is in a way to attract favor so that it may make good the potentialities of its natural talent.¹⁰¹ Who are the most prosperous and wealthy among our fellow citizens? Who the most powerful and successful in all their enterprises? Is it not the eloquent? As Cicero observes "Nothing is so unlikely that words cannot lend an air of probability; nothing is so repulsive and rude that speech cannot polish it and somehow render it attractive, as though it had been remade for the better."¹⁰² He who despises such a great boon [as eloquence] is clearly in error; while he who appreciates, or rather pretends to appreciate it, without actually cultivating it, is grossly negligent and on the brink of insanity.

⁹⁹ Victorinus, *In Lib. I de Inventione* (in *Opera Ciceronis*, ed. Orellius, V, 3).

¹⁰⁰ Horace, *Ep.*, i, 4, 8-11.

¹⁰¹ Or: For youth attracts favor and so makes good its claim to intellectual distinction.

¹⁰² Cicero, *Paradox.*, praef., § 3.

CHAPTER 8. *The necessity of helping nature by use and exercise.*

The Cornificians argue that nature herself gratuitously grants eloquence to anyone who ever comes to possess it, whereas she arbitrarily and irrevocably refuses and denies it to those fated never to become eloquent. They conclude that efforts to acquire eloquence are useless or superfluous. Why, therefore, oh most learned Cornificians, do you not understand¹⁰³ all languages? Why do you not at least know Hebrew, which, as we are told, mother nature gave to our first parents and preserved for mankind until human unity was rent by impiety, and the pride which presumed to mount to heaven by physical strength and the construction of a tower, rather than by virtue, was leveled in a babbling chaos of tongues?¹⁰⁴ Why do not the Cornificians speak this language, which is more natural than the others, having been, so to speak, taught by nature herself? Nature is, according to some (although it is not easy to explain this definition)¹⁰⁵ "a certain genitive¹⁰⁶ force, implanted in all things, whereby they can act or be the recipients of action."¹⁰⁷ It is called "genitive," both because everything obtains a nature as a result of being brought into existence, and because this nature is for each being its principle of existence. Everything derives its suitability for this or for that form its composition. This is true whether a thing is composed of what are known as parts; or its composition consists in a union of matter and form, as with simple things that do not admit of an assemblage of parts; or its manner of composition is a consequence solely of the decree of the divine goodness. The latter [the divine decree] is verily "first nature," according to Plato, who, as Victorinus and many

¹⁰³ *peritiam . . . habetis*, have a practical knowledge or mastery of.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Augustine, *De C.D.*, xvi, 11.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Cicero, *De Inv.*, i, 24, § 34; and Victorinus, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ *genitiua*, genitive, innate or inborn; also dynamic, begetting or originating.

¹⁰⁷ *facere uel pati*.

others attest, asserted that the divine will is the surest nature of all things, since created nature flows from this fountain, and the activities of all things can ultimately be traced back to God.¹⁰⁸ We exclude, of course, corruption and sin, whereby nature degenerates from its original state. That force which is originally implanted in each and every thing and constitutes the source of its activities or aptitudes is a nature, but a created one. I believe that other definitions [of nature] found among authors generally refer to created nature. Even that "master artisan, fire," which produces visible effects in an invisible way,¹⁰⁹ is created; although some, begging leave of Aristotle¹¹⁰ and Chalcidius,¹¹¹ doubt that it is a nature.¹¹² I further believe that the principle of movement as such¹¹³ traces back to God, and that Aristotle would not deny this. I am sure that Boethius would agree, since he does not deny that what can act or be acted upon is created [nature].¹¹⁴ But the specific differences that provide forms for every thing either come from Him by Whom all things have been made, or they are nothing at all. There are also other descriptions of nature, but anything else that is postulated by a Platonist must be either nothing at all, or a work of God.¹¹⁵ For the present, however, let us use the first definition, which seems best suited for our purpose. We will grant that the genitive force originally implanted in things is powerful and effective. But, certainly, just as it can be canceled or hindered by defects, so it can, on the other hand, be restored or helped by aids. It is not uncommon to hear children, in their prattle, remark that one lacks the use of a given natural ability which he otherwise possesses. An animal that naturally has leg locomotion is sometimes crippled, whereas one who is by nature two-footed, often lacks either or both of his feet. Care is accordingly not superfluous. Rather, it assists nature, and makes easier something that is already possible in one way or another.

¹⁰⁸ Victorinus, *In Lib. I de Inv.* (Cicero, *Opp.*, ed. Orell., V, 70).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ See Boethius, *Contra Eut. et Nest.*, chap. i (ed. Peiper, p. 190).

¹¹¹ Cf. Chalcidius, *Comm. in Tim. Plat.*, §§ 23, 323.

¹¹² *naturam*, a nature, or simply nature (in general).

¹¹³ *principium motus secundum se*; cf. Boethius, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁴ Boethius, *op. cit.* (ed. Peiper, p. 189).

¹¹⁵ *aut de numero rerum tollendum est aut diuinis operibus ascribendum*, literally: is either to be separated from the number of things or ascribed to the divine works.

Socrates, we are told,¹¹⁶ was naturally wanton¹¹⁷ and overly susceptible to women¹¹⁸ (to use history's own word).¹¹⁹ But he subdued and controlled his passionate nature, which he corrected by philosophy and the exercise of virtue. They say that Scaurus Rufus was far from naturally bright, but that by assiduously employing his meager natural talents, he became so accomplished that he even called Cicero himself "a barbarian."¹²⁰ If [more] examples were adduced, it would everywhere be apparent that, even where nature is sluggish, it is not unreasonable to apply oneself, and that even though natural endowment might have been more effective in a given case, diligence is not futile as though it were wasted. Although frequently nature is a dominant factor, and has greater proclivity in one or in another person,¹²¹ still, just as natural ability easily deteriorates when neglected, so it is strengthened by cultivation and care.

The question is raised whether a poem¹²² is due to nature or art;
 But I neither see what study can do in the absence of natural talent,
 Nor what natural talent can accomplish without cultivation,
 So much does one demand¹²³ the assistance of the other, and so closely
 do they coöperate.¹²⁴

Although the gifts of nature are definitely helpful, they are never or rarely so effective that they are fully realized without study. Nothing is so strong and robust that it cannot be enfeebled by neglect,¹²⁵ nothing so well constructed that it cannot be razed. On the other hand, diligent application can build up and preserve the lowest

¹¹⁶ Cf. Cicero, *De Fato*, 5, § 10.

¹¹⁷ *petulcus*, inclined to butt with the horns, wanton.

¹¹⁸ *muliebrosus* (from *mulier*), overly affectionate toward women, or lascivious regarding women.

¹¹⁹ Namely, to quote the very word used in the story itself.

¹²⁰ *Allobroga*, literally: an Allobrogian, a member of a warlike people of Gaul; a barbarian. Cf. Juvenal, *Sat.*, vii, 213, though Juvenal here has "that Rufus, whom they have so often called 'the Allobrogian Cicero.'"

¹²¹ This may mean either: "in one or the other respect," or "in one or the other person."

¹²² *carmen*, song, poem.

¹²³ *poscit* should be substituted here for *possit* in the Webb edition. Cf. MSS C, B, A, as well as the text of Horace.

¹²⁴ Horace, *A.P.*, II, 408-411.

¹²⁵ *diligentia* in the Migne and Webb editions is evidently a mistake for *negligentia*; cf. MSS C, B, A.

degree of natural talent. If nature is propitious, it should be industriously cultivated, rather than neglected, so that its fruits may be readily harvested. On the other hand, if nature is unbenign, it should still be nursed even more carefully, so that, with the aid of virtue, it may more happily and gloriously grow strong.

CHAPTER 9. *That one who attacks logic is trying to rob mankind of eloquence.*¹²⁶

Who has ever, by nature's gift alone, and without study, had the privilege of being most eloquent in all tongues, or even in only one language? If it is good to be eloquent, surely it is better to be very eloquent. The degrees of comparison are not here in inverse ratio to the good proposed, as with "fluent" and "extremely fluent,"¹²⁷ where the positive term connotes wisdom and eloquence, but wisdom diminishes, and the flow of speech swells to a flood, in proportion as the comparison increases. So [at least] some grammarians have taught. Although some of the arts pertaining to and imparting the power of eloquence are natural, still that art [of eloquence] which is practically as we would want it cannot be known by nature since it is not natural. For it is not the same among all [peoples]. It is imprudent to expect of nature, without human assistance, that which is chiefly the work of man. While this [Cornifician] sect does not condemn eloquence, which is necessary to everyone and approved by all, it holds that the arts which promise eloquence are useless. The Cornificians do not propose to make everyone mute, which would be impossible and inexpedient. Rather, they would do away with logic. The latter, according to them, is the fallacious profession of the verbose, which dissipates the natural talents of many persons, blocks the gateway to philosophical studies, and excludes both sense and success from all undertakings.

¹²⁶ *homines enititur elingues facere.*

¹²⁷ *disertus . . . aut disertior, fluent or voluble.*

CHAPTER 10. *What "logic" means, and how we should endeavor to acquire all arts that are not reprobate.*

Behold, the Cornificians disclose their objective, and advance to attack logic, although, of course, they are equally violent persecutors of all philosophical pursuits. They have to begin somewhere, and so they have singled out that branch of philosophy which is the most widely known and seems the most familiar to their heretical sect. First, bear with me while we define what "logic" is. "Logic" (in its broadest sense) is "the science of verbal expression and [argumentative] reasoning."¹²⁸ Sometimes [the term] "logic" is used with more restricted extension, and limited to rules of [argumentative] reasoning.¹²⁹ Whether logic teaches only the ways of reasoning, or embraces all rules relative to words,¹³⁰ surely those who claim that it is useless are deluded. For either of these services may be proved by incontrovertible arguments, to be very necessary. The twofold meaning of "logic" stems from its Greek etymology, for in the latter language "*logos*"¹³¹ means both "word" and "reason." For the present let us concede to logic its widest meaning, according to which it includes all instruction relative to words,¹³² in which case it can never be convicted of futility. In this more general sense, there can be no doubt that all logic is both highly useful and necessary. If, as has been frequently observed (and as no one denies), the use of speech is so essential, the more concisely it [the use of speech] is taught, the more useful and certainly the more reliable will be the teaching. It is foolish to delay a long time, with much sweat and worry, over

¹²⁸ *loquendi uel disserendi ratio*, the rational system or science of speaking or verbal expression, discussion, argumentation, or reasoning; cf. Boethius, *Comm. in Top. Cic.*, I (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXVI, 750).

¹²⁹ *disserendi*, discussing, arguing, or reasoning: argumentative reasoning.

¹³⁰ Literally: "the rule of all words," or "all rules relative to words" [whether spoken or mental].

¹³¹ *logos*, here John transliterates the Greek word into Latin characters, according to his practice.

