

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

si medium spatium transiluerit et se in illam saeculo post futuram sollicitudinem in miserit; eodem modo fit, ut animos libenter aegros et captantes causas doloris vetera atque obliterateda contristent. Et quae praeterierunt et quae futura sunt, absunt; neutra sentimus.¹ Non est autem nisi ex eo, quod sentias, dolor. VALE.

LXXV.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Minus tibi accuratas a me epistulas mitti quereris. Quis enim accurate loquitur, nisi qui vult putide loqui? Qualis sermo meus esset, si una sederemus aut ambularem, inlaboratus et facilis, tales esse epistulas meas volo, quae nihil habent accersitum nec
2 fictum. Si fieri posset, quid sentiam, ostendere quam loqui mallet. Etiam si disputarem, nec supploderem pedem nec manum iactarem nec attollerem vocem, sed ista oratoribus reliquissem, contentus sensus meos ad te pertulisse, quos nec
3 exornassem nec abiicissem. Hoc unum plane tibi adprobare vellem: omnia me illa sentire, quae dicerem, nec tantum sentire, sed amare. Aliter homines amicam, aliter liberos osculantur; tamen in hoc quoque amplexu tam sancto et moderato satis apparet adfectus.

¹ *sentimus* later MSS. ; *sentiamus* Pb ; *sentiam* V.

^a For *putidum* (that which offends the taste, *i.e.* is too artificially formal) see Cic. *De Orat.* iii. 41 *nolo exprimi litteras putidius, nolo obscurari negligentius.*

^b Cf. *Ep.* lxxvii. 2 *si quando intervenerunt epistulae tuae, tecum esse mihi videor, etc.*

EPISTLES LXXIV., LXXV.

unless he has leaped over the intervening years, and has projected himself into the trouble that is destined to arrive a generation later. In the same way, souls that enjoy being sick and that seize upon excuses for sorrow are saddened by events long past and effaced from the records. Past and future are both absent; we feel neither of them. But there can be no pain except as the result of what you feel. Farewell.

LXXV. ON THE DISEASES OF THE SOUL

You have been complaining that my letters to you are rather carelessly written. Now who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly^a? I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation^b would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking walks together,—spontaneous and easy; for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them. If it were possible, I should prefer to show, rather than speak, my feelings. Even if I were arguing a point, I should not stamp my foot, or toss my arms about, or raise my voice; but I should leave that sort of thing to the orator, and should be content to have conveyed my feelings to you without having either embellished them or lowered their dignity. I should like to convince you entirely of this one fact,—that I feel whatever I say, that I not only feel it, but am wedded to it. It is one sort of kiss which a man gives his mistress, and another which he gives his children; yet in the father's embrace also, holy and restrained as it is, plenty of affection is disclosed.

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

Non mehercules ieiuna esse et arida volo, quae de rebus tam magnis dicentur; neque enim philosophia ingenio renuntiat. Multum tamen operae 4 inpendi verbis non oportet. Haec sit propositi nostri summa: quod sentimus loquamur, quod loquimur sentiamus; concordet sermo cum vita. Ille promissum suum implevit, qui, et cum videas 5 illum et cum audias, idem est. Videbimus, qualis sit, quantus sit; unus sit. Non delectent verba nostra, sed prosint. Si tamen contingere eloquentia non sollicito potest, si aut parata est aut parvo constat, adsit et res pulcherrimas prosequatur. Sit talis, ut res potius quam se ostendat. Aliae artes ad ingenium totae pertinent, hic animi negotium agitur. 6 Non quaerit aeger medicum eloquentem,¹ sed, si ita competit, ut idem ille, qui sanare potest, compte de iis, quae facienda sunt, disserat, boni consulat. Non tamen erit, quare gratuletur sibi, quod inciderit in medicum etiam disertum. Hoc enim tale est, quale si peritus gubernator etiam formosus est. 7 Quid aures meas scabis? Quid oblectas? Aliud agitur; urendus, secandus, abstinendus sum. Ad haec adhibitus es.

Curare debes morbum veterem, gravem, publicum. Tantum negotii habes, quantum in pestilentia

¹ *eloquentem* later MSS. ; *loquentem* VPb.

^a Cf. *Ep.* cxiv. 1 *talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita*, and *passim* in *Epp.* xl., lxxv. and cxiv.

^b Eloquence and the other arts please mainly by their cleverness; nor does philosophy abjure such cleverness as style; but here in these letters, wherein we are discussing the soul, the graces of speech are of no concern.

EPISTLE LXXV.

I prefer, however, that our conversation on matters so important should not be meagre and dry; for even philosophy does not renounce the company of cleverness. One should not, however, bestow very much attention upon mere words. Let this be the kernel of my idea: let us say what we feel, and feel what we say; let speech harmonize with life.^a That man has fulfilled his promise who is the same person both when you see him and when you hear him. We shall not fail to see what sort of man he is and how large a man he is, if only he is one and the same. Our words should aim not to please, but to help. If, however, you can attain eloquence without painstaking, and if you either are naturally gifted or can gain eloquence at slight cost, make the most of it and apply it to the noblest uses. But let it be of such a kind that it displays facts rather than itself. It and the other arts are wholly concerned with cleverness^b; but our business here is the soul.

