

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

deposuit. Hi paulo tardius surgunt, sed cum tamquam a planta processerint, nihil habent in se abhorridum aut triste.

- 20 Illud etiam nunc vidi, vitem ex arbusto suo annosam transferri; huius capillamenta quoque, si fieri potest, colligenda sunt, deinde liberalius sternenda vitis, ut etiam ex corpore radicescat. Et vidi non tantum mense Februario positas, sed etiam Martio exacto; tenent et  
21 complexae sunt non suas ulmos. Omnes autem istas arbores, quae, ut ita dicam, grandiscapiae sunt, ait aqua adiuvandas cisternina, quae si prodest, habemus pluviam in nostra potestate.

Plura te docere non cogito, ne quemadmodum Aegialus me sibi adversarium paravit, sic ego parem te mihi. VALE.

### LXXXVII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Naufragium, antequam navem adscenderem, feci. Quomodo acciderit, non adicio, ne et hoc putes inter Stoica paradoxa ponendum, quorum nullum esse falsum nec tam mirabile quam prima facie videtur, cum volueris, adprobabo, immo etiam si nolueris. Interim hoc me iter docuit, quam multa haberemus supervacua et quam facile iudicio possemus deponere,

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<sup>a</sup> An agricultural term not elsewhere found.

<sup>b</sup> *i. e.*, on my journey I travelled with almost as meagre an equipment as a shipwrecked man.

<sup>c</sup> *Cf. Ep. lxxxix. 11 and note.*

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of young saplings are wont to be. These grow a little more slowly, but, since they spring from what is practically a cutting, there is no roughness or ugliness in them.

This too I have seen recently—an aged vine transplanted from its own plantation. In this case, the fibres also should be gathered together, if possible, and then you should cover up the vine-stem more generously, so that roots may spring up even from the stock. I have seen such plantings made not only in February, but at the very end of March; the plants take hold of and embrace alien elms. But all trees, he declares, which are, so to speak, “thick-stemmed,”<sup>a</sup> should be assisted with tank-water; if we have this help, we are our own rain-makers.

I do not intend to tell you any more of these precepts, lest, as Aegialus did with me, I may be training you up to be my competitor. Farewell.

## LXXXVII. SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE SIMPLE LIFE

“I was shipwrecked before I got aboard.”<sup>b</sup> I shall not add how that happened, lest you may reckon this also as another of the Stoic paradoxes;<sup>c</sup> and yet I shall, whenever you are willing to listen, nay, even though you be unwilling, prove to you that these words are by no means untrue, nor so surprising as one at first sight would think. Meantime, the journey showed me this: how much we possess that is superfluous; and how easily we can make up our minds to do away with things whose

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quae, si quando necessitas abstulit, non sentimus ablata.

- 2 Cum paucissimis servis, quos unum capere vehiculum potuit, sine ullis rebus, nisi quae corpore nostro continebantur, ego et Maximus meus biduum iam beatissimum agimus. Culcita in terra iacet, ego in culcita. Ex duabus paenulis altera stragulum, altera
- 3 opertorium facta est. De prandio nihil detrahi potuit; paratum fuit non magis hora, nusquam sine caricis, numquam sine pugillaribus. Illae, si panem habeo, pro pulmentario sunt, si non habeo, pro pane. Cotidie mihi annum novum faciunt, quem ego faustum et felicem reddo bonis cogitationibus et animi magnitudine, qui numquam maior est, quam ubi aliena seposuit et fecit sibi pacem nihil timendo, fecit sibi
- 4 divitias nihil concupiscendo. Vehiculum, in quod inpositus sum, rusticum est; mulae vivere se ambulando testantur; mulio excalceatus, non propter aestatem. Vix a me obtineo, ut hoc vehiculum velim<sup>1</sup> videri meum. Durat adhuc perversa recti verecundia, et quotiens in aliquem comitatum lautiores incidimus, invitus erubesco, quod argumentum est ista, quae probo, quae laudo, nondum habere certam sedem et immobilem. Qui sordido vehiculo erubescit, pretioso gloriabitur.
- 5 Parum adhuc profeci. Nondum audeo frugalitatem palam ferre. Etiamnunc curo opiniones viatorum.

<sup>1</sup> *velim* V<sup>2</sup>; *nolim* V<sup>1</sup>Pb, etc.

<sup>a</sup> As Pliny the Elder (a man of the same inquiring turn of mind) did on his journeys, Pliny, *Ep.* iii. 5. 15.

<sup>b</sup> *Caricae* were sent as New Year gifts, implying by their sweetness the good wishes of the sender.

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loss, whenever it is necessary to part with them, we do not feel.

My friend Maximus and I have been spending a most happy period of two days, taking with us very few slaves—one carriage-load—and no paraphernalia except what we wore on our persons. The mattress lies on the ground, and I upon the mattress. There are two rugs—one to spread beneath us and one to cover us. Nothing could have been subtracted from our luncheon; it took not more than an hour to prepare, and we were nowhere without dried figs, never without writing tablets.<sup>a</sup> If I have bread, I use figs as a relish; if not, I regard figs as a substitute for bread. Hence they bring me a New Year feast every day,<sup>b</sup> and I make the New Year happy and prosperous by good thoughts and greatness of soul; for the soul is never greater than when it has laid aside all extraneous things, and has secured peace for itself by fearing nothing, and riches by craving no riches. The vehicle in which I have taken my seat is a farmer's cart. Only by walking do the mules show that they are alive. The driver is barefoot, and not because it is summer either. I can scarcely force myself to wish that others shall think this cart mine. My false embarrassment about the truth still holds out, you see; and whenever we meet a more sumptuous party I blush in spite of myself—proof that this conduct which I approve and applaud has not yet gained a firm and steadfast dwelling-place within me. He who blushes at riding in a rattle-trap will boast when he rides in style.