¹³² Evidently here John understands mental, as well as written or oral words.

something that could otherwise be easily and quickly expedited. This is a fault common among careless persons who have no sense of the value of time. To safeguard against this mistake, the arts of doing all things that we are to do should be taken up and cultivated. Our devotion to the arts should be augmented by the reflection that the latter stem from nature, the best of all mothers, and attest their noble lineage by the facile and successful accomplishment of their objects. I would say, therefore, that the arts of doing things we are to do¹³³ should be cultivated, with the exception of those [arts] whose purpose is evil, such as lot-reading and other mathematical methods of divination that are reprobate.¹³⁴ Arts such as the latter, which are wrong,¹³⁵ should, by the decree of sound philosophers, be banished from human society. This matter, however, is discussed more at length in our *Policraticus*.¹³⁶

CHAPTER 11. *The nature of art, the various kinds of innate abilities, and the fact that natural talents should be cultivated and developed by the arts.*

Art is a system that reason¹³⁷ has devised in order to expedite, by its own short cut, our ability to do things within our natural capabilities. Reason neither provides nor professes to provide the accomplishment of the impossible. Rather, it substitutes for the spendthrift and roundabout ways of nature a concise, direct method of doing things that are possible. It further begets (so to speak) a faculty of accomplishing what is difficult. Wherefore the Greeks also call it¹³⁸ *methodon*, that is, so to speak, an efficient plan,¹³⁹ which avoids nature's wastefulness, and straightens out her circuitous wanderings,

¹³³ *gerendorum*, "of doing things" or "of things to be done."

¹³⁴ *matheseos*, divinatory mathematics; evidently a transliteration of the Greek.

¹³⁵ Literally: contrary to our duties.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Policraticus*, ii, 19.

¹³⁷ *ratio*, reason, or a rational, scientific system or method.

¹³⁸ *eam*, evidently art, or possibly [the system of] reason.

¹³⁹ *quasi compendiarium rationem*.

so that we may more correctly and easily accomplish what we are to do. However vigorous it may be, nature cannot attain the facility of an art unless it be trained. At the same time, nature is the mother of all the arts, to which she has given reason as their nurse for their improvement and perfection. Nature first evokes our natural capacity¹⁴⁰ to perceive things, and then, as it were, deposits these perceptions in the secure treasury of our memory.¹⁴¹ Reason then examines, with its careful study, those things which have been perceived, and which are to be, or have been, commended to memory's custody. After its scrutiny of their nature, reason pronounces true and accurate judgment concerning each of these (unless, perchance, it slips up in some regard). Nature has provided beforehand these three factors [natural capacity, memory, and reason] as both the foundations and the instruments of all the arts. Natural ability (according to Isidore) is "an immanent¹⁴² power infused into one's soul by nature."¹⁴³ This description seems to mean that nature has endowed the soul with a certain force, which either constitutes or at least evokes the initial [and fundamental] activity of the soul in its investigations. Natural talent is said to be "immanent" inasmuch as it has need of nothing else as a prerequisite, but precedes and aids all subsequent [abilities]. In our acquisition of [scientific] knowledge, investigation is the first step, and comes before comprehension, analysis, and retention. Innate ability, although it proceeds from nature, is fostered by study and exercise. What is difficult when we first try it, becomes easier after assiduous practice, and once the rules for doing it are mastered, very easy, unless languor creeps in, through lapse of use or carelessness, and impedes our efficiency. This, in short, is how all the arts have originated: Nature, the first fundamental, begets the habit and practice of study, which proceeds to provide an art, and the latter, in turn, finally furnishes the faculty whereof we speak. Natural ability is accordingly effective. So, too, is exercise. And memory likewise, is effective, when employed by

¹⁴⁰ *ingenium*, natural or innate capacity, native ability or talent.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Cicero, *De Orat.*, i, 5, § 18.

¹⁴² *per se valens*, effective of itself, immanent.

¹⁴³ John evidently refers here to Hugh of St. Victor (*Erud. Did.*, iii, 8, in Migne, *P.L.*, CLXXVI, 771), rather than to Isidore; cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, x, § 122.

the two aforesaid. With the help of the foregoing, reason waxes strong, and produces the arts, which are proportionate to [man's] natural talents. There are three kinds of these natural capacities [or personalities], as old Bernard of Chartres used to remind his listeners. The first flies, the second creeps, the third takes the intermediate course of walking. The flying one flits about, easily learning, but just as quickly forgetting, for it lacks stability. The creeping one is mired down to earth, and cannot rise, wherefore it can make no progress. But the one that goes to neither extreme [and walks], both because it has its feet on the ground so it can firmly stand, and because it can climb, provides prospect of progress, and is admirably suited for philosophizing. Nature, I believe, has provided in the latter a basis for the arts. For study enhances its effectiveness. "Study" (according to Cicero) "is the diligent and vigorous application of one's mind to the determined accomplishment of something."¹⁴⁴ Memory is, as it were, the mind's treasure chest, a sure and reliable place of safe-deposit for perceptions. Reason, on its part, is that power of the soul which examines and investigates things that make an impression on the senses or intellect. A dependable judge of better things, reason has, after estimating similarities and differences, finally established art, to be, as it were, a circumscribed science of unlimited things. As unlimited names end in "a," the names of the arts terminate in the feminine article, except those which reason has distinguished by some designation of their specific property. Species are unlimited, but reason has circumscribed them, so that every species has a genus. Numbers are unlimited, but reason has classified all of them as either odd or even. Consider an example to illustrate the origin of an art.¹⁴⁵ The first disputation developed by chance, and the practice of disputing grew with repetition. Reason then perceived the form of disputation, the art of this activity. This art, on being cultivated, conferred a corresponding faculty. The mother of the arts is nature, to despise whose progeny amounts to insulting their parent. Natural ability should accordingly be diligently cultivated. At the same time, study should be moderated by recreation, so that while one's natural

¹⁴⁴ Cicero, *De Inv.*, i, 25, § 36.

¹⁴⁵ . . . *et ut duo dicitur, liquido comprobetur exemplo . . .*, *duo* in the Webb edition is a misprint for *quod*; cf. MSS C, B, A.

ability waxes strong with the former, it may be refreshed by the latter. A certain very wise man (whom I thank for his statement) has said: "While innate ability, proceeds from nature, it is fostered by use and sharpened by moderate exercise, but it is dulled by excessive work." If natural ability is properly trained and exercised, it will not only be able to acquire the arts, but will also find direct and expeditious short cuts for the accomplishment of what would otherwise be naturally impossible, and will enable us quickly to learn and teach everything that is necessary or useful.

CHAPTER 12. *Why some arts are called "liberal."*

While there are many sorts of arts, the first to proffer their services to the natural abilities of those who philosophize are the liberal arts. All of the latter are included in the courses of the Trivium¹⁴⁶ and Quadrivium.¹⁴⁷ The liberal arts are said to have become so efficacious among our ancestors, who studied them diligently, that they enabled them to comprehend everything they read, elevated their understanding to all things, and empowered them to cut through the knots of all problems possible of solution. Those to whom the system of the Trivium has disclosed the significance of all words, or the rules of the Quadrivium have unveiled the secrets of all nature, do not need the help of a teacher in order to understand the meaning of books and to find the solutions of questions. They [the branches of learning included in the Trivium and Quadrivium] are called "arts" [either] because they delimit [*artant*]¹⁴⁸ by rules and precepts; or from virtue, in Greek known as *ares*,¹⁴⁹ which strengthens minds to apprehend the ways of wisdom; or from reason, called

¹⁴⁶ Namely, grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric.

¹⁴⁷ Namely, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

¹⁴⁸ *artant*, they delimit, circumscribe, compress.

¹⁴⁹ *ares*, evidently for ἀρετή, -ῆς. Cf. Donatus, *Commentum Terenti* (ed. P. Wessner, i, 1, 3, and note)

*arso*¹⁵⁰ by the Greeks, which the arts nourish and cause to grow.¹⁵¹ They are called "liberal," either because the ancients took care to have their children¹⁵² instructed in them; or because their object is to effect man's liberation,¹⁵³ so that, freed from cares, he may devote himself to wisdom. More often than not, they liberate us from cares incompatible with wisdom. They often even free us from worry about [material] necessities, so that the mind may have still greater liberty to apply itself to philosophy.

CHAPTER 13. *Whence grammar gets its name.*

Among all the liberal arts, the first is logic, and specifically that part of logic which gives initial instruction about words. As has already been explained,¹⁵⁴ the word "logic" has a broad meaning, and is not restricted exclusively to the science of argumentative reasoning. [It includes] Grammar [which] is "the science of speaking and writing correctly—the starting point of all liberal studies."¹⁵⁵ Grammar is the cradle of all philosophy, and in a manner of speaking, the first nurse of the whole study of letters.¹⁵⁶ It takes all of us as tender babes, newly born from nature's bosom. It nurses us in our infancy, and guides our every forward step in philosophy. With motherly care, it fosters and protects the philosopher from the start to the finish [of his pursuits]. It is called "grammar" from the basic elements of writing and speaking. *Grama* means a letter or line,¹⁵⁷ and

¹⁵⁰ *arso*, to what Greek word meaning "reason" John here refers, the translator does not know.

¹⁵¹ See Isidore's *Etym.*, i, 1, § 2, 5, § 2; Cassiodorus, *De Artibus*, praef. (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXX, 1151); Donatus, *In Ter. Andr.*, i, 1, 4; and St. Augustine, *De C.D.*, iv, 21.

¹⁵² *liberos*

¹⁵³ *libertatem.*

¹⁵⁴ *Met.*, i, 10.

¹⁵⁵ Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 5, § 1.

¹⁵⁶ Literally: of the whole study of literature, letters, or learning.

¹⁵⁷ For this part of John's discussion, see Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 5, § 1; as well as Macrobius, *In Somn. Scrip.*, i, 5, § 7.

grammar is "literal," since it teaches letters, that is, both the symbols which stand for simple sounds, and the elementary sounds represented by the symbols. It is also [in a way] linear. For in augmenting size, the length of lines is fundamental, and, as it were, the basic dimension of plane surfaces and solids. So also this branch, which teaches language,¹⁵⁸ is the first of the arts to assist those who are aspiring to increase in wisdom. For it introduces wisdom both through ears and eyes by its facilitation of verbal intercourse. Words admitted into our ears knock on and arouse our understanding.¹⁵⁹ The latter (according to Augustine) is a sort of hand of the soul, able to grasp and to perceive.¹⁶⁰ Letters, that is written symbols, in the first place represent sounds. And secondly they stand for things, which they conduct into the mind through the windows of the eyes. Frequently they even communicate, without emitting a sound, the utterances of those who are absent.¹⁶¹ This art [grammar] accordingly imparts the fundamental elements of language, and also trains our faculties of sight and hearing. One who is ignorant of it [grammar] cannot philosophize any easier than one who lacks sight and hearing from birth can become an eminent philosopher.

CHAPTER 14. *Although it is not natural, grammar imitates nature.*

Since grammar is arbitrary and subject to man's discretion,¹⁶² it is evidently not a handiwork of nature. Although natural things are everywhere the same, grammar varies from people to people. However, we have already seen that nature is the mother of the arts.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Literally: which educates the tongue.

¹⁵⁹ *intellectum*.

¹⁶⁰ Whence John obtains this description, which he attributes to St. Augustine, is undetermined.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 3, § 1.

¹⁶² *ad placitum sit*: is according to our [human] will, pleasure, or discretion; is arbitrary.

¹⁶³ *Met.*, i, 11.

