

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

fecisse: aliquos dies interponere, quibus nos imaginaria paupertate exerceamus ad veram. Quod eo magis faciendum est, quod deliciis permaduimus et omnia dura ac difficilia iudicamus. Potius excitandus e somno et vellicandus est animus admonendusque naturam nobis minimum constituisse. Nemo nascitur dives. Quisquis exit in lucem, iussus est lacte et panno esse contentus; ab his initiis nos regna non capiunt. VALE.

XXI.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Cum istis tibi esse negotium iudicas, de quibus scripseras? Maximum negotium tecum habes; tu tibi molestus es. Quid velis nescis; melius probas honesta quam sequeris; vides, ubi sit posita felicitas, sed ad illam pervenire non audes. Quid sit autem, quod te impediat, quia parum ipse dispicis, dicam.

Magna esse haec existimas, quae relicturus es, et cum proposuisti tibi illam securitatem, ad quam transiturus es, retinet te huius vitae, a qua recessurus es, fulgor tamquam in sordida et obscura casurum.

2 Erras, Lucili; ex hac vita ad illam adscenditur. Quod interest inter splendorem et lucem, cum haec

^a Adapted from the epigram on Alexander the Great, "hic est quem non capit orbis." See Plutarch, *Alexander*, § 6 ὁ παῖς ζῆτει σεαυτῷ βασιλείαν ἴσθην· Μακεδονία γὰρ σε οὐ χωρεῖ, and Seneca, *Ep.* cxix. 8.

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few days in which we may prepare ourselves for real poverty by means of fancied poverty. There is all the more reason for doing this, because we have been steeped in luxury and regard all duties as hard and onerous. Rather let the soul be roused from its sleep and be prodded, and let it be reminded that nature has prescribed very little for us. No man is born rich. Every man, when he first sees light, is commanded to be content with milk and rags. Such is our beginning, and yet kingdoms are all too small for us!^a Farewell.

XXI. ON THE RENOWN WHICH MY WRITINGS WILL BRING YOU

Do you conclude that you are having difficulties with those men about whom you wrote to me? Your greatest difficulty is with yourself; for you are your own stumbling-block. You do not know what you want. You are better at approving the right course than at following it out. You see where the true happiness lies, but you have not the courage to attain it. Let me tell you what it is that hinders you, inasmuch as you do not of yourself discern it.

You think that this condition, which you are to abandon, is one of importance, and after resolving upon that ideal state of calm into which you hope to pass, you are held back by the lustre of your present life, from which it is your intention to depart, just as if you were about to fall into a state of filth and darkness. This is a mistake, Lucilius; to go from your present life into the other is a promotion. There is the same difference between

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certam originem habeat ac suam ille niteat alieno, hoc inter hanc vitam et illam; haec fulgore extrinsecus veniente percussa est, crassam illi statim umbram faciet quisquis obstiterit; illa suo lumine inlustris est.

Studia te tua clarum et nobilem efficient. Exem-
3 plum Epicuri referam. Cum Idomeneo scriberet
et illum a vita speciosa ad fidelem stabilemque
gloriam revocaret, rigidae¹ tunc potentiae ministrum
et magna tractantem: "Si gloria," inquit, "tangeris,
notiorem te epistulae meae facient quam omnia ista,
4 quae colis et propter quae coleris." Numquid ergo
mentitus est? Quis Idomeneae nosset, nisi Epicurus
illum litteris suis incidisset? Omnes illos megistanas
et satrapas et regem ipsum, ex quo Idomenei titulus
petebatur, oblivio alta suppressit. Nomen Attici
perire Ciceronis epistulae non sinunt. Nihil illi
profuisset gener Agrippa et Tiberius progener et
Drusus Caesar pronepos; inter tam magna nomina
5 taceretur, nisi sibi² Cicero illum adplicuisset. Pro-
funda super nos altitudo temporis veniet, pauca
ingenia caput exerent et in idem quandoque silentium
abitura oblivioni resistent ac se diu vindicabunt.

¹ For *rigidae* Lipsius proposed *regiae*, "like that of a king." This may be the correct reading.

² *sibi* inserted by Gertz.

^a Epicurus, Frag. 132 Usener.

^b *i.e.*, Cicero's letters did more to preserve the name of Atticus than such a connexion with the imperial house would have done.

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these two lives as there is between mere brightness and real light; the latter has a definite source within itself, the other borrows its radiance; the one is called forth by an illumination coming from the outside, and anyone who stands between the source and the object immediately turns the latter into a dense shadow; but the other has a glow that comes from within.

It is your own studies that will make you shine and will render you eminent. Allow me to mention the case of Epicurus. He was writing^a to Idomeneus and trying to recall him from a showy existence to sure and steadfast renown. Idomeneus was at that time a minister of state who exercised a rigorous authority and had important affairs in hand. "If," said Epicurus, "you are attracted by fame, my letters will make you more renowned than all the things which you cherish and which make you cherished." Did Epicurus speak falsely? Who would have known of Idomeneus, had not the philosopher thus engraved his name in those letters of his? All the grandees and satraps, even the king himself, who was petitioned for the title which Idomeneus sought, are sunk in deep oblivion. Cicero's letters keep the name of Atticus from perishing. It would have profited Atticus nothing to have an Agrippa for a son-in-law, a Tiberius for the husband of his grand-daughter, and a Drusus Caesar for a great-grandson; amid these mighty names his name would never be spoken, had not Cicero bound him to himself.^b The deep flood of time will roll over us; some few great men will raise their heads above it, and, though destined at the last to depart into the same realms of silence, will battle against oblivion and maintain their ground for long.

