

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

libenter mori. Da operam, ne quid umquam invitus
3 facias. Quicquid necesse futurum est repugnanti,
volenti necessitas non est. Ita dico: qui imperia
libens excipit, partem acerbissimam servitutis effugit,
facere quod nolit. Non qui iussus aliquid facit, miser
est, set qui invitus facit. Itaque sic animum compona-
4 ut finem nostri sine tristitia cogitemus. Ante ad
mortem quam ad vitam praeparandi sumus. Satis
instructa vita est, sed nos in instrumenta eius avidi
sumus; deesse aliquid nobis videtur et semper vide-
bitur. Ut satis vixerimus, nec anni nec dies faciunt,
sed animus. Vixi, Lucili carissime, quantum satis
erat; mortem plenus exspecto. VALE.

LXII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Mentiuntur, qui sibi obstare ad studia liberalia
turbam negotiorum videri volunt; simulant occupa-
tiones et augent et ipsi se occupant. Vaco, Lucili,
vaco et ubicumque sum, ibi meus sum. Rebus enim
me non trado, sed commodo, nec consector perdendi
temporis causas. Et quocumque constitui loco, ibi
cogitationes meas tracto et aliquid in animo salutare

^a A reminiscence of Lucretius, iii. 938 f. *Cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis Aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?* Cf. also Horace, *Sat. i. l. 118 f. vita Cedat uti conviva satur.*

EPISTLES LXI., LXII.

well means dying gladly. See to it that you never do anything unwillingly. That which is bound to be a necessity if you rebel, is not a necessity if you desire it. This is what I mean: he who takes his orders gladly, escapes the bitterest part of slavery,—doing what one does not want to do. The man who does something under orders is not unhappy; he is unhappy who does something against his will. Let us therefore so set our minds in order that we may desire whatever is demanded of us by circumstances, and above all that we may reflect upon our end without sadness. We must make ready for death before we make ready for life. Life is well enough furnished, but we are too greedy with regard to its furnishings; something always seems to us lacking, and will always seem lacking. To have lived long enough depends neither upon our years nor upon our days, but upon our minds. I have lived, my dear friend Lucilius, long enough. I have had my fill^a; I await death. Farewell.

LXII. ON GOOD COMPANY

We are deceived by those who would have us believe that a multitude of affairs blocks their pursuit of liberal studies; they make a pretence of their engagements, and multiply them, when their engagements are merely with themselves. As for me, Lucilius, my time is free; it is indeed free, and wherever I am, I am master of myself. For I do not surrender myself to my affairs, but loan myself to them, and I do not hunt out excuses for wasting my time. And wherever I am situated, I carry on my own meditations and ponder in my mind some

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- 2 converso. Cum me amicis dedi non tamen mihi abduco, nec cum illis moror, quibus me tempus aliquod congregavit aut causa ex officio nata civili,¹ sed cum optimo quoque sum; ad illos, in quocumque loco, in quocumque saeculo fuerunt, animum meum mitto.
- 3 Demetrium, virorum optimum, mecum circumfero et relictis conchyliatis cum illo seminudo loquor, illum admiror. Quidni admirer? Vidi nihil ei deesse. Contemnere aliquis omnia potest, omnia habere nemo potest. Brevissima ad divitias per contemptum divitiarum via est. Demetrius autem noster sic vivit, non tamquam contempserit omnia, sed tamquam aliis habenda permiserit. VALE.

LXIII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Molesto fero decessisse Flaccum, amicum tuum, plus tamen aequo dolere te nolo. Illud, ut non doleas, vix audebo exigere; et esse melius scio. Sed cui ista firmitas animi continget nisi iam multum supra fortunam elato? Illum quoque ista res vellit, sed tantum vellicabit. Nobis autem ignosci potest prolapsis ad lacrimas, si non nimiae decucurrerunt, si ipsi illas repressimus. Nec sicci sint oculi

¹ *civili* late MSS.; *civi* the rest, followed by Hense.

^a Demetrius of Sunium, the Cynic philosopher, who taught in Rome in the reign of Caligula and was banished by Nero.

^b *i.e.*, he has achieved the Stoic ideal of independence of all external control; he is a king and has all things to bestow upon others, but needs nothing for himself.

EPISTLES LXII., LXIII.

wholesome thought. When I give myself to my friends, I do not withdraw from my own company, nor do I linger with those who are associated with me through some special occasion or some case which arises from my official position. But I spend my time in the company of all the best; no matter in what lands they may have lived, or in what age, I let my thoughts fly to them. Demetrius,^a for instance, the best of men, I take about with me, and, leaving the wearers of purple and fine linen, I talk with him, half-naked as he is, and hold him in high esteem. Why should I not hold him in high esteem? I have found that he lacks nothing. It is in the power of any man to despise all things, but of no man to possess all things. The shortest cut to riches is to despise riches. Our friend Demetrius, however, lives not merely as if he has learned to despise all things, but as if he has handed them over for others to possess.^b Farewell.

LXIII. ON GRIEF FOR LOST FRIENDS

I am grieved to hear that your friend Flaccus is dead, but I would not have you sorrow more than is fitting. That you should not mourn at all I shall hardly dare to insist; and yet I know that it is the better way. But what man will ever be so blessed with that ideal steadfastness of soul, unless he has already risen far above the reach of Fortune? Even such a man will be stung by an event like this, but it will be only a sting. We, however, may be forgiven for bursting into tears, if only our tears have not flowed to excess, and if we have checked them by our own efforts. Let not the eyes be dry when

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