While grammar has developed to some extent, and indeed mainly, as an invention of man, still it imitates nature,¹⁶⁴ from which it partly derives its origin. Furthermore, it tends, as far as possible, to conform to nature in all respects. Thus it has, at nature's bidding, limited the number of elementary vowel-sounds to five¹⁶⁵ among all peoples, even though with many [peoples] the number of written symbols may be greater.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, our friend Tenred,¹⁶⁷ a grammarian who has more real scientific knowledge than he has been given credit for, has demonstrated that the number of elementary sounds is even greater. According to him, if one carefully notes the differences of vowel sounds, one will observe that they are seven. Among the consonants, nature has likewise formed various semi-vowels and mutes, as well as simple and double consonants; whose differences cannot remain hidden from one who observes mouths modulating sounds according to the marvelous laws of nature, and carefully estimates the vocal quality¹⁶⁸ of these sounds. The very application of names, and the use of various expressions, although such depends on the will of man, is in a way subject to nature, which it probably imitates [at least] to some modest extent.¹⁶⁹ In accordance with the divine plan, and in order to provide verbal intercourse in human society, man first of all named those things which lay before him, formed and fashioned by nature's hand out of the four elements or from matter and form, and so distinguished that they could be discerned by the senses of rational creatures and have their diversity designated by names as well as by properties. Hence it is that (as Boethius observes)¹⁷⁰ one entity is called "man," another "wood," a third "stone," names being, so to speak, stamped on all substances. Also, since there are numerous differences among given substances, some quantitative and some qualitative, some accidental and some from things more intimately connected with them and

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Ad Herennium de arte rhetorica*, iii, 22, § 36, erroneously attributed to Cicero.

¹⁶⁵ Namely, *a, e, i, o, u*.

¹⁶⁶ Thus among the Greeks, *ε* is distinct from *η* and *ο* from *ω*.

¹⁶⁷ Tenredus: Webb is of the opinion that this refers to Tenred of Dover, concerning whom, see the Prolegomena to Webb's edition of the *Met.*, pp. xx-xxi, and note to p. 33.

¹⁶⁸ Literally: force, power.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Abelard in his *Dialectica* (*Ouvr. Inéd.*, p. 487) and in his *Theol. Christiana*, iii (*Opp.*, ed. Cousin, II, 481; and in Migne, *P.L.*, CLXXVIII, 1245).

¹⁷⁰ Boethius, *Comm. I in Arist. de Interpr.*, i, 2 (ed. Meiser).

pertaining to their essence,¹⁷¹ names to express such differences have been invented so that they can be added to substantive names [nouns]. These [adjectives] in a way depict the force and nature of nouns in the same way that the properties of substances indicate their differences. Just as accidents provide raiment and form for substances, so, with due proportion, adjectives perform a similar function for nouns. And that the devices of reason may cleave even more closely to nature, since the substance of a thing is not susceptible of greater or less intensity, a noun does not admit of degrees of comparison. Neither do words referring to substantial differences [admit of degrees of comparison], despite the fact that they are adjectival, since they denote substantial qualities. Nor do things added to substances in the category of quantity [admit of degrees of comparison], inasmuch as a given quantity cannot become greater or less and yet remain itself.¹⁷² In fine, just as accidents alone, though not all accidents, can be increased or diminished, so only adjectives denoting accidents, though not all such [adjectives], can be compared. Upon reflection, one sees that this imitation of nature also maintains in other parts of speech, as well as in nouns. Since a substance presented to our senses or intellect cannot exist without some movement,¹⁷³ whereby it undergoes temporal change by acting or being acted upon, verbs have been invented to denote the changes occurring in things acting or being acted upon in time. Also, since there is no movement independent of time, there cannot be a verb without designation of its tense.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, as movement is not always uniform, but has, so to speak, several different shades, and action or being the recipient of action occurs in diverse places and ways, as well as at various times, adverbs have evolved for the purpose of expressing differences in motion, and serve the same function for verbs as adjectives do for nouns. Moreover, is not the fact that some verbs do not have certain tenses, as meditative and inchoative verbs lack a preterite, since the deliberation concerning future action ex-

¹⁷¹ *adesse conducunt*, whose presence is beneficial; or which are conducive to their existence or essence.

¹⁷² Cf. Aristotle, *Cat.*, 6, 6^a, 19-26: "One thing cannot be two cubits long to a greater degree than another."

¹⁷³ *motus*, movement or change.

¹⁷⁴ Boethius, *Comm. I in Arist. de Interpr.*, i, 3 (ed. Meiser).

tends over some time and the things undertaken are not immediately accomplished, is not this a clear footprint of nature impressed on [the devices of] human reason?

CHAPTER 15. *That adjectives of secondary application should not be copulated with nouns of primary application,¹⁷⁵ as in the example "a patronymic horse."*

When we proceed to a consideration of the origin of the secondary application, queen nature's authority is likewise apparent, though not so clearly as in the foregoing instances. Man's mind first applied names to things. Then, reflecting on its own processes, it designated the names of things by further names, to facilitate the teaching of language and the communication of thoughts from one mind to another. A word which is declinable, but lacks tenses, is called a "noun"¹⁷⁶ if it signifies a substance or in a substantial way, whereas one which formally, so to speak, refers to what is present in a substance, or something along this line,¹⁷⁷ is called an "adjective." A word which denotes temporal action¹⁷⁸ (provided this is in a temporal manner) is called a "verb," and is "active" if it represents the subject as acting, "passive" if it represents the subject as being the recipient of action. Words of secondary application have originated in a way similar to that in which words of primary application were formed. Just as with nouns and adjectives of primary application, some are said to pertain to certain specific things, whereas others are, by their nature, common to several things, so, among words of secondary application, some have a singular and others a general meaning. The words "name" and "enunciation" are properly classified as nouns. When terms such as "appellative" or "categorical" are

¹⁷⁵ *secunde impositionis* . . . *prime*, second or secondary imposition, origin, or application . . . first or primary imposition, origin, or application. Cf. *Met.*, iii, 1.

¹⁷⁶ Literally: a substantive name.

¹⁷⁷ *aliquid ad imaginem eius*, something like this, apparently with reference to "what is present in a substance," something similar to something present in a substance.

¹⁷⁸ *motus*, in its broad sense, as including all movement, activity, change or action.

predicated of the former, they fulfill the function of adjectives by determining the quality of nouns. In the works of nature, it requires much greater subtlety to discern their internal constitution, for example, the simple elements, than to perceive what is presented to the senses or intellect in a composite state. And if adjectives of secondary application are not predicated of those things for which they were by their nature intended, it is close to impossible to know what they could mean. Substances are by their nature more solid than words, and the accidents of substances are likewise more substantial than those of words, since they [the accidents of substances] are more familiar and more readily perceptible by our senses and intellect.¹⁷⁹ So true is this that those who refer adjectives of secondary application to nouns of primary institution, either fail to say anything at all, or talk sheer nonsense. If one speaks of "a patronymic horse" or "hypothetical shoes," he unites terms that are incompatible. Comprehension is here precluded by the fundamental meaning of the words, rather than by a mere lack of agreement in accidentals. Although the adjectives agree sufficiently with their nouns in gender, number, and case, to join the principals signified is to jabber like an idiot, as well as to lie. Vergil has been accused of inappropriate wording¹⁸⁰ for saying *gramineo in campo*,¹⁸¹ where he should have said *graminoso in campo*,¹⁸² but he would certainly have been more at fault, and far more ridiculous, had he said *in campo cathégorico*¹⁸³ or [*in campo*] *patronomico*.¹⁸⁴ The argument of those who rely on the mere mutual agreement of accidentals is refuted by the fact that not every consonant followed by a vowel constitutes a syllable. For the juxtaposition of the consonants "i" [j] and "u" [v]¹⁸⁵ no more suffices to constitute a syllable than the copulation of adjectives of secondary application and nouns of primary origin does to provide

¹⁷⁹ *que sensui aut intellectui familiarius occurrunt.*

¹⁸⁰ *acirologie*, see Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 34, § 4; Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, iii, 3 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 394). Both Donatus and Isidore define *acrylogia* as *impropria dictio* or *non propria dictio*, faulty or inappropriate wording.

¹⁸¹ Vergil, *Aen.*, v, 287; "in a field covered with grass."

¹⁸² In a field full of grass.

¹⁸³ In a categorical field.

¹⁸⁴ In a patronymic field.

¹⁸⁵ In Latin, *i* is both the vowel *i* and a consonant equivalent to the later *j*; whereas *u* is both the vowel *u* and a consonant equivalent to the later *v*.

correct and balanced¹⁸⁶ speech. Manifestly there are two kinds of faults in speech: lying, and violating the established usages of language. Those who join adjectives of secondary application with nouns of primary application are guilty of at least the second transgression. Furthermore, it is incorrect to add pronouns of the first and second person to verbs, except for purposes of discrimination or emphasis, even though here the accidentals of speech are in sufficient agreement. I would not narrowly restrict futile¹⁸⁷ diction to redundance, as when one perchance adds to a noun an adjective that is already understood in it, for example, by saying, "The rational man walks." Rather, I would extend it to include every form of speech where the copulation of terms is pointless, and in some way falls short of fulfilling its own law. However, a verbal copulation is not futile simply because what it states is false, or because what it clarifies at one time it confuses at another. Grammatical rules do not censure lying, and even things which mean nothing to one who understands the language, may be predicated of each other. From the foregoing it is clear that we should not join adjectives of secondary application with nouns of primary application. But when adjectives are resolved into equivalent words (such as definitions), our mind does not recoil from the apposition of an equivalent term, although it would shudder on hearing the apposition of an adjective of secondary application. The statement: "The proposition is predicative," seems equally to mean that the proposition [in question] states something apodictically, that is, without qualification, and that it has a predicate term. If it be said that "the tunic is categorical," our intellect is perplexed by the incongruity of the adjective, and is probably more likely to charge that the terms have been improperly joined than to accuse one who says this of lying. If one would say, however, that "tunic," of itself, without any condition, "states something," or "has a predicate term," one's listener would straightway argue that this is false, but he would not so quickly complain of a violation of grammatical rules.¹⁸⁸ A "categorical proposition" means "a proposition having a subject and predicate"; whereas a "categori-

¹⁸⁶ Literally: equimodal.

¹⁸⁷ *nugatorie*, futile, foolish, trifling, nugatory.

¹⁸⁸ Literally: of an inappropriate copulation of terms.

cal syllogism" refers to a syllogism that consists of categorical propositions. I do not know what "a categorical horse" can possibly signify, but until convinced otherwise I will maintain that it means nothing. For I opine that something, which can never be found, is, and will always be, non-existent. A similar abuse is to say: "*Equus*"¹⁸⁹ ends in 's," and the like. The sentence: "Cato, seated between the Hill of Janus¹⁹⁰ and the first day of March, is mending the clothes of the Roman people with the number four or the number six," either is no speech at all or is more degenerate than the most foolish prattle. Talk of this sort is styled "stichology,"¹⁹¹ or "inverted speech,"¹⁹² since the words are combined contrary to the rules of language. For *sticos* means a "verse."¹⁹³ From it comes the word "distich," signifying a poem of two verses.¹⁹⁴ I have heard many persons arguing this point, and advocating diverse opinions on the question. Hence it will not be out of place to recount, nor will it perhaps be unwelcome to hear, what a Greek interpreter, who also knew the Latin language very well, told me when I was staying in Apulia. I am grateful to him, if not for the utility (though there really is some utility in such), at least for his kindness in endeavoring to enlighten his hearers. The first point of his judgment or opinion I have already mentioned: namely, that to join adjectives of secondary application with nouns of primary application is inconsequential, even according to grammatical rules. It has an incalculable latent "aphony,"¹⁹⁵ that is, lack of harmony, or (to use Quintilian's expression) *cacozugia*,¹⁹⁶ namely, lack of suitability. Such apposition, even though we may be at a loss directly to put our finger on why it is wrong, of itself [immediately] grates on the ears of those who know grammar. There are many such things that are directly repugnant, although

¹⁸⁹ Horse.

¹⁹⁰ Janiculum: one of the seven hills of Rome.

¹⁹¹ *stichyologus*, from *στίχος* (Lat. *uersus*) and *λόγος* (Lat. *sermo*).

¹⁹² *sermo inuersus*, turned about, inverted, or perverted speech.

