

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- 7 Dissentio ab his, qui in fluctus medios eunt et tumultuosam probantes vitam cotidie cum difficultatibus rerum magno animo conluctantur. Sapiens feret ista, non eliget, et malet in pace esse quam in pugna. Non multum prodest vitia sua proiecisse, si
- 8 cum alienis rixandum est. "Triginta," inquit,<sup>1</sup> "tyranni Socraten circumsteterunt nec potuerunt animum eius infringere." Quid interest, quot domini sint? Servitus una est. Hanc qui contempsit, in quantalibet turba dominantium liber est.
- 9 Tempus est desinere, sed si prius portorium solvero. "Initium est salutis notitia peccati." Egregie mihi hoc dixisse videtur Epicurus. Nam qui peccare se nescit, corrigi non vult; deprehendas
- 10 te oportet, antequam emendes. Quidam vitiis gloriantur; tu existimas aliquid de remedio cogitare, qui mala sua virtutum loco numerant? Ideo quantum potes, te ipse coargue, inquire in te; accusatoris primum partibus fungere, deinde iudicis, novissime deprecatoris. Aliquando te offende. VALE.

### XXIX.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 De Marcellino nostro quaeris et vis scire, quid agat. Raro ad nos venit, non ulla alia ex causa quam quod audire verum timet, a quo periculo iam abest.

<sup>1</sup> *inquit p; inquis LPb.*

<sup>a</sup> Frag. 522 Usener.

<sup>b</sup> *i. e.,* refuse your own intercession.

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ing from its ailment. I disagree with those who strike out into the midst of the billows and, welcoming a stormy existence, wrestle daily in hardihood of soul with life's problems. The wise man will endure all that, but will not choose it; he will prefer to be at peace rather than at war. It helps little to have cast out your own faults if you must quarrel with those of others. Says one: "There were thirty tyrants surrounding Socrates, and yet they could not break his spirit"; but what does it matter how many masters a man has? "Slavery" has no plural; and he who has scorned it is free,—no matter amid how large a mob of over-lords he stands.

It is time to stop, but not before I have paid duty. "The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation." This saying of Epicurus<sup>a</sup> seems to me to be a noble one. For he who does not know that he has sinned does not desire correction; you must discover yourself in the wrong before you can reform yourself. Some boast of their faults. Do you think that the man has any thought of mending his ways who counts over his vices as if they were virtues? Therefore, as far as possible, prove yourself guilty, hunt up charges against yourself; play the part, first of accuser, then of judge, last of intercessor. At times be harsh with yourself.<sup>b</sup> Farewell.

### XXIX. ON THE CRITICAL CONDITION OF MARCELLINUS

You have been inquiring about our friend Marcellinus and you desire to know how he is getting along. He seldom comes to see me, for no other reason than that he is afraid to hear the truth, and at present he

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- Nulli enim nisi audituro dicendum est. Ideo de Diogene nec minus de aliis Cynicis, qui libertate promiscua usi sunt et obvios monuerunt, dubitari solet, 2 an hoc facere debuerint. Quid enim, si quis surdos obiurget aut natura morbove mutos? "Quare," inquis, "verbis parcam? Gratuita sunt. Non possum scire, an ei profuturus sim, quem admoneo; illud scio, alicui me profuturum si multos admonuero. Spar-genda manus est.<sup>1</sup> Non potest fieri, ut non aliquando succedat multa temptanti."
- 3 Hoc, mi Lucili, non existimo magno viro faciendum; diluitur eius auctoritas nec habet apud eos satis ponderis, quos posset minus obsolecta corrigere. Sagittarius non aliquando ferire debet, sed aliquando deerrare. Non est ars, quae ad effectum casu venit. Sapientia ars est; certum petat, eligat profecturos, ab is, quos desperavit, recedat, non tamen cito relinquat et in ipsa desperatione extrema remedia temptet.
- 4 Marcellinum nostrum ego nondum despero. Etiamnunc servari potest, sed si cito illi manus porrigitur. Est quidem periculum, ne porrigentem trahat; magna in illo ingenii vis est, sed iam tendentis in pravum. Nihilominus adibo hoc peri-culum et audebo illi mala sua ostendere. Faciet
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<sup>1</sup> So the MSS.; otherwise Hense would read *spargendum plena manu est*.

<sup>a</sup> The usual expression is *plena manu spargere*, "with full hand," cf. *Ep.* cxx. 10. In the famous saying of Corinna to Pindar: "Sow with the hand and not with the sack," the idea is "sparingly," and not, as here, "bountifully."

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is removed from any danger of hearing it; for one must not talk to a man unless he is willing to listen. That is why it is often doubted whether Diogenes and the other Cynics, who employed an indiscriminating freedom of speech and offered advice to any who came in their way, ought to have pursued such a plan. For what if one should chide the deaf or those who are speechless from birth or by illness? But you answer: "Why should I spare words? They cost nothing. I cannot know whether I shall help the man to whom I give advice; but I know well that I shall help someone if I advise many. I must scatter this advice by the handful." It is impossible that one who tries often should not sometime succeed."

This very thing, my dear Lucilius, is, I believe, exactly what a great-souled man ought not to do; his influence is weakened; it has too little effect upon those whom it might have set right if it had not grown so stale. The archer ought not to hit the mark only sometimes; he ought to miss it only sometimes. That which takes effect by chance is not an art. Now wisdom is an art; it should have a definite aim, choosing only those who will make progress, but withdrawing from those whom it has come to regard as hopeless,—yet not abandoning them too soon, and just when the case is becoming hopeless trying drastic remedies.