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Quod Epicurus amico suo potuit promittere, hoc tibi promitto, Lucili. Habebo apud posteros gratiam, possum mecum duratura nomina educere. Vergilius noster duobus memoriam aeternam promisit et praestat :

Fortunati ambo ! Siquid mea carmina possunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet aevo,
Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
Accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

6 Quoscumque in medium fortuna protulit, quicumque membra ac partes alienae potentiae fuerunt, horum gratia viguit, domus frequentata est, dum ipsi steterunt; post ipsos cito memoria defecit. Ingeniorum crescit dignatio nec ipsis tantum honor habetur, sed quicquid illorum memoriae adhaesit, excipitur.

7 Ne gratis Idomeneus in epistulam meam venerit, ipse eam de suo redimet. Ad hunc Epicurus illam nobilem sententiam scripsit, qua hortatur, ut Pythoclea locupletem non publica nec ancipiti via faciat. "Si vis," inquit, "Pythoclea divitem facere, non pecuniae adiciendum, sed cupiditati detrahendum
8 est." Et apertior ista sententia est quam ut interpretanda sit, et disertior quam ut adiuvanda. Hoc unum te admoneo, ne istud tantum existimes de divitiis dictum; quocumque transtuleris, idem poterit.

^a *Aeneid*, ix. 446 ff.

^b As in the case of Epicurus and Idomeneus, Cicero and Atticus, Vergil and Euryalus and Nisus, and Seneca and Lucilius!

^c *Frag.* 135 *Usener*.

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That which Epicurus could promise his friend, this I promise you, Lucilius. I shall find favour among later generations; I can take with me names that will endure as long as mine. Our poet Vergil promised an eternal name to two heroes, and is keeping his promise: ^a

Blest heroes twain! If power my song possess,
The record of your names shall never be
Erased from out the book of Time, while yet
Aeneas' tribe shall keep the Capitol,
That rock immovable, and Roman sire
Shall empire hold.

Whenever men have been thrust forward by fortune, whenever they have become part and parcel of another's influence, they have found abundant favour, their houses have been thronged, only so long as they themselves have kept their position; when they themselves have left it, they have slipped at once from the memory of men. But in the case of innate ability, the respect in which it is held increases, and not only does honour accrue to the man himself, but whatever has attached itself to his memory is passed on from one to another.^b

In order that Idomeneus may not be introduced free of charge into my letter, he shall make up the indebtedness from his own account. It was to him that Epicurus addressed the well-known saying,^c urging him to make Pythocles rich, but not rich in the vulgar and equivocal way. "If you wish," said he, "to make Pythocles rich, do not add to his store of money, but subtract from his desires." This idea is too clear to need explanation, and too clever to need reinforcement. There is, however, one point on which I would warn you,—not to consider that *this statement applies only to riches; its value will*

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Si vis Pythoclea honestum facere, non honoribus adiciendum est, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum. Si vis Pythoclea esse in perpetua voluptate, non voluptatibus adiciendum est, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum; si vis Pythoclea senem facere et implere vitam, non annis adiciendum est, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum.

- 9 Has voces non est quod Epicuri esse iudices; publicae sunt. Quod fieri in senatu solet, faciendum ego in philosophia quoque existimo: cum censuit aliquis, quod ex parte mihi placeat, iubeo illum dividere sententiam et sequor, quod probo. Eo¹ libentius Epicuri egregia dicta commemoro, ut istis,² qui ad illum³ confugiunt spe mala inducti, qui velamentum ipsos vitiorum suorum habituros existimant, probem⁴ quocumque ierint honeste esse vivendum.
- 10 Cum adieris⁵ eius hortulos et inscriptum hortulis legeris⁶

Hospes, hic bene manebis, hic summum bonum voluptas est,

paratus erit istius domicilii custos hospitalis, humanus, et te polenta excipiet et aquam quoque large ministrabit et dicet: "Ecquid bene acceptus es?" "Non iniritant," inquit, "hi hortuli famem, sed extinguunt. Nec maiorem ipsis potionibus sitim faciunt, sed naturali et gratuito remedio sedant. In hac voluptate consenui."

- 11 De his tecum desiderii loquor, quae consolationem non recipiunt, quibus dandum est aliquid, ut desinant.

¹ quod probo eo Haupt and Madvig; pro eo or probeo MSS.

² isti Muretus; isti MSS.

³ illum Haupt; illam or illa MSS.

⁴ probem Muretus; probent MSS.

⁵ adieris Schweighäuser; aud (ad) ierithis p; audierit his L; adieretis audierit his Pb.

⁶ legeris added by Buecheler; inscriptum hortulis pL; inscriptum portae videris Wilamowitz.

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