¹⁹³ *uersus*, a verse, or a turning about.

¹⁹⁴ *uersuum*, verses; probably so called because each new verse involves a "turning about" and starting a new line.

¹⁹⁵ *aphonie*, that is, *ἀσυμφωνίας*: *asymphonia*. See Priscian, *Inst.*, viii, 1, § 4 (Keil, *G.L.*, II, 371).

¹⁹⁶ *cacozugie*; Quintilian discusses not *cacozygia*, but *cacozelia*, that is, bad or perverted affectation, in his *Inst. Or.*, viii, 6, § 73; cf. viii, 3, §§ 56 ff.

it is not so easy to point out just what is wrong with them. The like occurs with things whose good points or defects are evident. Although grammar overlooks much, it here perceives and argues that the wording is inappropriate.¹⁹⁷ It does not stop with denouncing lack of agreement in accidentals among copulated terms, but also considers absurd the application of words of secondary invention to subjects of primary origin. And absurd it actually is, since the mind becomes, as it were, deaf¹⁹⁸ on being confronted with a copulation of this kind. But what sense of hearing accurately apprehends things to which it is deaf? Are not one's words wasted when uttered to a deaf ear? Therefore, since our intellect¹⁹⁹ is, as it were, the soul's ear, as well as its hand, it derives absolutely no conception from words whose absurdity²⁰⁰ precludes understanding. However, sometimes a thing may be taken to be absurd, owing to the fact that, at the time, we are not accustomed to hearing the term employed in this unusual manner. "A formless woman"²⁰¹ means, not a woman without any figure at all, but a woman with a poor figure. Certain letters are called "mute," not because they completely lack any sound, but because they have very little sound in comparison with other letters. The joining of the terms discussed above is, however, fundamentally absurd, and not just something that sounds false or inconsonant to the listener's ear. Not everything false is absurd, even though one inquiring into the truth will condemn and reject falsehood. Some things are declared absurd by judgment of the appropriate faculties examining the quality of such statements or facts. Grammar considers absurd any incongruous joining of terms, but it does not presume to constitute itself a judge of truth. In his book *On Analogy*,²⁰² wherein he is a grammarian, Caesar declares that we must avoid whatever may appear absurd to a learned listener. "As sailors steer clear of reefs" he says, "So we should shun unusual and strange

¹⁹⁷ *acirologiam*; see above, n. 180.

¹⁹⁸ *absurda . . . obsurdescit*, evidently a play on the words *surdus*, "deaf" and *absurdus*, "absurd."

¹⁹⁹ *intellectus*, intellect, understanding, rational intuition.

²⁰⁰ Again a play on *surdus*, "deaf."

²⁰¹ *mulier informis*; see Priscian, *Inst.*, i, 3, § 10 (Keil, *G.L.*, II, 9).

²⁰² Gaius Julius Caesar wrote a work on grammar called *De Analogia*, that was much praised by his contemporaries, but it is not now extant.

words.”²⁰³ Dialectic it is which accepts only what is or seems true, and brands whatever is remote from the truth as preposterous. But dialectic does not go to the extent of estimating utility or goodness. It remains for political science²⁰⁴ to measure the latter. For political science treats of degrees of justice, utility, and goodness. Political science accordingly equally abhors whatever falls short of goodness and rightness, whether it be true or false. The like [delimitation of subject matter] is apparent in other branches of knowledge. But let us return to the explanation given by our Greek interpreter. That “Man is rational” is, in view of present reality, in a way necessary. That “Man is able to laugh”²⁰⁵ is probable. That “Man is white” is possible, but also doubtful, for its chances of being false are about equivalent to its chances of being true. That “Man is able to bray”²⁰⁶ is impossible, for this positively cannot be true. The grammarian, however, will repudiate none of these statements. For in each of them he finds his own rules observed. Rather than try to correct any of the aforesaid propositions, he alters nothing, and accepts them all without argument. The logician, however, challenges and disproves the last. For it is his function to determine truth and falsity, in view of which he considers it absurd to pay any attention to the last proposition. But now let us suppose that to the foregoing statements we add a fifth to the effect that “Man is categorical.” Forthwith the grammarian, who before admitted the doubtful, the false, and even the impossible, jumps up to condemn this as absurd. What does he give as his reason? Simply that his rules are violated: for he has declared it to be ever anathema to combine such adjectives and subjects.

²⁰³ See Gellius, *Noct. Att.*, i, 10, 4.

²⁰⁴ *ciuilis . . . scientia*, political science, political economy, the science of government and citizenship, here used as Aristotle uses the equivalent Greek word, to include ethics. Cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, ii, 15.

²⁰⁵ *risibilis*.

²⁰⁶ *rudibilis*, able to bray.

CHAPTER 16. *That adjectives of primary origin are copulated with nouns of primary²⁰⁷ application.*

It is not, however, impossible or inconsequential to reverse matters, and join adjectives of primary application with nouns of secondary origin. Nature is rich and bountiful, and liberally provides human indigence with her untold wealth, with the result that the properties of things overflow into words as our reason endeavors to make words cognate to things discussed.²⁰⁸ Speech²⁰⁹ is characterized as "hard" or "soft"; a verb²¹⁰ is referred to as "rough" or "smooth";²¹¹ and a name²¹² is called "sweet" or "bitter," even though the aforesaid qualities, strictly speaking, pertain to corporeal entities, rather than to words. Many such instances might be alleged, where nothing sounds incongruous to, or is rejected as false by a fair-minded judge or listener. Although faith is a virtue which can be possessed only by a rational creature, yet speech is called "faithful." Again, speech is condemned as "deceitful," although certainly the deceit is in the person speaking, rather than in the words. It is an accepted custom to transfer what I may call "natural" names to supply what "conceptual"²¹³ names lack; whereas the reverse process is by no means of such frequent occurrence. Transfer is sometimes made from necessity, sometimes for ornamentation, and, as the learned well know, if there be not at least the excuse of ornamentation, it becomes akin to equivocation.²¹⁴ When transfer is necessary, words may fittingly

²⁰⁷ MSS C, B, and A of the *Metalogicon* have *prime* (primary) here; this may be a slip for *secunde* (secondary). Cf. the first sentence of the text. But in favor of the present reading, see later in this chapter.

²⁰⁸ See Abelard, *Theol. Christiana* (*Opp.*, ed. Cousin, II, 481; and in Migne, *P.L.*, CLXXVIII, 1245).

²⁰⁹ *sermo*, speech, or possibly a word.

²¹⁰ *uerbum*, a verb, or possibly a word.

²¹¹ *asperum aut leue*, rough, harsh, strong, or smooth, mild, weak.

²¹² *nomen*, a name, or possibly a noun.

²¹³ *rationalium*, rational, conceptual.

²¹⁴ Cicero, *De Orat.*, iii, 38, § 155; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, viii, 6, §§ 5, 6.

be applied to many things, and may even frequently change their meaning according to their particular subject, as with words said to be predicated in an accidental manner. No one, however, will charge that this copulation of terms is improper. And even though the less proper or transferred meaning of a word may come to prevail over its original and proper meaning as a result of customary usage, still if we turn about and use the term in its original sense, it is likely that no absurdity will result. At least there will not be as much absurdity in this case as we have said takes place when adjectives that modify words²¹⁵ are conscripted to qualify things. By usage, conversion has come to be admissible in the case of terms that delimit one another by mutual predication, as with species, definition, and property. "Finite" and "infinite" are terms that have been applied to names and verbs to designate their qualities; but since these terms were originally derived from things, it is by no means unfitting for them to be brought back home from their wandering, so to speak, so that a thing may also conversely²¹⁶ be called "finite" or "infinite." The terms "universal" and "particular," although especially used to refer to words, were originally borrowed from things (for they are not of secondary application). Thus they may, without any absurdity, be referred to names that have been assigned to things. In other words, terms derived from things may revert to things; but terms invented to designate the quality of words cannot be diverted from this special application and employment to refer to the quality of things. The latter terms are something like those called "syncategorematic"²¹⁷ in Greek. The meaning of such "consignificative" terms depends on, or is estimated from, their context. When they are associated with terms of like origin, these words each aptly evoke their own proper concept. But if they are transferred to other words, they faint and lose their voice,²¹⁸ as though they had

²¹⁵ *adiectiva uerborum*, adjectives derived from, or applied to, words rather than things, i.e., adjectives of secondary application.

²¹⁶ Literally: "a convertible thing may."

²¹⁷ *syncategoremata*, "syncategorematic" [to coin a word in English] or "consignificative." See Priscian, *Inst.*, ii, 4, § 15 (Keil, *G.L.*, II, 54). Priscian tells us that all words are "syncategorematic" or "consignificative," except nouns and verbs, since the latter alone can, without help of other words, make complete sentences when combined.

²¹⁸ Literally: they wilt away or lose their voice: they lose their meaning or ability to convey a message.

been drained of their natural vigor. On hearing someone say "a patronymic horse," the grammarian²¹⁹ will at once take the person to task, and constrain him to correct his erroneous language. Or perhaps, out of deference to the speaker, he will, with the servant in the comedy, suggest: "Come now, let's have good words."²²⁰ Does not such an exhortation impute a certain defect? One who asks to hear good words, in place of those which have actually been used, evidently does not consider those which have been employed good. Otherwise he would say less rudely: "Come now, let's have better words." If one looks for mood and tense in a name [a noun], or case and comparison in a verb, the grammarian marks him as a silly sort; whence I do not believe he could adjust his powers of endurance to a student who referred to a "horse" as "patronymic." Adjectives of secondary application are so restricted by the limitations of their nature that they not only cannot be applied to the names of things, but also cannot stray far from the words for which they were invented. A proposition may correctly be called "hypothetical," and a name "patronymic"; but if we try to interchange the terms, and refer to a "hypothetical name," or a "patronymic proposition," either we are saying nothing at all, or at least we are speaking incorrectly, according to the grammarian. The supreme arbiter of speech, however, is custom. What usage condemns cannot be reinstated save by usage. Hence the poet:

Many words that are obsolete, will one day be resurrected, and many now highly esteemed will lapse from use,

If such be but the will of usage: the judge, the law, and the norm of speech.²²¹

Lawyers hold, as an accepted principle, that "Custom is the best interpreter of law."²²² Even so, the practice of those who speak correctly is the most reliable interpreter of grammatical rules. Something that one never finds in writing, or catches on the lips of those who speak correctly, and the like of which one never reads or hears,

²¹⁹ *gramaticus auditor*, the grammatical listener, a listener who knows grammar, or a grammarian on hearing this.

²²⁰ Words of the servant Davus, in Terence, *Andr.*, i, 2, 33.

²²¹ Horace, *A.P.*, 70-72.

²²² *Corpus Juris Civilis, Dig.*, i, 3, § 37.

has, I believe, already been long since condemned, or certainly has not yet been approved by grammarians. Still, not all names of primary origin can, in my estimation, be appropriately transferred in all cases, even though their general nature makes them better suited for such transfer.²²³ One often finds an instance that does not fit under the rules, and an exception to what we have said above may be uncovered. Still usage generally obtains as we have stated. This reciprocity between things and words, and words and things, whereby they mutually communicate their qualities, as by an exchange of gifts,²²⁴ is more commonly accomplished by words used in a metaphorical sense²²⁵ than by those of secondary origin.²²⁶ Although there may be particular instances which derogate from this general principle, we are speaking of what is usually the case. This force of transferred meaning, whereby properties of things are ascribed to words, and vice versa, gives birth to a certain tolerance, which permits the use of words in varying senses.²²⁷ The latter license serves the learned²²⁸ as a shortcut; yet it confounds and virtually slays the uneducated,²²⁹ preventing them from comprehending the truth. For one who wants to know the truth must weigh, with a judicious mind, even what those who speak in an obscure and faulty way are trying to say as even the latter very often speak the truth.