As to our friend Marcellinus, I have not yet lost hope. He can still be saved, but the helping hand must be offered soon. There is indeed danger that he may pull his helper down; for there is in him a native character of great vigour, though it is already inclining to wickedness. Nevertheless I shall brave this danger and be bold enough to show him his

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quod solet; advocabit illas facetias, quae risum evocare lugentibus possunt, et in se primum, deinde in nos iocabitur. Omnia, quae dicturus sum, occupabit. Scrutabitur scholas nostras et obiciet philosophis congiaria, amicas, gulam. Ostendet mihi alium in adulterio, alium in popina, alium in aula.

6 Ostendet mihi M. Lepidi<sup>1</sup> philosophum Aristonem, qui in gestatione disserebat. Hoc enim ad edendas operas tempus acceperat. De cuius secta cum quaereretur, Scaurus ait: "Utique Peripateticus non est." De eodem cum consuleretur Iulius Graecinus, vir egregius, quid sentiret, "Non possum," inquit, "tibi dicere; nescio enim, quid de gradu faciat,"

7 tamquam de essedario interrogaretur. Hos mihi circultores, qui philosophiam honestius neglexissent quam vendunt, in faciem ingeret. Constitui tamen contumelias perpeti; moveat ille mihi risum, ego fortasse illi lacrimas movebo, aut si ridere perseverabit, gaudebo tamquam in malis, quod illi genus insaniae hilare contigerit. Sed non est ista hilaritas longa. Observa; videbis eosdem intra exiguum

8 tempus acerrime ridere et acerrime rabere. Propositum est adgredi illum et ostendere, quanto pluris fuerit, quom multis minoris videretur. Vitia eius etiam si non excidero, inhibebo; non desinent, sed

<sup>1</sup> *Lepidi* Erasmus (from an unknown MS.); *lepidum* all known MSS.

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<sup>a</sup> The *essedarius* fought from a car. When his adversary forced him out of his car, he was compelled to continue the fight on foot, like an unhorsed knight.

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faults. He will act in his usual way; he will have recourse to his wit,—the wit that can call forth smiles even from mourners. He will turn the jest, first against himself, and then against me. He will forestall every word which I am about to utter. He will quiz our philosophic systems; he will accuse philosophers of accepting doles, keeping mistresses, and indulging their appetites. He will point out to me one philosopher who has been caught in adultery, another who haunts the cafés, and another who appears at court. He will bring to my notice Aristo, the philosopher of Marcus Lepidus, who used to hold discussions in his carriage; for that was the time which he had taken for editing his researches, so that Scaurus said of him when asked to what school he belonged: "At any rate, he isn't one of the Walking Philosophers." Julius Graecinus, too, a man of distinction, when asked for an opinion on the same point, replied: "I cannot tell you; for I don't know what he does when dismounted," as if the query referred to a chariot-gladiator.<sup>a</sup> It is mountebanks of that sort, for whom it would be more creditable to have left philosophy alone than to traffic in her, whom Marcellinus will throw in my teeth. But I have decided to put up with taunts; he may stir my laughter, but I perchance shall stir him to tears; or, if he persist in his jokes, I shall rejoice, so to speak, in the midst of sorrow, because he is blessed with such a merry sort of lunacy. But that kind of merriment does not last long. Observe such men, and you will note that within a short space of time they laugh to excess and rage to excess. It is my plan to approach him and to show him how much greater was his worth when many thought it less. Even though I shall not root out his faults, I shall

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intermittent. Fortasse autem et desinent, si intermittendi consuetudinem fecerint. Non est hoc ipsum fastidiendum, quoniam quidem graviter adfectis  
 9 sanitatis loco est bona remissio. Dum me illi paro, tu interim, qui potes, qui intellegis, unde quo evaseris, et ex eo suspicaris, quousque sis evasurus, compone mores tuos, attolle animum, adversus formidata consiste. Numerare eos noli, qui tibi metum faciunt. Nonne videatur stultus, si quis multitudinem eo loco timeat, per quem transitus singulis est? Aequae ad tuam mortem multis aditus non est, licet illam multi minentur. Sic istuc natura disposuit: spiritum tibi tam unus eripiet quam unus dedit.

10 Si pudorem haberes, ultimam mihi pensionem remisisses. Sed ne ego quidem me sordide geram in finem aeris alieni et tibi quod debeo, inpingam. "Numquam volui populo placere. Nam quae ego scio, non probat populus; quae probat populus, ego  
 11 nescio." "Quis hoc?" inquis, tamquam nescias, cui imperem<sup>1</sup>; Epicurus. Sed idem hoc omnes tibi ex omni domo conclamabunt, Peripatetici, Academici, Stoici, Cynici. Quis enim placere populo potest, cui placet virtus? Malis artibus popularis favor quaeritur. Similem te illis facias oportet. Non probabunt, nisi agnoverint. Multo autem ad rem

<sup>1</sup> *imperem* and *imperim* MSS.; *imputem* Rossbach. Buecheler conjectures *nescias, aes cui imperem*, "you did not know the man upon whom I am levying for a loan."

• Epicurus, Frag. 187 Usener,

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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