

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

aliunde. Quia non est alieni muneris, ne arbitrii quidem alieni est. Quod non dedit fortuna, non eripit. VALE.

LX.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Queror, litigo, irascor. Etiamnunc optas, quod tibi optavit nutrix tua aut paedagogus aut mater? Nondum intellegis, quantum mali optaverint? O quam inimica nobis sunt vota nostrorum! Eo quidem inimiciora quo cessere felicius. Iam non admiror, si omnia nos a prima pueritia mala secuntur; inter execrationes parentum crevimus. Exaudiant di nostram quoque¹ pro nobis vocem gratuitam.
- 2 Quousque poscemus aliquid deos ita quasi² nondum ipsi alere nos possimus? Quamdiu sationibus implebimus magnarum urbium campos? Quamdiu nobis populus metet? Quamdiu unius mensae instrumentum multa navigia et quidem non ex uno mari subvehent? Taurus paucissimorum iugerum pascuo impletur; una silva elephantis pluribus³ sufficit; homo et terra et mari pascitur. Quid ergo? Tam insatiabilem nobis natura alvum dedit, cum tam modica corpora dedisset, ut vastissimorum edacissimorumque animalium aviditatem vinceremus? Minime. Quantulum est enim, quod naturae datur?

¹ *nostram quoque* Buecheler; *quoque nostram* MSS.; *quandoque nostram* Muretus.

² *ita quasi* Haase; *quasi ita* or *ita* MSS.

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from without. Just because it is not in the power of another to bestow, neither is it subject to another's whims. That which Fortune has not given, she cannot take away. Farewell.

LX. ON HARMFUL PRAYERS

I file a complaint, I enter a suit, I am angry. Do you still desire what your nurse, your guardian, or your mother, have prayed for in your behalf? Do you not yet understand what evil they prayed for? Alas, how hostile to us are the wishes of our own folk! And they are all the more hostile in proportion as they are more completely fulfilled. It is no surprise to me, at my age, that nothing but evil attends us from our early youth; for we have grown up amid the curses invoked by our parents. And may the gods give ear to our cry also, uttered in our own behalf,—one which asks no favours!

How long shall we go on making demands upon the gods, as if we were still unable to support ourselves? How long shall we continue to fill with grain the market-places of our great cities? How long must the people gather it in for us? How long shall many ships convey the requisites for a single meal, bringing them from no single sea? The bull is filled when he feeds over a few acres; and one forest is large enough for a herd of elephants. Man, however, draws sustenance both from the earth and from the sea. What, then? Did nature give us bellies so insatiable, when she gave us these puny bodies, that we should outdo the hugest and most voracious animals in greed? Not at all. How small is the amount which will satisfy nature? A very

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Parvo illa dimittitur. Non fames nobis ventris nostri
4 magno constat, sed ambitio. Hos itaque, ut ait
Sallustius, "ventri oboedientes" animalium loco
numeremus, non hominum, quosdam vero ne anima-
lium quidem, sed mortuorum. Vivit is, qui multis
usui est, vivit is, qui se utitur; qui vero latitant et
torpent, sic in domo sunt, quomodo in conditivo.
Horum licet in limine ipso nomen marmori inscribas,
mortem suam antecesserunt. VALE.

LXI.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Desinamus, quod voluimus, velle. Ego certe id
ago: senex ea desii velle¹ quae puer volui. In hoc
unum eunt dies, in hoc noctes, hoc opus meum est,
haec cogitatio: inponere veteribus malis finem. Id
ago, ut mihi instar totius vitae dies sit. Nec meher-
cules tamquam ultimum rapio, sed sic illum aspicio,
2 tamquam esse vel ultimus possit. Hoc animo tibi
hanc epistulam scribo, tamquam me cum maxime
scribentem mors evocatura sit. Paratus exire sum
et ideo fruar vita, quia quam diu futurum hoc sit,
non nimis pendeo.

Ante senectutem curavi, ut bene viverem, in
senectute, ut bene moriar; bene autem mori est

¹ *senex; ea desii velle* Schultess; *senex eadem velle*
pLVPb; *senex ne eadem velle videar* later MSS; *senex ne*
eadem velim Hense after Madvig.

^a *Catiline*, i. 1.

^b *i.e.*, like animals.

^c *i.e.*, you may put an epitaph upon his dwelling as if it
were a tomb.

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little will send her away contented. It is not the natural hunger of our bellies that costs us dear, but our solicitous cravings. Therefore those who, as Sallust^a puts it, "hearken to their bellies," should be numbered among the animals, and not among men; and certain men, indeed, should be numbered, not even among the animals, but among the dead. He really lives who is made use of by many; he really lives who makes use of himself. Those men, however, who creep into a hole and grow torpid^b are no better off in their homes than if they were in their tombs. Right there on the marble lintel of the house of such a man you may inscribe his name,^c for he has died before he is dead. Farewell.

LXI. ON MEETING DEATH CHEERFULLY

Let us cease to desire that which we have been desiring. I, at least, am doing this: in my old age I have ceased to desire what I desired when a boy. To this single end my days and my nights are passed; this is my task, this the object of my thoughts,—to put an end to my chronic ills. I am endeavouring to live every day as if it were a complete life. I do not indeed snatch it up as if it were my last; I do regard it, however, as if it might even be my last. The present letter is written to you with this in mind,—as if death were about to call me away in the very act of writing. I am ready to depart, and I shall enjoy life just because I am not over-anxious as to the future date of my departure.

Before I became old I tried to live well; now that I am old, I shall try to die well; but dying

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