²²³ *transumptionis*, metalepsis: a rhetorical figure whereby a word is transferred from its own proper meaning to another sense. See Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, viii, 6, § 37.

²²⁴ Or: by mutual investiture.

²²⁵ *translatiuis sermonibus*, words used in transferred or metaphorical senses.

²²⁶ *quam his quos institutio secundaria promulgauit*. It is thought that *institutio secundaria* is here equivalent to *impositio secundaria*, both of which are practically equivalent to "second intention," a term common in later mediaeval logic. John would mean that when words of first and second intention are combined, the adjection is generally of the first intention and metaphorical. See above, for examples.

²²⁷ *indifferentiam loquendi*, impartiality, indifference, tolerance, or latitude in the use of words, whereby, e.g., words may be used with varying meanings.

²²⁸ *compositis ingeniis*, the learned, educated, prudent, broad-minded, judicious.

²²⁹ *indiscreta [ingenia]*, the uneducated, indiscrete, immature, or simple minded.

CHAPTER 17. *That grammar also imitates nature in poetry.*

Grammar also imitates nature in further respects. Thus the rules of poetry clearly reflect the ways of nature, and require anyone who wishes to become a master in this art to follow nature as his guide. [So the poet tells us:]

Nature first adapts our soul to every
 Kind of fate: she delights us, arouses our wrath,
 Or overwhelms and tortures us with woe,
 After which she expresses these emotions employing the tongue as their
 interpreter.²³⁰

So true is this [principle] that a poet must never forsake the footsteps of nature. Rather, he should strain to cleave closely to nature in his bearing and gestures, as well as in his words.²³¹

. . . If you expect me to weep, then first
 You yourself must mourn . . .²³²

Likewise, if you want me to rejoice, you yourself must first be joyful. Otherwise,

. . . If you speak your piece poorly,
 I will either drift off to sleep or will laugh at you.²³³

Consequently, we must take into account, not merely poetical feet and meters, but also age, place, and time, in addition to other circumstances, whose detailed enumeration does not suit our present purpose. Suffice it to say that all of these are products from nature's workshop. Indeed, so closely does it cleave to the things of nature that several have denied that poetry is a subdivision of grammar, and would have it be a separate art. They maintain that poetry no more belongs to grammar than it does to rhetoric, although it is related

²³⁰ Horace, *A.P.*, 108-111.

²³¹ *habitu, gestu, item uerbo.*

²³² Horace, *A.P.*, 102, 103.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 104, 105.

to both, inasmuch as it has rules in common with each. Let those who wish, argue this (for I will not extend the controversy). Begging leave of all, however, I venture to opine that poetry belongs to grammar, which is its mother and the nurse of its study. Although neither poetry nor grammar is entirely natural, and each owes most of its content to man, its author and inventor, nevertheless nature successfully asserts some authority in both. Either poetry will remain a part of grammar, or it will be dropped from the roll of liberal studies.

CHAPTER 18. *What grammar should prescribe, and what it should forbid.*

According to its traditional definition, grammar is "the science of writing and speaking in a correct manner."²³⁴ The qualification "in a correct manner" is added in order to exclude error, so that "orthography" will be observed in writing, and the authority of the [grammatical] art and usage will be respected in speaking. "Orthography," or correct writing, consists in putting every letter in its proper position, and not allowing any alphabetic character to usurp another's place or forsake its own post.²³⁵ Speaking is the articulate and literate verbal expression of our thoughts. The statement ". . . They speak by nods and signs,"²³⁶ does not refer to speech proper. One who speaks correctly, shuns the pitfalls of solecisms and barbarisms. A "barbarism" is the corruption of a civilized word,²³⁷ that is, of a Greek or Latin word.²³⁸ Use of a barbarian²³⁹ language in speaking is "barbarolexis"²⁴⁰ rather than a "barbarism." A solecism, on the

²³⁴ Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 5.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 27.

²³⁶ Ovid., *Met.*, iv, 63.

²³⁷ *dictionis non barbare*, a non-barbarous or civilized diction or word.

²³⁸ Cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 32; Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, ii, 18 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 392).

²³⁹ *barbara*, barbarian; other than Greek or Roman.

²⁴⁰ *barbarolexis*, barbarian speech or words. See Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 32, § 2; cf. Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, ii, 18 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 392).

other hand, is a corruption, not of one word, but of construction, whereby words are joined contrary to the rules of syntax.²⁴¹ A solecism may occur either from the parts of speech used, or from accidents in these parts. We have a solecism from parts of speech used when, for instance, a person substitutes one part of speech for another. An example is when one puts a preposition for an adverb, or vice versa. We also have a solecism of this kind when, while using the right part of speech, a person employs one sort of word where he should have used another. An example is when one places a word of secondary origin²⁴² where one of primary origin is really required. We may also have a solecism that is due to accidents,²⁴³ such as kinds,²⁴⁴ genders, cases, numbers, and forms²⁴⁵ [of words]. In addition, there is the metaplasma,²⁴⁶ which is found in verse. Like the barbarism in prose, the metaplasma occurs in a single word, although it is more permissible than the former, since it is used for the sake of meter. It is called a "metaplasma," or a sort of "transformation" or "deformation," because, as though on its own authority, it modifies or disfigures the form of words.²⁴⁷ There are also schemata,²⁴⁸ which we may translate as figures in wording²⁴⁹ or sense,²⁵⁰ and which comprise various forms of diction used to embellish speech.²⁵¹ Barbarisms and metaplasms occur in single words; solecisms and schemata, not in individual words, but in the joining of a number of words.²⁵² There are thus three subjects which the grammarian should master; the grammatical art, grammatical errors,

²⁴¹ See Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 33, § 1; cf. Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, ii, 19 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 393-394).

²⁴² *inventionis*, invention, origin, imposition, application.

²⁴³ Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 33, §§ 4-5; Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, ii, 19 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 393-394).

²⁴⁴ *qualitates*, kinds of words, as "proper" or "common" nouns; e.g., putting the proper noun "Dardanus" for the common noun "Dardanius." Cf. Donatus, *loc. cit.*

²⁴⁵ *figuras*, inflections. John evidently here refers to such forms as the moods, tenses, and persons of verbs. Cf. Donatus, *loc. cit.*

²⁴⁶ *metaplasma*, in Greek equivalent to *transformatio* in Latin, means a sort of transformation, deformation, or irregularity.

²⁴⁷ Concerning metaplasms, see Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 35, § 1; cf. Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, iii, 4 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 395). Some examples of metaplasms are the use of *gnato* for *nato*, *sat* for *satis*, and the like.

²⁴⁸ *scemata*; cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 36; Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, iii, 5 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 395-397).

²⁴⁹ That is, in a number of words together, as is stated in the next sentence.

²⁵⁰ *sententiis*, evidently meanings. Cf. Donatus, *loc. cit.*

²⁵¹ Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 36.

²⁵² See *ibid.*, i, 35, § 7.

and figures [of speech]. Otherwise he will find it difficult to become secure in his art, to avoid mistakes, and to imitate the graceful style of the authors. If someone who is ignorant of the aforesaid [three] subjects, writes or speaks correctly, he does so more through chance than as a result of scientific skill. The art [of grammar] is, as it were, a public highway, on which all have the right to journey, walk, and act, immune from criticism or molestation. To use faulty grammar always means that one is forsaking the proper thoroughfare. He who pursues such devious by-paths is likely either to end up at a precipice, or to become an easy target for the darts and jousts of those who may challenge what he says.²⁵³ The figure [of speech], however, occupies an intermediate position. Since it differs to some extent from both [regular grammar and grammatical error], it falls in neither category. All strive to conform to the [grammatical] art, since it is commanded, and to shun [grammatical] mistakes, since these are forbidden; but only some use figures, since the latter are [merely] permissible. Between errors, that is to say, barbarisms and solecisms, and the art [of grammar], which consists in normal good speech,²⁵⁴ stand figures and schemata. With the metaplasm, there is, for sufficient reason, some modification of a word; with the *schemata*,²⁵⁵ for due cause, some deviation from the rules of construction.²⁵⁶ According to Isidore, a figure is "an excusable departure from the rule."²⁵⁷ License to use figures is reserved for authors and for those like them, namely, the very learned. Such have understood why [and how] to use certain expressions and not use others. According to Cicero, "by their great and divine good writings they have merited this privilege,"²⁵⁸ which they still enjoy. The authority of such persons is by no means slight, and if they have said or done something, this suffices to win praise for it, or [at least] to absolve it from stigma. One who has not proved himself deserving of imita-

²⁵³ *interpellantium*, of attackers, disturbers, critics.

²⁵⁴ Literally: which is the virtue and the norm of speech.

²⁵⁵ *schemata*, that is, a figure proper.

²⁵⁶ Literally: in the context of the words.

²⁵⁷ *vitium cum ratione*, literally: a fault with reason, an excusable or rational fault. Figures are discussed by Isidore in his *Etym.*, i, 35, § 7. Texts of the *Etymologies* here differ.

²⁵⁸ Cicero, *De Off.*, i, 41, § 148.

tion by such "great and good writings" will, however, vainly try to expropriate this privilege. The excellence of their other virtues has rightly made these faults of earlier authors sweet and delectable to posterity. Whence Augustine says, in the second book of his work *On Order*: "Poets have chosen to call the solecisms and barbarisms, whereby they express themselves, and to which they are addicted, *schemata* and *metaplasmos*, preferring to change their names rather than give up these evident faults. Rob poems of the latter, and we would keenly miss these delicious condiments. But when we transfer to scenes of informal conversation and forensic discussion,²⁵⁹ who will not banish this sort of diction, and bid it be off and hide itself in the theater? Furthermore, if anyone piles up very many such expressions together, we become nauseated by the consequent rancid, ill smelling, and putrid heap.²⁶⁰ Therefore the moderating principle of good order will neither allow schemata and metaplasms to be employed everywhere, nor suffer them to be absolutely banished. And when these expressions are mixed with ordinary ones, life and color are breathed into style that would otherwise be dull and commonplace."²⁶¹ So says Augustine. Thus we find that one whose authority we have been admonished to heed,²⁶² confirms the great necessity of a knowledge of these forms of speech, which are licitly used by the more learned, and are found practically throughout the length and breadth of literature.²⁶³ Consequently one must learn to discriminate between what is said literally, what is said figuratively, and what is said incorrectly, if one is ever easily and accurately to comprehend what he reads.

²⁵⁹ Literally: free talk and the speech of the forum, market place, or law court.

²⁶⁰ Augustine, *De Ord.*, ii, 4, § 13.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* The last sentence, though its sense is from Augustine, is evidently not a direct quotation.

²⁶² *precepta* . . . *auctoritate*, enjoined, commanded, or prescribed authority.

²⁶³ *scripturarum*, writings, scriptures, literature.