A sick man does not call in a physician who is eloquent; but if it so happens that the physician who can cure him likewise discourses elegantly about the treatment which is to be followed, the patient will take it in good part. For all that, he will not find any reason to congratulate himself on having discovered a physician who is eloquent. For the case is no different from that of a skilled pilot who is also handsome. Why do you tickle my ears? Why do you entertain me? There is other business at hand; I am to be cauterized, operated upon, or put on a diet. That is why you were summoned to treat me!

You are required to cure a disease that is chronic and serious,—one which affects the general weal. You have as serious a business on hand as a physician

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

medicus. Circa verba occupatus es? Iamdudum
 gaude, si sufficis rebus. Quando, quae multa disces?
 Quando, quae didiceris, adfiges tibi ita, ut excidere
 non possint? Quando illa experieris? Non enim
 ut cetera, memoriae tradidisse satis est; in opere
 temptanda sunt. Non est beatus, qui scit illa, sed
 8 qui facit.¹ "Quid ergo? Infra illum nulli gradus
 sunt? Statim a sapientia praeceptus est?" Non, ut
 existimo. Nam qui proficit, in numero quidem
 stultorum est, magno tamen intervallo ab illis didu-
 citur. Inter ipsos quoque proficientes sunt magna
 discrimina. In tres classes, ut quibusdam placet,
 9 dividuntur: primi sunt, qui sapientiam nondum
 habent, sed iam in vicinia eius constitierunt. Tamen
 etiam quod prope est, extra² est. Qui sint hi
 quaeris? Qui omnes iam adfectus ac vitia posuerunt,
 quae erant complectenda, didicerunt, sed illis adhuc
 inexperta fiducia est. Bonum suum nondum in usu
 habent, iam tamen in illa, quae fugerunt, decidere
 non possunt. Iam ibi sunt, unde non est retro
 lapsus, sed hoc illis de se nondum liquet; quod in
 quadam epistula scripsisse me memini, "scire se
 nesciunt." Iam contigit illis bono suo frui, nondum
 10 confidere. Quidam hoc proficientium genus, de quo
 locutus sum, ita complectuntur, ut illos dicant iam
 effugisse morbos animi, adfectus nondum, et adhuc

¹ *qui facit* later MSS. ; *facit* VPb.

² *extra* later MSS. ; *ex ora (hora)* VPb.

^a Chrysippus, however, recognized only the first two classes, as did Epictetus (iv. 2).

^b *Ep.* lxxi. 4.

EPISTLE LXXV.

has during a plague. Are you concerned about *words*? Rejoice this instant if you can cope with *things*. When shall you learn all that there is to learn? When shall you so plant in your mind that which you have learned, that it cannot escape? When shall you put it all into practice? For it is not sufficient merely to commit these things to memory, like other matters; they must be practically tested. He is not happy who only knows them, but he who does them. You reply: "What? Are there no degrees of happiness below your 'happy' man? Is there a sheer descent immediately below wisdom?" I think not. For though he who makes progress is still numbered with the fools, yet he is separated from them by a long interval. Among the very persons who are making progress there are also great spaces intervening. They fall into three classes,^a as certain philosophers believe. First come those who have not yet attained wisdom but have already gained a place near by. Yet even that which is not far away is still outside. These, if you ask me, are men who have already laid aside all passions and vices, who have learned what things are to be embraced; but their assurance is not yet tested. They have not yet put their good into practice, yet from now on they cannot slip back into the faults which they have escaped. They have already arrived at a point from which there is no slipping back, but they are not yet aware of the fact; as I remember writing in another letter, "They are ignorant of their knowledge."^b It has now been vouchsafed to them to enjoy their good, but not yet to be sure of it. Some define this class, of which I have been speaking,—a class of men who are making progress,—as having escaped the diseases of the mind,

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

in lubrico stare, quia nemo sit extra periculum malitiae, nisi qui totam eam excussit. Nemo autem illam excussit, nisi qui pro illa sapientiam adsumpsit.

- 11 Quid inter morbos animi intersit et adfectus, saepe iam dixi. Nunc quoque te admonebo: morbi sunt inveterata vitia et dura, ut avaritia, ut ambitio; nimio¹ artius² haec animum implicuerunt et perpetua eius mala esse coeperunt. Ut breviter finiam, morbus est iudicium in pravo pertinax, tamquam valde expetenda sint, quae leviter expetenda sunt. Vel si mavis, ita finiamus: nimis imminere leviter petendis vel ex toto non petendis, aut in magno pretio habere
- 12 in aliquo habenda vel in nullo. Adfectus sunt motus animi improbabiles, subiti et concitati, qui frequentes neglectique fecere morbum, sicut destillatio una nec adhuc in morem adducta tussim facit, adsidua et vetus phthisin. Itaque qui plurimum profecere, extra morbos sunt, adfectus adhuc sentiunt perfecto proximi.
- 13 Secundum genus est eorum, qui et maxima animi mala et adfectus deposuerunt, sed ita, ut non sit illis securitatis suae certa possessio. Possunt enim
- 14 in eadem relabi. Tertium illud genus extra multa

¹ *nimio* Rossbach; *nimia* VP; *nimia* b.

² *artius* later MSS.; *actus* VPb.

^a For Seneca's own struggles with this disease cf. *Ep.* lxxviii. 1.

^b The difference between the first and the second classes is well described in *Ep.* lxxii. 6 *hoc interest inter consummatae sapientiae virum et alium procedentis, quod inter sanum et ex morbo gravi ac diutino emergentem.*

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:
Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature
which can be purchased on our Website :
www.Brainfly.net

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

webcomments@brainfly.net