So my progress is still insufficient. I have not yet the courage openly to acknowledge my thriftiness. Even yet I am bothered by what other travellers think of me. But instead of this, I should really

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Contra totius generis humani opiniones mittenda vox erat: "Insanitis, erratis, stupetis ad supervacua, neminem aestimatis suo. Cum ad patrimonium ventum est, diligentissimi computatores sic rationem ponitis singulorum, quibus aut pecuniam credituri estis aut beneficia, nam haec quoque iam expensa  
6 fertis: late possidet, sed multum debet; habet domum formosam, sed alienis nummis paratam: familiam nemo cito speciosiore[m] producet, sed nominibus non respondet; si creditoribus solverit, nihil illi supererit. Idem in reliquis quoque facere debetis, excutere quantum proprii quisque habeat."

7 Divitem illum putas, quia aurea supellex etiam in via sequitur, quia in omnibus provinciis arat, quia magnus kalendari liber volvitur, quia tantum suburbani agri possidet, quantum invidiose in desertis Apuliae possideret. Cum omnia dixeris, pauper est. Quare? Quia debet. "Quantum?" inquis. Omnia. Nisi forte iudicas interesse, utrum aliquis ab homine an a  
8 fortuna mutuum sumpserit. Quid ad rem pertinent mulae saginatae unius omnes coloris? Quid ista vehicula caelata?

Instratos ostro alipedes pictisque tapetis,  
Aurea pectoribus demissa monilia pendent,  
Tecti auro fulvom mandunt sub dentibus aurum.

Ista nec dominum meliorem possunt facere nec mulam.

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<sup>a</sup> *Nomen* in this sense means primarily the name entered in the ledger; secondarily, the item or transaction with which the name is connected.

<sup>b</sup> Vergil, *Aeneid*, vii. 277 ff., describing the gifts sent by King Latinus to Aeneas.

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have uttered an opinion counter to that in which mankind believe, saying, "You are mad, you are misled, your admiration devotes itself to superfluous things! You estimate no man at his real worth. When property is concerned, you reckon up in this way with most scrupulous calculation those to whom you shall lend either money or benefits; for by now you enter benefits also as payments in your ledger. You say: 'His estates are wide, but his debts are large.' 'He has a fine house, but he has built it on borrowed capital.' 'No man will display a more brilliant retinue on short notice, but he cannot meet his debts.'<sup>a</sup> 'If he pays off his creditors, he will have nothing left.'" So you will feel bound to do in all other cases as well,—to find out by elimination the amount of every man's actual possessions.

I suppose you call a man rich just because his gold plate goes with him even on his travels, because he farms land in all the provinces, because he unrolls a large account-book, because he owns estates near the city so great that men would grudge his holding them in the waste lands of Apulia. But after you have mentioned all these facts, he is poor. And why? He is in debt. "To what extent?" you ask. For all that he has. Or perchance you think it matters whether one has borrowed from another man or from Fortune. What good is there in mules caparisoned in uniform livery? Or in decorated chariots and

Steeds decked with purple and with tapestry,  
With golden harness hanging from their necks,  
Champing their yellow bits, all clothed in gold?<sup>b</sup>

Neither master nor mule is improved by such trappings.

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- 9 M. Cato Censorius, quem tam e re publica fuit nasci quam Scipionem, alter enim cum hostibus nostris bellum, alter cum moribus gessit, cantherio vehebatur et hippoperis quidem inpositis, ut secum utilia portaret. O quam cuperem illi nunc occurrere aliquem ex his trossulis in via<sup>1</sup> cursores et Numidas et multum ante se pulveris agentem! Hic sine dubio cultior comitatorque quam M. Cato videretur, hic, qui inter illos apparatus delicatos cum maxime dubi-
- 10 tat, utrum se ad gladium locet an ad cultrum. O quantum erat saeculi decus, imperatorem triumphalem, censorium, quod super omnia haec est, Catonem uno caballo esse contentum et ne toto quidem! Partem enim sarcinae ab utroque latere dependentes occupabant. Ita non omnibus obesis mannis et asturconibus et tolutariis praeferres unicum illum equum
- 11 ab ipso Catone defricum? Video non futurum finem in ista materia ullum, nisi quem ipse mihi fecero. Hic itaque conticescam, quantum ad ista, quae sine dubio talia divinavit futura, qualia nunc sunt, qui prinus appellavit "impedimenta." Nunc volo paucissimas adhuc interrogationes nostrorum tibi reddere ad virtutem pertinentes, quam satisfacere vitae beatae contendimus.
- 12 "Quod bonum est, bonos facit. Nam et in arte musica quod bonum est, facit musicum. Fortuita

<sup>1</sup> After *via* Lipsius removed *divitibus*.

<sup>a</sup> For *trossuli* cf. *Ep.* lxxvi. 2, and footnote.

<sup>b</sup> *i. e.*, whether to turn gladiator or *bestiarius*.

<sup>c</sup> "Amblers" from Asturia in Spain.

<sup>d</sup> Horses with rapid steps, compared with *gradarii*, "slow pacers," cf. *Ep.* xl. 11.

<sup>e</sup> The literal meaning of *impedimenta*, "luggage."

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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