CHAPTER 19. *That a knowledge of figures [of speech] is most useful.*

Grammar also regulates the use of tropes,²⁶⁴ special forms of speech²⁶⁵ whereby, for sufficient cause, speech²⁶⁶ is used in a transferred sense that differs from its own proper meaning. Examples of tropes are found in metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and the like. An enumeration of all the various kinds of tropes would be too lengthy.²⁶⁷ The employment of tropes, just as the use of schemata, is the exclusive privilege of the very learned. The rules governing tropes are also very strict, so that the latitude in which they may be used is definitely limited. For the rules teach that we may not extend figures. One who is studiously imitating the authors by using metaphors²⁶⁸ and figures, must take care to avoid crude figures that are hard to interpret. What is primarily desirable in language²⁶⁹ is lucid clarity and easy comprehensibility. Therefore schemata should be used only out of necessity or for ornamentation. Speech was invented as a means of communicating mental concepts; and figures [of speech] are admitted so far as they compensate by their utility for whatever they lack in conformity to the [rules of the grammatical] art. It is especially necessary to understand those three things which are generally most to blame for blocking comprehension of meaning, namely schemata together with rhetorical tropes; sophisms which envelop the minds of listeners in a fog of fallacies; and the various considerations which prompt the speaker or writer to say what he does, and which, when recognized, make straight the way for understanding. Indeed, as Hilary tells us, "What is said should

²⁶⁴ *tropos*

²⁶⁵ *modos locutionum.*

²⁶⁶ *sermo*, speech, diction.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 37.

²⁶⁸ *translationibus*, transfers, metaphors.

²⁶⁹ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 6, § 41.

be interpreted in the light of why it is said.”²⁷⁰ Otherwise, even in the canonical scriptures, the Fathers would be at odds, and the Evangelists themselves would be contradicting each other, if we were foolishly to judge only from the surface of their words, without considering their underlying purposes. Such procedure indicates a perverse disposition and disregard of one’s own progress. Does not Solomon, in the same book, on the same page, and even in consecutive verses, declare: “Respond not to a fool according to his foolishness, lest you become like him”; and: “Reply to the fool according to his foolishness, lest he be deluded into imagining he is wise.”²⁷¹ One should learn the rules whereby one can determine what is right and what wrong in speech. One cannot correct mistakes save by rule, and one cannot avoid pitfalls which one fails to recognize owing to one’s failure to study. Among the rules of the arts, I do not believe that there are any more useful or more compendious²⁷² than those which, in addition to taking note of the figures used by authors, clearly point out the merits and defects of their speech.²⁷³ It is a matter of [no small] wonder to me why our contemporaries have so neglected this part [of grammar], for it is very useful, and equally concise, and has been carefully treated by most writers on the art [of grammar]. Donatus,²⁷⁴ Servius,²⁷⁵ Priscian,²⁷⁶ Isidore,²⁷⁷ Cassiodorus,²⁷⁸ our Bede,²⁷⁹ and many others, have all discussed it, so that if one remains ignorant of it, this can only be attributed to negligence. Quintilian²⁸⁰ also teaches this part of the art. In fact he praises it so highly that he would say that, if one lacks it, it is doubtful whether he has the right to be called a grammarian, and certain that he cannot hope to become a master of the [grammatical] art. The meaning of words should be carefully analyzed, and one should

²⁷⁰ Hilary, *De Trin.*, iv, 14 (in Migne, *P.L.*, X, 107).

²⁷¹ Proverbs, xxvi, 4, 5.

²⁷² That is, more comprehensively concise.

²⁷³ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 5, §§ 1–54.

²⁷⁴ Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, iii, 5, 6 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 397 ff.).

²⁷⁵ Servius, *Comm. in Donatum*, near the end.

²⁷⁶ Priscian, *Inst.*, xvii, §§ 166 ff. (Keil, *G.L.*, III, 192 ff.).

²⁷⁷ Isidore, *Etym.*, ii, 21.

²⁷⁸ Cassiodorus, *De Artibus liberalibus*, chap. i (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXX, 1153).

²⁷⁹ Bede, *De Schematibus et tropis sacrae scripturae* (in Migne, *P.L.*, XC, 175 ff.).

²⁸⁰ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 5, § 7.

diligently ascertain the precise force of each and every term, both in itself and in the given context, so that one may dispel the haze of sophistries that would otherwise obscure the truth. The considerations prompting the speaker²⁸¹ may be surmised from the occasion, the kind of person he is, and the sort of listeners he has, as well as from the place, the time, and various other pertinent circumstances that must be taken into account by one who seriously seeks the truth. If one applies himself to mastering the above-suggested means of overcoming the three obstacles to understanding, not only will he be agreeably surprised by his own increased proficiency in comprehending what he reads and hears, but he will also come to be admired and respected by others.

CHAPTER 20. *With what the grammarian should concern himself.*

Grammar also studies other questions.²⁸² In addition to treating the nature of letters, syllables, and words,²⁸³ it likewise discusses metrical feet as well as the accents to be given to syllables. It even distinguishes and explains the [various] forms of accents, and teaches whether accents on syllables should be grave, acute, or circumflex. It further discriminates between punctuations, which are figures indicating a colon, a comma, or a period, that is to say, where we should make a slight, a half, or a full stop.²⁸⁴ Which may be more easily explained by calling a colon a clause, a comma a phrase, and a period a sentence²⁸⁵ comprising the verbal expression of a complete thought. Some, in order to make matters even clearer, say (whether or not their opinion is correct) that a colon is put where we commonly pause or inhale, a comma where we divide a verse as it were

²⁸¹ *ratio dicendi*, the reason of speaking, the considerations prompting the speaker.

²⁸² John's chief source in this chapter is Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 19, 20.

²⁸³ *dictionum*, of words or dictions.

²⁸⁴ *distinctio*, distinction, separation, interpunction, stop.

²⁸⁵ *periodus circuitus, circuitus* is the Latin equivalent for the Greek *περίοδος*.

in half, and a period where we conclude a complete verbal statement.²⁸⁶ There are also notations that indicate the mode of what is written, and show whether the latter is clear or obscure, certain or doubtful, and so on. However, this part of the [grammatical] art has so generally fallen into disuse that those who are most enthusiastic about learned studies justly lament and are brought to the verge of tears because the art of notations,²⁸⁷ so highly useful and effective for both comprehension and retention, has, through the prejudice or negligence of our predecessors, vanished. That such great import has existed in such tiny notations should not seem strange, for singers of music likewise indicate by a few graphic symbols numerous variations in the acuteness and gravity of tones.²⁸⁸ For which reason such characters are appropriately known as "the keys of music."²⁸⁹ If, however, the little notations we spoke of above gave access to such great science, I am surprised that our forefathers, who were so learned, were not aware of this, or that the keys to so much knowledge were lost. Seneca glibly promised to impart the art of memorization,²⁹⁰ of which I certainly wish I were a master; but as far as I know, he did not actually teach it. Tullius [Cicero] seems to have applied himself to this in his *Rhetorical Questions*,²⁹¹ but the latter are not of much help to men like me. There are extant some things, it is true, which we can scarcely apprehend, but about these we are very little concerned. On the other hand, rules concerning similar forms and inflections, etymologies, definitions of terms that need explanation, and differences,²⁹² those pointing out the faults of barbarisms, solecisms, and other grammatical errors to be avoided, those clarifying the question as to what forms of metaplasms, schemata, and tropes are permissible and ornamental, and those explain-

²⁸⁶ Cf., in addition to Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 20, also Donatus, *Art. Gram.*, i, 6 (Keil, *G.L.*, IV, 372).

²⁸⁷ *ars notaria*.

²⁸⁸ That is, in pitch.

²⁸⁹ *musice claves*, the "keys of music" here refers to musical "notes," rather than to musical "keys" as we understand them today.

²⁹⁰ Cicero relates this of a certain learned man: *De Orat.*, ii, 74, § 299; cf. *De Fin.*, ii, 32, § 104.

²⁹¹ See pseudo-Cicero, *Ad Herennium*, iii, 16 ff.

²⁹² Literally: analogies, etymologies, glosses, and differences.

ing prose, enunciating the laws of poetry, and stating cases,²⁹³ as well as the method to be followed in historical and fictional narratives,—all must be extremely advantageous. If anyone wants the definitions and forms of the above, he has but to peruse the books of the aforesaid grammarians. If all these volumes are not at hand, one may see what worth knowing he can find in particular books. For, although every one of them does not adequately treat all questions, still each is helpful to some extent. Isidore, especially, is very useful, sufficiently general, and praiseworthy for studied conciseness. If all the books of the grammarians are not available, it is still very helpful, for the interpretation of what we read, to bear in mind²⁹⁴ even this fragmentary survey.

CHAPTER 21. *By what great men grammar has been appreciated, and the fact that ignorance of this art is as much a handicap in philosophy as is deafness and dumbness.*

From what has been said, it is clear that [the function of] grammar is not narrowly confined to one subject. Rather, grammar prepares the mind to understand everything that can be taught in words. Consequently, everyone can appreciate how much all other studies depend on grammar. Some of our contemporaries apparently pride themselves on being able to babble along garrulously without benefit of this art. They regard it as useless, openly assail it, and glory in the fact that they have never studied it. But Marcus Tullius [Cicero] did not hate his son, of whom, as is evident in his letters, he insistently required the study of grammar.²⁹⁵ And Gaius Caesar wrote books *On Analogy*,²⁹⁶ conscious that, without grammar, one cannot

²⁹³ *causas*, John evidently here refers to cases or subjects occasioning discourse. Cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, ii, 5, § 7.

²⁹⁴ Literally: to have fixed in our memory.

²⁹⁵ See Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 7, § 34.

²⁹⁶ Or on like word forms in grammar. See above, n. 202. See also Quintilian, *loc. cit.*

master philosophy²⁹⁷ (with which he was thoroughly familiar) or eloquence (in which he was most proficient).²⁹⁸ Quintilian also praises this art to the point of declaring that we should continue the use²⁹⁹ of grammar and the love of reading "not merely during our school days, but to the very end of our life."³⁰⁰ For grammar equips us both to receive and to impart knowledge. It modulates our accent, and regulates our very voice so that it is suited to all persons and matters. Poetry should be recited in one way; prose in another. The governing principle in pronunciation is at one time harmony, at another rhythm, at still another the sense. The law of harmony reigns in music. Caesar, while still a boy,³⁰¹ with fine sarcasm remarked to a certain person: "If you're trying to read, you're singing, and if you're trying to sing, you're doing a miserable job."³⁰² In similar vein, Martianus, in *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, represents grammar as provided with a knife, a rod, and the ointment case carried by physicians.³⁰³ She uses the knife to prune away grammatical errors, and to cleanse the tongues of infants as she instructs them. Nursing and feeding her charges, she conducts them on to the art of philosophy, thoroughly training them beforehand so that they will not babble in barbarisms or solecisms. Grammar employs her rod to punish offenders; while with the ointment of the propriety and utility which derive from her services, she mitigates the sufferings of her patients. Grammar also guides our hand to write correctly, and sharpens our vision so that it is not nonplussed by fine convolutions of letters, or by parchment crowded with intricate and elaborate script. It opens our ears, and accommodates them to all word sounds, including those that are deep or sharp.³⁰⁴ If, therefore, grammar is so useful, and the key to everything written, as well as the mother and arbiter of all speech, who will [try to]

²⁹⁷ Philosophy or general learning.

²⁹⁸ Quintilian, *loc. cit.*

²⁹⁹ *usus*, the use, habit, or practice.

³⁰⁰ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 8, § 12.

³⁰¹ *pretextatus*, clad in the toga that was worn by freeborn children until they were seventeen years of age, at which time they assumed the *toga virilis*. Thus: while still a minor; while still under age.

³⁰² Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 8, § 2.

³⁰³ Martianus Capella, *De Nupt.*, iii, § 223.

³⁰⁴ *tam grauibus quam acutis*, grave, deep, or heavy; acute, sharp, or high.

exclude it from the threshold of philosophy, save one who thinks that philosophizing does not require an understanding of what has been said or written? Accordingly those who would banish or condemn grammar are in effect trying to pretend that the blind and deaf are more fit for philosophical studies than those who, by nature's gift, have received and still enjoy the vigor of all their senses.

