damni. Nemo illa perisse sentit, sed cogitat. Qui se habet, nihil perdidit. Sed quoto cuique habere se contigit? Vale.

XLIII.

Seneca Lvcilio svo salvtem

1 Quomodo hoc ad me pervenerit quaeris, quis mihi
id te cogitare narraverit, quod tu nulli narraveras?
Is qui scit plurumum, rumor. "Quid ergo?" inquis,
"Tantus sum, ut possim excitare rumorem?" Non
est quod te ad hunc locum respiciens metiaris; ad
2 istum respice, in quo moraris. Quicquid inter vicina
eminet, magnum est illic, ubi eminet. Nam magnitudo non habet[1] modum certum; comparatio illam
aut tollit[2] aut deprimit. Navis, quae in flumine
magna est, in mari parvula est. Gubernaculum, quod
alteri navi magnum, alteri exiguum est.

3 Tu nunc in provincia, licet contemnas ipse te,
magnus es. Quid agas, quemadmodum cenes, quemadmodum dormias, quaeritur, scitur; eo tibi diligentius vivendum est. Tunc autem felicem esse te
iudica, cum poteris in publico vivere, cum te parietes
tui tegent, non abscondent, quos plerumque circumdatos nobis iudicamus non ut tutius vivamus, sed ut
4 peccemus occultius. Rem dicam, ex qua mores
aestimes nostros: vix quemquam invenies, qui possit

[1] *non habet* later MSS.; *habet* pLg.
[2] *tollit* L; *attollit* L second hand and codd. Wirc. and Erlang.

[a] *i.e.*, Rome.
[b] Lucilius was at this time imperial procurator in Sicily.

reference to these things, but a notion of loss. No one feels that they have been lost, but his mind tells him that it has been so. He that owns himself has lost nothing. But how few men are blessed with ownership of self! Farewell.

XLIII. ON THE RELATIVITY OF FAME

Do you ask how the news reached me, and who informed me, that you were entertaining this idea, of which you had said nothing to a single soul? It was that most knowing of persons,—gossip. "What," you say, "am I such a great personage that I can stir up gossip?" Now there is no reason why you should measure yourself according to this part of the world[a]; have regard only to the place where you are dwelling. Any point which rises above adjacent points is great, at the spot where it rises. For greatness is not absolute; comparison increases it or lessens it. A ship which looms large in the river seems tiny when on the ocean. A rudder which is large for one vessel, is small for another.

So you in your province[b] are really of importance, though you scorn yourself. Men are asking what you do, how you dine, and how you sleep, and they find out, too; hence there is all the more reason for your living circumspectly. Do not, however, deem yourself truly happy until you find that you can live before men's eyes, until your walls protect but do not hide you; although we are apt to believe that these walls surround us, not to enable us to live more safely, but that we may sin more secretly. I shall mention a fact by which you may weigh the worth of a man's character: you will scarcely find anyone

aperto ostio vivere. Ianitores conscientia nostra, non
superbia opposuit; sic vivimus, ut deprendi sit subito
adspici. Quid autem prodest recondere se et oculos
5 hominum auresque vitare? Bona conscientia turbam
advocat, mala etiam in solitudine anxia atque sollicita
est. Si honesta sunt quae facis, omnes sciant, si
turpia, quid refert neminem scire, cum tu scias? O
te miserum, si contemnis hunc testem! Vale.

XLIIII.

Seneca Lvcilio svo salvtem

1 Iterum tu mihi te pusillum facis et dicis malignius
tecum egisse naturam prius, deinde fortunam, cum
possis eximere te vulgo et ad felicitatem hominum
maximam emergere. Si quid est aliud in philosophia
boni, hoc est, quod stemma non inspicit. Omnes, si
2 ad originem primam revocantur, a dis sunt. Eques
Romanus es, et ad hunc ordinem tua te perduxit
industria; at mehercules multis quattuordecim clausa
sunt; non omnes curia admittit; castra quoque, quos
ad laborem et periculum recipiant, fastidiose legunt.
Bona mens omnibus patet, omnes ad hoc sumus
nobiles. Nec reicit quemquam philosophia nec
3 eligit; omnibus lucet. Patricius Socrates non fuit.

[a] Alluding to the seats reserved for the knights at the theatre.

who can live with his door wide open. It is our conscience, not our pride, that has put doorkeepers at our doors; we live in such a fashion that being suddenly disclosed to view is equivalent to being caught in the act. What profits it, however, to hide ourselves away, and to avoid the eyes and ears of men? A good conscience welcomes the crowd, but a bad conscience, even in solitude, is disturbed and troubled. If your deeds are honourable, let everybody know them; if base, what matters it that no one knows them, as long as you yourself know them? How wretched you are if you despise such a witness! Farewell.

XLIV. ON PHILOSOPHY AND PEDIGREES

You are again insisting to me that you are a nobody, and saying that nature in the first place, and fortune in the second, have treated you too scurvily, and this in spite of the fact that you have it in your power to separate yourself from the crowd and rise to the highest human happiness! If there is any good in philosophy, it is this,—that it never looks into pedigrees. All men, if traced back to their original source, spring from the gods. You are a Roman knight, and your persistent work promoted you to this class; yet surely there are many to whom the fourteen rows are barred;[a] the senate-chamber is not open to all; the army, too, is scrupulous in choosing those whom it admits to toil and danger. But a noble mind is free to all men; according to this test, we may all gain distinction. Philosophy neither rejects nor selects anyone; its light shines for all. Socrates was no aristocrat. Cleanthes

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