

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

LI.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Quomodo quisque potest, mi Lucili! Tu istic habes Aetnam, editum illum ac¹ nobilissimum Siciliae montem, quem quare dixerit Messala unicum, sive Valgius, apud utrumque enim legi, non reperio, cum plurima loca evomant ignem, non tantum edita, quod crebrius evenit, videlicet quia ignis in altissimum effertur, sed etiam iacentia. Nos utcumque possumus, contenti sumus Bais, quas postero die quam adtigeram reliqui, locum ob hoc devitandum, cum habeat quasdam naturales dotes, quia illum sibi celebrandum 2 luxuria desumpsit. "Quid ergo? Ulli loco indicendum est odium?" Minime. Sed quemadmodum aliqua vestis sapienti ac probo viro magis convenit quam aliqua, nec ullum colorem ille odit, sed aliquem parum putat aptum esse frugalitatem professo; sic regio quoque est, quam sapiens vir aut ad sapientiam tendens declinet tamquam alienam bonis moribus.
- 3 Itaque de secessu cogitans numquam Canopum eliget, quamvis neminem Canopus esse frugi vetet, ne Baias quidem; deversorium vitiorum esse coeperunt. Illic sibi plurimum luxuria permittit, illic, tamquam aliqua licentia debeatur loco, magis solvitur.
- 4 Non tantum corpori, sed etiam moribus salubrem

¹ *editum illum ac* Chatelain and Hense; *et illuc* MSS.

^a Etna was of especial interest to Lucilius. Besides being a Governor in Sicily, he may have written the poem *Aetna*. For Seneca's own curiosity regarding the mountain compare *Ep.* lxxix. 5 ff.

^b Not far from Naples, and across the bay from Puteoli. It was a fashionable and dissolute watering-place.

^c Situated at the mouth of the westernmost branch of the Nile, and proverbial in Latin literature for the laxity of its morals.

EPISTLE LI.

LI. ON BAIÆ AND MORALS

Every man does the best he can, my dear Lucilius! You over there have Etna,^a that lofty and most celebrated mountain of Sicily; (although I cannot make out why Messala,—or was it Valgius? for I have been reading in both,—has called it “unique,” inasmuch as many regions belch forth fire, not merely the lofty ones where the phenomenon is more frequent,—presumably because fire rises to the greatest possible height,—but low-lying places also.) As for myself, I do the best I can; I have had to be satisfied with Baiæ^b; and I left it the day after I reached it; for Baiæ is a place to be avoided, because, though it has certain natural advantages, luxury has claimed it for her own exclusive resort. “What then,” you say, “should any place be singled out as an object of aversion?” Not at all. But just as, to the wise and upright man, one style of clothing is more suitable than another, without his having an aversion for any particular colour, but because he thinks that some colours do not befit one who has adopted the simple life; so there are places also, which the wise man or he who is on the way toward wisdom will avoid as foreign to good morals. Therefore, if he is contemplating withdrawal from the world, he will not select Canopus^c (although Canopus does not keep any man from living simply), nor Baiæ either; for both places have begun to be resorts of vice. At Canopus luxury pampers itself to the utmost degree; at Baiæ it is even more lax, as if the place itself demanded a certain amount of licence.

We ought to select abodes which are wholesome

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- locum eligere debemus. Quemadmodum inter tortores habitare nolim, sic ne inter popinas quidem. Videre ebrios per litora errantes et comessiones navigantium et symphoniarum cantibus strepentes lacus et alia, quae velut soluta legibus luxuria non
5 tantum peccat, sed publicat, quid necesse est? Id agere debemus, ut irritamenta vitiorum quam longissime profugiamus. Indurandus est animus et a blandimentis voluptatum procul abstrahendus. Una Hannibalem hiberna solverunt et indomitum illum nivibus atque Alpibus virum enervaverunt fomenta
6 Campaniae. Armis vicit, vitiis victus est. Nobis quoque militandum est, et quidem genere militiae, quo numquam quies, numquam otium datur. Debellandae sunt in primis voluptates, quae, ut vides, saeva quoque ad se ingenia rapuerunt. Si quis sibi proposuerit, quantum operis adgressus sit, sciet nihil delicate, nihil molliter esse faciendum. Quid mihi cum istis calentibus stagnis? Quid cum sudatoriis, in quae siccus vapor corpora exhausurus includitur? Omnis sudor per laborem exeat.
- 7 Si faceremus, quod fecit Hannibal, ut interrupto cursu rerum omissoque bello fovendis corporibus operam daremus, nemo non intempestivam desidiam victori quoque, nedum vincenti, periculosam merito reprehenderet; minus nobis quam illis Punica signa sequentibus licet, plus periculi restat cedentibus, plus

* There is considerable doubt whether *symphonia* was vocal or instrumental music. The passage probably refers either to glee-singers (as in Venice to-day) or to bands of flute-players playing part-music. Cicero (*Verr.* iii. 44. 105) mentions them as providing entertainment at banquets.

EPISTLE LI.

not only for the body but also for the character. Just as I do not care to live in a place of torture, neither do I care to live in a café. To witness persons wandering drunk along the beach, the riotous revelling of sailing parties, the lakes a-din with choral^a song, and all the other ways in which luxury, when it is, so to speak, released from the restraints of law not merely sins, but blazons its sins abroad,—why must I witness all this? We ought to see to it that we flee to the greatest possible distance from provocations to vice. We should toughen our minds, and remove them far from the allurements of pleasure. A single winter relaxed Hannibal's fibre; his pampering in Campania took the vigour out of that hero who had triumphed over Alpine snows. He conquered with his weapons, but was conquered by his vices. We too have a war to wage, a type of warfare in which there is allowed no rest or furlough. To be conquered, in the first place, are pleasures, which, as you see, have carried off even the sternest characters. If a man has once understood how great is the task which he has entered upon, he will see that there must be no dainty or effeminate conduct. What have I to do with those hot baths or with the sweating-room where they shut in the dry steam which is to drain your strength? Perspiration should flow only after toil.

