

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- 12 Quid ergo? Non eo potius curam transferes, ut ostendas omnibus magno temporis inpendio quaeri supervacua et multos transisse vitam, dum vitae instrumenta conquirunt? Recognosce singulos, considera universos; nullius non vita spectat in crastinum.
- 13 Quid in hoc sit mali, quaeris? Infinitum. Non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt. Omnia differunt. Etiam si adtenderemus, tamen nos vita praecurreret; nunc vero cunctantes quasi aliena transeunt et ultimo die finitur, omni perit.

Sed ne epistolae modum excedam, quae non debet sinistram manum legentis implere, in alium diem hanc litem cum dialecticis differam nimium subtilibus et hoc solum curantibus, non et hoc. VALE.

### XLVI.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Librum tuum, quem mihi promiseras, accepi et tanquam lecturus ex commo adaperui ac tantum degustare volui. Deinde blanditus est ipse, ut procederem longius. Qui quam disertus fuerit, ex hoc intellegas licet; levis mihi visus est, cum esset nec mei nec tui corporis, sed qui primo aspectu aut Titi Livii aut Epicuri posset videri. Tanta autem dulcedine me tenuit et traxit, ut illum sine ulla

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\* A book was unrolled with the right hand; the reader gathered up the part already perused with his left hand. Nearly all books at this time were papyrus rolls, as were letters of any great length.

## EPISTLES XLV., XLVI.

What, then? Shall you not rather transfer your efforts to making it clear to all men that the search for the superfluous means a great outlay of time, and that many have gone through life merely accumulating the instruments of life? Consider individuals, survey men in general; there is none whose life does not look forward to the morrow. "What harm is there in this," you ask? Infinite harm; for such persons do not live, but are preparing to live. They postpone everything. Even if we paid strict attention, life would soon get ahead of us; but as we are now, life finds us lingering and passes us by as if it belonged to another, and though it ends on the final day, it perishes every day.

But I must not exceed the bounds of a letter, which ought not to fill the reader's left hand.<sup>a</sup> So I shall postpone to another day our case against the hair-splitters, those over-subtle fellows who make argumentation supreme instead of subordinate. Farewell.

### XLVI. ON A NEW BOOK BY LUCILIUS

I received the book of yours which you promised me. I opened it hastily with the idea of glancing over it at leisure; for I meant only to taste the volume. But by its own charm the book coaxed me into traversing it more at length. You may understand from this fact how eloquent it was; for it seemed to be written in the smooth style,<sup>b</sup> and yet did not resemble your handiwork or mine, but at first sight might have been ascribed to Titus Livius or to Epicurus. Moreover, I was so impressed and carried along by its charm that I finished it without

<sup>a</sup> Possibly *levis* in the sense of *light*, referring to size.

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- dilatione perlegerim. Sol me invitabat, fames ad-  
monebat, nubes minabantur; tamen exhausti totum.
- 2 Non tantum delectatus, sed gavisus sum. Quid ingenii iste habuit, quid animi! Dicerem, quid inpetus, si interquievisset, si ex intervallo<sup>1</sup> surrexisset; nunc non fuit inpetus, sed tenor, compositio virilis et sancta; nihilominus interveniebat dulce illud et loco lene. Grandis, erectus es; hoc te volo tenere, sic ire. Fecit aliquid et materia; ideo eligenda est fertilis, quae capiat ingenium, quae incitet.
- 3 De libro<sup>2</sup> plura scribam cum illum retractavero; nunc parum mihi sedet iudicium, tamquam audierim illa, non legerim. Sine me et inquirere. Non est quod verearis; verum audies. O te hominem felicem, quod nihil habes, propter quod quisquam tibi tam longe mentiatur! Nisi quod iam etiam ubi causa sublata est, mentimur consuetudinis causa. VALE.

### XLVII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Libenter ex is,<sup>3</sup> qui a te veniunt, cognovi familiariter te cum servis tuis vivere. Hoc prudentiam tuam, hoc eruditionem decet. "Servi sunt." Immo homines. "Servi sunt." Immo contubernales.

<sup>1</sup> *si ex intervallo* Madvig; *si intervallo* LPb.

<sup>2</sup> *de libro* later MSS.; *libro* pLPb.

<sup>3</sup> *is* Hense: *his* or *iis* MSS.

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<sup>a</sup> Much of the following is quoted by Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 11. 7 ff., in the passage beginning *vis tu cogitare eos, quos ius tuum vocas, eisdem seminibus ortos eodem frui caelo*, etc.

## EPISTLES XLVI., XLVII.

any postponement. The sunlight called to me, hunger warned, and clouds were lowering; but I absorbed the book from beginning to end.

I was not merely pleased; I rejoiced. So full of wit and spirit it was! I should have added "force," had the book contained moments of repose, or had it risen to energy only at intervals. But I found that there was no burst of force, but an even flow, a style that was vigorous and chaste. Nevertheless I noticed from time to time your sweetness, and here and there that mildness of yours. Your style is lofty and noble; I want you to keep to this manner and this direction. Your subject also contributed something; for this reason you should choose productive topics, which will lay hold of the mind and arouse it.

I shall discuss the book more fully after a second perusal; meantime, my judgment is somewhat unsettled, just as if I had heard it read aloud, and had not read it myself. You must allow me to examine it also. You need not be afraid; you shall hear the truth. Lucky fellow, to offer a man no opportunity to tell you lies at such long range! Unless perhaps, even now, when excuses for lying are taken away, custom serves as an excuse for our telling each other lies! Farewell.

## XLVII. ON MASTER AND SLAVE

I am glad to learn, through those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This befits a sensible and well-educated man like yourself. "They are slaves," people declare.<sup>a</sup> Nay, rather they are men. "Slaves!" No, comrades.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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