

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

quid dicat, sed quid sentiat, refert, nec quid uno die sentiat, sed quid adsidue. Non est autem quod verearis, ne ad indignum res tanta perveniat; nisi sapienti sua non placent. Omnis stultitia laborat fastidio sui. VALE.

### X.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Sic est, non muto sententiam: fuge multitudinem, fuge paucitatem, fuge etiam unum. Non habeo, cum quo te communicatum velim. Et vide, quod iudicium meum habeas: audeo te tibi credere. Crates, ut aiunt, huius ipsius Stilbonis auditor, cuius mentionem priore epistula feci, cum vidisset adolescentulum secreto ambulans, interrogavit, quid illic solus faceret? "Mecum," inquit, "loquor." Cui Crates "Cave," inquit, "rogo, et diligenter adtende; cum homine malo loqueris."
- 2 Lugentem timentemque custodire solemus, ne solitudine male utatur. Nemo est ex imprudentibus, qui relinqui sibi debeat; tunc mala consilia agitant, tunc aut aliis aut ipsis futura pericula struunt; tunc cupiditates improbas ordinant; tunc quicquid aut metu aut pudore celabat, animus exponit, tunc audaciam acuit, libidinem inritat, iracundiam instigat. Denique quod unum solitudo habet commodum, nihil ulli committere, non timere indicem, perit stulto; ipse se prodit.

Vide itaque, quid de te sperem, immo quid spon-

## EPISTLES IX., X.

It matters not what one says, but what one feels; also, not how one feels on one particular day, but how one feels at all times. There is no reason, however, why you should fear that this great privilege will fall into unworthy hands; only the wise man is pleased with his own. Folly is ever troubled with weariness of itself. Farewell.

### X. ON LIVING TO ONESELF

Yes, I do not change my opinion: avoid the many, avoid the few, avoid even the individual. I know of no one with whom I should be willing to have you shared. And see what an opinion of you I have; for I dare to trust you with your own self. Crates, they say, the disciple of the very Stilbo whom I mentioned in a former letter, noticed a young man walking by himself, and asked him what he was doing all alone. "I am communing with myself," replied the youth. "Pray be careful, then," said Crates, "and take good heed; you are communing with a bad man!"

When persons are in mourning, or fearful about something, we are accustomed to watch them that we may prevent them from making a wrong use of their loneliness. No thoughtless person ought to be left alone; in such cases he only plans folly, and heaps up future dangers for himself or for others; he brings into play his base desires; the mind displays what fear or shame used to repress; it whets his boldness, stirs his passions, and goads his anger. And finally, the only benefit that solitude confers,—the habit of trusting no man, and of fearing no witnesses,—is lost to the fool; for he betrays himself.

Mark therefore what my hopes are for you,—nay,

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- deam mihi, spes enim incerti boni nomen est: non  
3 invenio, cum quo te malim esse quam tecum. Repeto  
memoria, quam magno animo quaedam verba proie-  
ceris, quanti roboris plena. Gratulatus sum protinus  
mihi et dixi: "Non a summis labris ista venerunt,  
habent hae voces fundamentum. Iste homo non est  
4 unus e populo, ad salutem spectat." Sic loquere, sic  
vive; vide ne te ulla res deprimat. Votorum tuorum  
veterum licet dis gratiam faciās, alia de integro sus-  
cipe; roga bonam mentem, bonam valitudinem animi,  
deinde tunc corporis. Quidni tu ista vota saepe  
facias? Audacter deum roga; nihil illum de alieno  
rogaturus es.
- 5 Sed ut more meo cum aliquo munusculo epistulam  
mittam, verum est, quod apud Athenodorum inveni:  
"Tunc scito esse te omnibus cupiditatibus solutum,  
cum eo perveneris, ut nihil deum roges, nisi quod  
rogare possis palam." Nunc enim quanta dementia  
est hominum! Turpissima vota dis insusurrant; si  
quis admoverit aurem, conticescent. Et quod scire  
hominem nolunt, deo narrant. Vide ergo, ne hoc  
praecipii salubriter possit: sic vive cum hominibus,  
tamquam deus videat; sic loquere cum deo, tamquam  
homines audiant. VALE.

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\* *Frag. de superstitione* 36 H., according to Rossbach.

## EPISTLE X.

rather, what I am promising myself, inasmuch as hope is merely the title of an uncertain blessing: I do not know any person with whom I should prefer you to associate rather than yourself. I remember in what a great-souled way you hurled forth certain phrases, and how full of strength they were! I immediately congratulated myself and said: "These words did not come from the edge of the lips; these utterances have a solid foundation. This man is not one of the many; he has regard for his real welfare." Speak, and live, in this way; see to it that nothing keeps you down. As for your former prayers, you may dispense the gods from answering them; offer new prayers; pray for a sound mind and for good health, first of soul and then of body. And of course you should offer those prayers frequently. Call boldly upon God; you will not be asking him for that which belongs to another.

But I must, as is my custom, send a little gift along with this letter. It is a true saying which I have found in Athenodorus<sup>a</sup>: "Know that thou art freed from all desires when thou hast reached such a point that thou prayest to God for nothing except what thou canst pray for openly." But how foolish men are now! They whisper the basest of prayers to heaven; but if anyone listens, they are silent at once. That which they are unwilling for men to know, they communicate to God. Do you not think, then, that some such wholesome advice as this could be given you: "Live among men as if God beheld you; speak with God as if men were listening"? Farewell.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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