Suppose we do what Hannibal did,—check the course of events, give up the war, and give over our bodies to be coddled. Every one would rightly blame us for our untimely sloth, a thing fraught with peril even for the victor, to say nothing of one who is only on the way to victory. And we have even less right to do this than those followers of the Carthaginian flag; for our danger is greater than

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- 8 operis etiam perseverantibus. Fortuna mecum bellum gerit; non sum imperata facturus. Iugum non recipio, immo, quod maiore virtute faciendum est, excutio. Non est emolliendus animus; si voluptati cessero, cedendum est dolori, cedendum est labori, cedendum est paupertati; idem sibi in me iuris esse volet et ambitio et ira; inter tot adfectus distrahar,
- 9 immo discerpar. Libertas proposita est; ad hoc praemium laboratur. Quae sit libertas, quaeris? Nulli rei servire, nulli necessitati, nullis casibus, fortunam in aequum deducere. Quo die illa me¹ intellexero plus posse, nil poterit. Ego illam feram, cum in manu mors sit?
- 10 His cogitationibus intentum loca seria sanctaque eligere oportet. Effeminat animos amoenitas nimia nec dubie aliquid ad corrumpendum vigorem potest regio. Quamlibet viam iumenta patiuntur, quorum durata in aspero ungula est; in molli palustrique pascuo saginata cito subteruntur. Et fortior miles ex confragoso venit; segnis est urbanus et verna. Nullum laborem recusant manus, quae ad arma ab aratro transferuntur; in primo deficit pulvere ille
- 11 unctus et nitidus. Severior loci disciplina firmat ingenium aptumque magnis conatibus reddit. Literni

¹ *quo die illa me* Lipsius; *quod die illā* P; *quo die illam* b; *quo die illum* L.

EPISTLE LI.

theirs if we slacken, and our toil is greater than theirs even if we press ahead. Fortune is fighting against me, and I shall not carry out her commands. I refuse to submit to the yoke; nay rather, I shake off the yoke that is upon me,—an act which demands even greater courage. The soul is not to be pampered; surrendering to pleasure means also surrendering to pain, surrendering to toil, surrendering to poverty. Both ambition and anger will wish to have the same rights over me as pleasure, and I shall be torn asunder, or rather pulled to pieces, amid all these conflicting passions. I have set freedom before my eyes; and I am striving for that reward. And what is freedom, you ask? It means not being a slave to any circumstance, to any constraint, to any chance; it means compelling Fortune to enter the lists on equal terms. And on the day when I know that I have the upper hand, her power will be naught. When I have death in my own control, shall I take orders from her?

Therefore, a man occupied with such reflections should choose an austere and pure dwelling-place. The spirit is weakened by surroundings that are too pleasant, and without a doubt one's place of residence can contribute towards impairing its vigour. Animals whose hoofs are hardened on rough ground can travel any road; but when they are fattened on soft marshy meadows their hoofs are soon worn out. The bravest soldier comes from rock-ribbed regions; but the town-bred and the home-bred are sluggish in action. The hand which turns from the plough to the sword never objects to toil; but your sleek and well-dressed dandy quails at the first cloud of dust. Being trained in a rugged country strengthens the character and fits it for great undertakings. It was

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

honestius Scipio quam Bais exulabat ; ruina eius non est tam molliter conlocanda. Illi quoque, ad quos primos fortuna populi Romani publicas opes transtulit, C. Marius et Cn. Pompeius et Caesar¹ extruxerunt quidem villas in regione Baiana, sed illas inposuerunt summis iugis montium. Videbatur hoc magis militare, ex edito speculari late longeque subiecta. Aspice, quam positionem elegerint, quibus aedificia excita-

12 Habitaturum tu putas umquam fuisse in mica² Catonem, ut praenavigantes adulteras dinumeraret et tot genera cumbarum variis coloribus picta et fluvitantes toto lacu rosam, ut audiret canentium nocturna convicia? Nonne ille manere intra vallum maluisset, quod in unam noctem manu sua ipse duxisset? Quidni mallet, quisquis vir est, somnum suum classico quam symphonia rumpi?

13 Sed satis diu cum Bais litigavimus, numquam satis cum vitiis, quae, oro te, Lucili, perseguere sine modo, sine fine. Nam illis quoque nec finis est nec modus. Proice quaecumque cor tuum laniant, quae si aliter extrahi nequirent, cor ipsum cum illis revellendum erat. Voluptates praecipue exturba et invisissimas habe; latronum more, quos *φιλητάς*³ Aegyptii vocant, in hoc nos amplectuntur, ut strangulent. VALE.

¹ Before *Caesar* Gertz, followed by Hense, adds *C*.

² in *mica* Lipsius; *inimica* LP. Friedländer, interpreting *mica* as a sort of casino, or fancy dining-hall, agrees with the reading of Lipsius and compares Martial, ii. 59. 1.

³ *φιλητάς* Muretus; *hostilistas* L; *stilistas* P; *psillistas* b.

^a See Letter lxxxvi.

^b The Egyptians used the word *φιλητής* in the sense of "knave" or "foot-pad." The word is found in the *Hecale* of Callimachus. Hesychius defines it as equal to *κλώψ* "thief." It was pronounced in the same way as *φιλητής* "lover," and in late Greek was spelt in the same way.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:
Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature
which can be purchased on our Website :
www.Brainfly.net

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

webcomments@brainfly.net