CHAPTER 22. *That Cornificius invokes the authority of Seneca to defend his erroneous contentions.*

Cornificius, however, hides behind a great authority, whom he quotes as the source of his erroneous doctrine. This authority [Seneca] indeed deserves the praise he receives from many, and for two reasons. In the first place, he [Seneca] is a strong advocate of virtue and a great teacher of morality. In the second place, his pithy epigrammatic style³⁰⁵ is admirable for its succinct brevity, while his diction is both beautiful and vivid. Consequently, those who love either virtue or eloquence cannot but be pleased [with Seneca]. With all due respect to Quintilian,³⁰⁶ there is no, or at least hardly any, other moralist among the pagans, whose words and opinions can be more conveniently alleged in all sorts of discussions. Quintilian, while praising Seneca's intelligence, condemns his judgment, and declares that his writings are full of sugar-coated faults, and that he was popular with immature boys rather than with the learned. Quintilian also complains that Seneca breaks down substantial periods into brief "points,"³⁰⁷ whence one of the emperors characterized his works as sand without lime.³⁰⁸ Seneca always has some-

³⁰⁵ *comatico genere dicendi*; cf. Jerome, *In Eccles.*, iii, 18 (in Migne, *P.L.*, XXIII, 1095).

³⁰⁶ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, x, 1, §§ 125 ff. Cf. *Policraticus*, viii, 13, for Quintilian's opinion of Seneca.

³⁰⁷ *summas rerum minutissimis sententiis frangere*, literally: he breaks down composite summaries into very short sentences, that is, substitutes the "sententious" style for the "periodic" one.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Quintilian, *loc. cit.* The emperor was Caligula, a madman in most things, but showed some keenness in literary judgments.

thing to say. Thus he feels that liberal studies do not make a person good.³⁰⁹ I agree with him, but I think that the same also holds true of other studies. Knowledge puffeth up; it is charity alone that makes one good.³¹⁰ Seneca deflates the arts, but at the same time he does not exclude them from the field of philosophy, since [it may also be said that] those who are merely philosophers are not good men. "The subject of the grammarian," he says, "is language, and if he goes farther, history, and if he proceeds still farther, poetry."³¹¹ Such, however, is no trivial matter, and contributes much to the formation of virtue, which makes a man good. Horace takes pride in the fact that, for virtue's sake, he has reread Homer,³¹²

Who tells us what is beautiful and what repulsive, what useful and what disadvantageous,
In [far] more entertaining and effective manner than do Chrysippus and Cantor.³¹³

That "Poetry is the cradle of philosophy" is axiomatic. Furthermore, do not our forefathers tell us that the liberal studies are so useful that one who has mastered them can, without a teacher, understand all books and everything written?³¹⁴ Indeed, as Quintilian observes, "These studies harm, not those who pass through them, but only those who become bogged down in them."³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Seneca, *Ep.*, 88, §§ 1-2.

³¹⁰ I Corinthians, viii, 1.

³¹¹ Seneca, *Ep.*, 88, § 3.

³¹² Seneca (*Ep.*, 88, § 5) denies that Homer was a philosopher.

³¹³ Horace, *Ep.*, i, 2, 1-4. John has *Cantore*, in place of Horace's *Crantore*.

³¹⁴ While preserving the sense, the translator has here changed the direct statement to a question, for stylistic purposes.

³¹⁵ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 7, § 35. The meaning here is, apparently: "These studies are not in themselves harmful, but only hurt those who after taking them up, become pedantic sticklers."

CHAPTER 23. *The chief aids to philosophical inquiry and the practice of virtue; as well as how grammar is the foundation of both philosophy and virtue.*

The chief aids to philosophical inquiry and the practice of virtue are reading, learning,³¹⁶ meditation,³¹⁷ and assiduous application.³¹⁸ Reading scrutinizes the written subject matter immediately before it. Learning likewise generally studies what is written, but also sometimes moves on to what is preserved in the archives of the memory and is not in the writing, or to those things that become evident when one understands the given subject. Meditation, however, reaches out farther to what is unknown, and often even rises to the incomprehensible by penetrating, not merely the apparent aspects, but even the hidden recesses of questions. The fourth is assiduous application. The latter, although it owes its form to previous cognition, and requires scientific knowledge, still smooths the way for understanding, since, in itself, it constitutes "a good understanding for all who do it."³¹⁹ The heralds of the truth, it is written, "have proclaimed the works of God, and have understood His doings."³²⁰ Scientific knowledge, by the nature of things, must precede the practice and cultivation of virtue, which does not "run without knowing where it is going," and does not merely "beat the air" in its battle against vice.³²¹ Rather "it sees its goal, and the target at which it aims." It does not haphazardly chase ravens with a piece of pottery and a bit of mud.³²² But scientific knowledge is the product of read-

³¹⁶ *doctrina*, study, learning, grasping the doctrinal content; cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *Erud. Didasc.*, iii, 7, 9, 10, 11; v, 7; together with G. Paré, A. Brunet, and P. Tremblay, *Renaissance du xii^e siècle*, pp. 113-116.

³¹⁷ *meditatio*.

³¹⁸ *assiduitas operis*, diligent practical application, action in accordance with knowledge, virtue. Cf. later in this chapter, and chap. 24.

³¹⁹ Psalms, cx, 10. The Psalm refers to practical "fear of the Lord," or observance of the divine commandments.

³²⁰ Psalms, lxxiii, 10.

³²¹ I Corinthians, ix, 26.

³²² Persius, *Sat.*, iii, 60, 61.

ing, learning, and meditation. It is accordingly evident that grammar, which is the basis and root of scientific knowledge, implants, as it were, the seed [of virtue] in nature's furrow after grace has readied the ground. This seed, provided again that coöperating grace is present, increases in substance and strength until it becomes solid virtue, and it grows in manifold respects until it fructifies in good works, wherefore men are called and actually are "good." At the same time, it is grace alone which makes a man good. For grace brings about both the willing and the doing of good.³²³ Furthermore, grace, more than anything else, imparts the faculty of writing and speaking correctly to those to whom it is given, and supplies them with the various arts. Grace should not be scorned when it generously offers itself to the needy, for if despised, it rightly departs, leaving the one who has spurned it no excuse for complaint.

CHAPTER 24. *Practical observations on reading and lecturing,³²⁴ together with [an account of] the method employed by Bernard of Chartres and his followers.*

One who aspires to become a philosopher should therefore apply himself to reading, learning, and meditation, as well as the performance of good works,³²⁵ lest the Lord become angry and take away what he seems to possess.³²⁶ The word "reading"³²⁷ is equivocal. It may refer either to the activity of teaching and being taught, or to the occupation of studying written things by oneself. Consequently, the former, the intercommunication between teacher and learner, may be termed (to use Quintilian's word) the "lecture";³²⁸

³²³ Philippians, ii, 13.

³²⁴ *prelegendi*, reading before, lecturing.

³²⁵ Cf. *Met.*, i, 23.

³²⁶ Matthew, xxv, 29.

³²⁷ *legendi*. The word "reading" is, as John says, ambiguous. One may "read" a book, or may "read" a "lecture" (a "reading" to students or an audience).

³²⁸ *prelectio*; cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, ii, 5, § 4.

the latter, or the scrutiny by the student, the "reading,"³²⁹ simply so called. On the authority of the same Quintilian,³³⁰ "the teacher of grammar should, in lecturing,³³¹ take care of such details as to have his students analyze verses into their parts of speech, and point out the nature of the metrical feet which are to be noted in poems. He should, furthermore, indicate and condemn whatever is barbarous, incongruous, or otherwise against the rules of composition." He should not, however, be overcritical of the poets, in whose case, because of the requirements of rhythm, so much is overlooked that their very faults are termed virtues. A departure from the rule that is excused by necessity, is often praised as a virtue, when observance of the rule would be detrimental. The grammarian should also point out metaplasm, schematism, and oratorical tropes, as well as various other forms of expression³³² that may be present. He should further suggest the various possible ways of saying things, and impress them on the memory of his listeners by repeated reminders. Let him "shake out"³³³ the authors, and, without exciting ridicule, despoil them of their feathers, which (crow fashion) they have borrowed from the several branches of learning in order to bedeck their works and make them more colorful.³³⁴ One will more fully perceive and more lucidly explain the charming elegance of the authors in proportion to the breadth and thoroughness of his knowledge of various disciplines. The authors by *diacrisis*,³³⁵ which we may translate as "vivid representation"³³⁶ or "graphic imagery,"³³⁷ when they would take the crude materials of history, arguments,³³⁸ narratives,³³⁹ and other topics, would so copiously embellish them by the various branches of knowledge, in such charming style, with such pleasing ornament,

³²⁹ *lectio*.

³³⁰ Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 8, §§ 13 ff.

³³¹ *in prelegendis*.

³³² *Met.*, i, 18, 19.

³³³ *excutiat*, shake out, search, thoroughly examine or analyze.

³³⁴ Cf. Horace, *Ep.*, i, 3, 18-20.

³³⁵ *diacrisim*, perhaps from *διακρίσις*: separation, discernment, solution, interpretation; or perhaps from: *διατύπωσις*. Cf. Martianus Capella, *De Nupt.*, v, § 524; and Cassiodorus, *In Ps.* xxx, 11; xc, 1; cxxv, 4 (in Migne, *P.L.*, LXX, 210, 650, 925).

³³⁶ *illustrationem*, illustration, illumination, vivid representation or description; cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, vi, 2, § 32.

³³⁷ *picturationem*.

³³⁸ Perhaps in the sense of a plot.

³³⁹ *fabule*, a narrative, story, play, fable, talk.

that their finished masterpiece would seem to image all the arts. Grammar and Poetry are poured without stint over the length and breadth of their works. Across this field,³⁴⁰ as it is commonly called, Logic, which contributes plausibility by its proofs,³⁴¹ weaves the golden lightening of its reasons; while Rhetoric, where persuasion is in order, supplies the silvery luster of its resplendent eloquence. Following in the path of the foregoing, Mathematics rides [proudly] along on the four-wheel chariot of its Quadrivium, intermingling its fascinating demonstration in manifold variety. Physical philosophy,³⁴² which explores the secret depths of nature, also brings forth from her [copious] stores numerous lovely ornaments of diverse hue. Of all branches of learning, that which confers the greatest beauty is Ethics, the most excellent part of philosophy, without which the latter would not even deserve its name. Carefully examine the works of Vergil or Lucan, and no matter what your philosophy, you will find therein its seed or seasoning.³⁴³ The fruit of the lecture on the authors is proportionate both to the capacity of the students and to the industrious diligence of the teacher. Bernard of Chartres,³⁴⁴ the greatest font of literary learning³⁴⁵ in Gaul in recent times,³⁴⁶ used to teach grammar in the following way. He would point out, in reading the authors, what was simple and according to rule. On the other hand, he would explain grammatical figures, rhetorical embellishment, and sophistical quibbling, as well as the relation of given passages to other studies. He would do so, however, without trying to teach everything at one time. On the contrary, he would dispense his instruction to his hearers gradually, in a manner commensurate with their powers of assimilation. And since diction is lustrous either because the words are well chosen,³⁴⁷ and the adject-

³⁴⁰ *campo*.

³⁴¹ Literally: its colors of proving (or credible proofs).

³⁴² *Phisica*, physical or natural philosophy, sometimes called physics.

³⁴³ *eiusdem inuenies condituram*, you will find therein its founding, preparing, or germ; or you will find it used therein as a seasoning.

³⁴⁴ See footnotes to *Met.*, i, 5; and cf. Clerval, *Les Écoles de Chartres au moyen-âge*, pp. 158 ff.

³⁴⁵ *litterarum*, of letters, of literary or grammatical learning.

³⁴⁶ Literally: in modern times.

³⁴⁷ *propriate*, from propriety, fitness, appropriateness.

tives and verbs admirably suited to the nouns with which they are used, or because of the employment of metaphors,³⁴⁸ whereby speech is transferred to some beyond-the-ordinary meaning for sufficient reason, Bernard used to inculcate this in the minds of his hearers whenever he had the opportunity. In view of the fact that exercise both strengthens and sharpens our mind, Bernard would bend every effort to bring his students to imitate what they were hearing.³⁴⁹ In some cases he would rely on exhortation, in others he would resort to punishments, such as flogging. Each student was daily required to recite part of what he had heard on the previous day. Some would recite more, others less. Each succeeding day thus became the disciple of its predecessor. The evening exercise, known as the "declination,"³⁵⁰ was so replete with grammatical instruction that if anyone were to take part in it for an entire year, provided he were not a dullard, he would become thoroughly familiar with the [correct] method of speaking and writing, and would not be at a loss to comprehend expressions in general use. Since, however, it is not right to allow any school or day to be without religion, subject matter was presented to foster faith, to build up morals, and to inspire those present at this quasicollation³⁵¹ to perform good works. This [evening] "declination," or philosophical collation, closed with the pious commendation of the souls of the departed to their Redeemer, by the devout recitation³⁵² of the Sixth Penitential Psalm³⁵³ and the Lord's Prayer. He [Bernard] would also explain the poets and orators who were to serve as models for the boys in their introductory exercises³⁵⁴ in imitating prose and poetry. Pointing out how the diction of the authors was so skillfully con-

³⁴⁸ *translatione*.

³⁴⁹ Literally: what they were hearing, namely, the selections that he read to them [from the authors].

³⁵⁰ *declinatio*. This exercise was probably so called from its characteristic part, the declination, or inflections, of nouns and verbs, or possibly from the fact that, at this time, the light and activity of day were declining (*declinante*) into the darkness and repose of night.

³⁵¹ *collatione*, may mean either a conference or a refreshing repast.

³⁵² Literally: offering.

³⁵³ Psalms, cxxix ("Out of the Depths" or the "*De profundis*").

³⁵⁴ *preexercitamina*; see Priscian, *De Figuris numerorum*, in his preface (Keil, *G.L.*, III, 405, 12).

nected,³⁵⁵ and what they had to say was so elegantly concluded,³⁵⁶ he would admonish his students to follow their example. And if, to embellish his work, someone had sewed on a patch of cloth filched from an external source,³⁵⁷ Bernard, on discovering this, would rebuke him for his plagiarist, but would generally refrain from punishing him. After he had reproofed the student, if an unsuitable theme had invited this,³⁵⁸ he would, with modest indulgence, bid the boy to rise to real imitation of the [classical authors], and would bring about that he who had imitated his predecessors would come to be deserving of imitation by his successors.³⁵⁹ He would also inculcate as fundamental, and impress on the minds of his listeners, what virtue exists in economy;³⁶⁰ what things are to be commended by facts and what ones by choice of words,³⁶¹ where concise and, so to speak, frugal speech is in order, and where fuller, more copious expression is appropriate; as well as where speech is excessive, and wherein consists just measure in all cases.³⁶² Bernard used also to admonish his students that stories and poems should be read thoroughly, and not as though the reader were being precipitated to flight by spurs. Wherefor he diligently and insistently demanded from each, as a daily debt, something committed to memory.³⁶³ At the same time, he said that we should shun what is superfluous. According to him, the works of distinguished authors

³⁵⁵ *iuncturas dictionum*, literally: connections, or the connecting of things said. Cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, ix, 4, § 32.

³⁵⁶ *sermonum clausulas*, the conclusion of speeches. A *clausula*, with Quintilian, means a concise and acute conclusion to a speech.

³⁵⁷ Horace, *A.P.*, 16; Matthew, ix, 16.

³⁵⁸ Or: if the inappropriate use had deserved this.

³⁵⁹ Baldwin (*Med. Rhet. and Poetic*, p. 163), translates this passage as follows: "But if the borrowing was misplaced, with modest kindness, he bade the boy come down to express his author's likeness; and his own practice was such that in imitating his predecessors, he became a model for his successors." But cf. A. Clerval, *Les Écoles de Chartres*, p. 226, and C. H. Haskins, *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, pp. 135-136.

³⁶⁰ *oeconomia*, that is, *oeconomia*, a fine practical adjustment of means to an end. Cf. Quintilian (*Inst. Or.*, iii, 3, § 9), where he refers to "economy" as including judgment, division, order, and everything relating to expression (according to Hermagoras).

³⁶¹ *que in decore rerum, que in uerbis laudanda sint*. John evidently distinguishes here between beauty of content and beauty of expression.

³⁶² That is, moderation.

³⁶³ Bernard apparently required of each of his students the daily recitation of some passages memorized from their current reading.

suffice. As a matter of fact, to study everything that everyone, no matter how insignificant, has ever said, is either to be excessively humble and cautious, or overly vain and ostentatious. It also deters and stifles minds that would better be freed to go on to other things. That which preëmpts the place of something that is better is, for this reason, disadvantageous, and does not deserve to be called "good." To examine and pore over everything that has been written, regardless of whether it is worth reading, is as pointless as to fritter away one's time with old wives' tales. As Augustine says in his book *On Order*: "Who is there who will bear that a man who has never heard that Daedalus³⁶⁴ flew should [therefor] be considered unlearned? And, on the contrary, who will not agree that one who says that Daedalus did fly should be branded a liar; one who believes it, a fool; and one who questions [anyone] about it, impudent? I am wont to have profound pity for those of my associates who are accused of ignorance because they do not know the name of the mother of Euryalus,³⁶⁵ yet who dare not call those who ask such questions 'conceited and pedantic busy-bodies.'" ³⁶⁶ Augustine summarizes the matter aptly and with truth. The ancients correctly reckoned that to ignore certain things constituted one of the marks of a good grammarian. A further feature of Bernard's method was to have his disciples compose prose and poetry every day, and exercise their faculties in mutual conferences,³⁶⁷ for nothing is more useful in introductory training than actually to accustom one's students to practice the art they are studying. Nothing serves better to foster the acquisition of eloquence and the attainment of knowledge than such conferences, which also have a salutary influence on practical conduct, provided that charity moderates enthusiasm, and that humility is not lost during progress in learning. A man cannot be the

³⁶⁴ Daedalus: an Athenian artist, celebrated for his mechanical skill, who was said to have flown from Crete to Sicily.

³⁶⁵ *Euriali*, Euryalus: a Trojan, who perished together with his friend Nisus.

³⁶⁶ See Augustine, *De Ord.*, ii, 12, § 37 (in Migne, *P.L.*, XXXII, 1012, 1013).

³⁶⁷ *collationibus*, collations, conferences, comparisons. Although "conferences" would seem to fit here as a translation, Webb holds that "comparisons" is better. Cf. Webb's ed., *Met.*, p. 57 (*ad loc.*). Haskins (*Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, p. 136), also translates this as "comparisons," though Baldwin (*Med. Rhet. and Poetic*, p. 136), renders it as "criticisms."

servant of both learning and carnal vice.³⁶⁸ My own instructors in grammar, William of Conches,³⁶⁹ and Richard, who is known as "the Bishop,"³⁷⁰ a good man both in life and conversation,³⁷¹ who now holds the office of archdeacon of Coutances, formerly used Bernard's method in training their disciples. But later, when popular opinion veered away from the truth, when men preferred to seem, rather than to be philosophers, and when professors of the arts were promising to impart the whole of philosophy in less than three or even two years, William and Richard were overwhelmed by the onslaught of the ignorant mob, and retired.³⁷² Since then, less time and attention have been given to the study of grammar. As a result, we find men who profess all the arts, liberal and mechanical, but who are ignorant of this very first one [i.e., grammar], without which it is futile to attempt to go on to the others. But while other studies may also contribute to "letters,"³⁷³ grammar alone has the unique privilege of making one "lettered."³⁷⁴ Romulus,³⁷⁵ in fact, refers to grammar as "letters," Varro³⁷⁶ calls it "making lettered,"³⁷⁷ and one who teaches or professes grammar is spoken of as "lettered." In times past, the teacher of grammar was styled a "teacher of letters."³⁷⁸ Thus Catullus says: "Silla, the 'teacher of letters,' gives thee a present."³⁷⁹ Hence it is probable that anyone who spurns grammar, is not only not a "teacher of letters," but does not even deserve to be called "lettered."

³⁶⁸ See Jerome, *Ep.*, cxxx, § 11 (in Migne, *P.L.*, XXII, 1078): "Love the knowledge of the scriptures, and you will not love the vices of the flesh."

³⁶⁹ On William of Conches, see *Met.*, I, 5, p. 21, n. 65.

³⁷⁰ Richard l'Evêque; cf. Clerval, *Les Écoles de Chartres*, pp. 182 f.

³⁷¹ *uita et conuersatione uir bonus*, a good man, both in his life or way of life or conduct, and in his conversation or intercourse or deportment. This may also mean a good man, both in his personal life and in his social influence.

³⁷² *cesserunt*, that is, they stopped school. See Poole, *Medieval Thought*, App., vii, p. 311.

³⁷³ *litteratura*, letters, literature, learning.

³⁷⁴ *litteratum*, lettered, literate, learned.

³⁷⁵ *Romulus*; see Martianus Capella, *De Nupt.*, iii, § 229, where *Romulus* is used for Romans.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Augustine, *De Ord.*, ii, 12, § 35 (in Migne, *P.L.*, XXXII, 1012); and Isidore, *Etym.*, i, 3, § 1.

³⁷⁷ *litterationem*, instruction in language, making literate, making lettered.

³⁷⁸ *litterator*.

³⁷⁹ Catullus, *Carmina*, xiv, 9, evidently cited from Martianus Capella, *De Nupt.*, iii, § 229.

CHAPTER 25. *A short conclusion concerning the value of grammar.*

Those who only yesterday were mere boys, being flogged by the rod, yet who today are [grave] masters, ensconced in the [doctor's] chair and invested with the [official] stole,³⁸⁰ claim that those who praise grammar do so out of ignorance of other studies. Let such patiently heed the commendation of grammar found in the book, *On the Education of an Orator*.³⁸¹ If the latter is acceptable to them, then let them [condescend to] spare innocent grammarians. In the aforesaid work we find this statement: "Let no one despise the principles of grammar as of small account. Not that it is a great thing to distinguish between consonants and vowels, and subdivide the latter into semivowels and mutes. But, as one penetrates farther into this (so to speak) sanctuary, he becomes conscious of the great intricacy of grammatical questions. The latter are not only well calculated to sharpen the wits of boys, but also constitute fit subject matter to exercise the most profound erudition and scientific knowledge."³⁸² [Quintilian also says:] "Those who deride this art [of grammar] as petty and thin, deserve even less toleration. For if grammar does not lay beforehand a firm foundation for the orator, the [whole] structure will collapse. Grammar is accordingly first among the liberal arts. Necessary for the young, gratifying to the old, and an agreeable solace in solitude, it alone, of all branches of learning, has more utility than show."³⁸³

END OF BOOK ONE

³⁸⁰ *stolati*, wearing the stole, the insignia of office.

³⁸¹ Quintilian's *De Institutione Oratoris*.

³⁸² Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, i, 4, § 6.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, i, 4, § 5.