facio. Invitus relinquo officia vitae, quibus fideliter et industrie fungor." Quid? Tu nescis unum esse ex vitae officiis et mori? Nullum officium relinquis. Non enim certus numerus, quem debeas explere,

Non emm certus numerus, quem deneas expete, 20 finitur. Nulla vita est non brevis. Nam si ad naturam rerum respexeris, etiam Nestoris et Sattiae brevis est, quae inscribi monumento suo iussit annis se nonaginta novem vixisse. Vides aliquem gloriari senectute longa. Quis illam ferre potuisset, si contigisset centesimum implere? Quomodo fabula, sic vita non quam diu, sed quam bene acta sit, refert. Nihil ad rem pertinet, quo loco desinas. Quocumque voles desine; tantum bonam clausulam inpone. Vale.

#### LXXVIII.

#### SENECA LUCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Vexari te destillationibus crebris ac febriculis, quae longas destillationes et in consuetudinem adductas secuntur, eo molestius mihi est, quia expertus sum hoc genus valetudinis, quod inter initia contempsi; poterat adhuc adulescentia iniurias ferre et se adversus morbos contumaciter gerere. Deinde succubui et eo perductus sum, ut ipse destillarem ad 2 summam maciem deductus. Saepe impetum cepi abrumpendae vitae; patris me indulgentissimi senectus retinuit. Cogitavi enim non quam fortiter ego

a A traditional example of old age, mentioned by Martial and the elder Pliny.

b Compare the last words of the Emperor Augustus: amicos percontatus ecquid iis videretur minum vitae commode transegisse (Suet. Aug. 99).

To such a degree that Seneca's enemy Caligula refrained from executing him, on the ground that he would soon die.

## EPISTLES LXXVII., LXXVIII.

honourable pursuits. I am loth to leave life's duties, which I am fulfilling with loyalty and zeal." Surely you are aware that dying is also one of life's duties? You are deserting no duty; for there is no definite number established which you are bound to complete. There is no life that is not short. Compared with the world of nature, even Nestor's life was a short one, or Sattia's, a the woman who bade carve on her tombstone that she had lived ninety and nine years. Some persons, you see, boast of their long lives; but who could have endured the old lady if she had had the luck to complete her hundredth year? with life as it is with a play,—it matters not how long the action is spun out, but how good the acting It makes no difference at what point you stop. Stop whenever you choose; only see to it that the closing period is well turned.<sup>b</sup> Farewell.

#### LXXVIII.

# ON THE HEALING POWER OF THE MIND

That you are frequently troubled by the snuffling of catarrh and by short attacks of fever which follow after long and chronic catarrhal seizures, I am sorry to hear; particularly because I have experienced this sort of illness myself, and scorned it in its early stages. For when I was still young, I could put up with hardships and show a bold front to illness. But I finally succumbed, and arrived at such a state that I could do nothing but snuffle, reduced as I was to the extremity of thinness. I often entertained the impulse of ending my life then and there; but the thought of my kind old father kept me back. For I reflected, not how bravely I

mori possem, sed quam ille fortiter desiderare non posset. Itaque imperavi mihi, ut viverem. Aliquando enim et vivere fortiter facere est.

Quae mihi tunc fuerint solacio dicam, si prius hoc dixero,1 haec ipsa, quibus adquiescebam, medicinae In remedium cedunt honesta solacia, vim habuisse. et quicquid animum erexit, etiam corpori prodest. Studia mihi nostra saluti fuerunt. Philosophiae acceptum fero, quod surrexi, quod convalui. Multum mihi 4 vitam debeo et nihil illi minus debeo. contulerunt ad bonam valetudinem amici, quorum adhortationibus, vigiliis, sermonibus adlevabar. Nihil aeque, Lucili, virorum optime, aegrum reficit atque adiuvat quam amicorum adfectus; nihil aeque expectationem mortis ac metum subripit. Non iudicabam me, cum illos superstites relinquerem,2 mori. Putabam, inquam, me victurum non cum illis, sed Non effundere mihi spiritum videbar, sed per illos. tradere.3

Haec mihi dederunt voluntatem adiuvandi me et patiendi omne tormentum; alioqui miserrimum est, cum animum moriendi proieceris, non habere vivendi. 5 Ad haec ergo remedia te confer. Medicus tibi quantum ambules, quantum exercearis, monstrabit; ne indulgeas otio, ad quod vergit iners valetudo; ut legas clarius et spiritum, cuius iter ac receptaculum

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> dixero or dixerim later MSS.; dixeris VPb. <sup>2</sup> relinquerem later MSS.; relinquere VPb. <sup>3</sup> tradere Muretus; trahere VPb.

#### EPISTLE LXXVIII.

had the power to die, but how little power he had to bear bravely the loss of me. And so I commanded myself to live. For sometimes it is an

act of bravery even to live.

Now I shall tell you what consoled me during those days, stating at the outset that these very aids to my peace of mind were as efficacious as medicine. Honourable consolation results in a cure; and whatever has uplifted the soul helps the body also. My studies were my salvation. I place it to the credit of philosophy that I recovered and regained my strength. I owe my life to philosophy, and that is the least of my obligations! My friends, too, helped me greatly toward good health; I used to be comforted by their cheering words, by the hours they spent at my bedside, and by their conversation. Nothing, my excellent Lucilius, refreshes and aids a sick man so much as the affection of his friends; nothing so steals away the expectation and the fear of death. In fact, I could not believe that, if they survived me, I should be dying at all. Yes, I repeat, it seemed to me that I should continue to live, not with them, but through them. I imagined myself not to be yielding up my soul, but to be making it over to them.

All these things gave me the inclination to succour myself and to endure any torture; besides, it is a most miserable state to have lost one's zest for dying, and to have no zest in living. These, then, are the remedies to which you should have recourse. The physician will prescribe your walks and your exercise; he will warn you not to become addicted to idleness, as is the tendency of the inactive invalid; he will order you to read in a louder voice and to exercise your lungs, a the passages

laborat, exerceas; ut naviges et viscera molli iactatione concutias; quibus cibis utaris, vinum quando virium causa advoces, quando intermittas, ne inritet et exasperet tussim. Ego tibi illud praecipio, quod non tantum huius morbi, sed totius vitae remedium est: contemne mortem. Nihil triste est, cum huius 6 metum effugimus. Tria haec in omni morbo gravia sunt: metus mortis, dolor corporis, intermissio voluptatum. De morte satis dictum est; hoc unum dicam, non morbi hunc esse sed naturae metum. Multorum mortem distulit morbus et saluti illis fuit videri Morieris, non quia aegrotas, sed quia vivis. Ista te res et sanatum manet; cum convalueris, non mortem, sed valetudinem effugies.

Ad illud nunc proprium incommodum revertamur: magnos cruciatus habet morbus. Sed hos tolerabiles intervalla faciunt. Nam summi doloris intentio invenit finem. Nemo potest valde dolere et diu; sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem 8 aut tolerabilem aut brevem faceret. Maximi dolores consistunt in macerrimis corporis partibus; nervi articulique et quicquid aliud exile est, acerrime saevit, cum in arto vitia concepit. Sed cito hae partes obstupescunt et ipso dolore sensum doloris amittunt,

b Cf. Epicurus, Frag. 446 Usener.

a i.e., men have become healthier after passing through serious illness.

c Compare, from among many parallels, Ep. xxiv. 14 (dolor) levis es, si ferre possum, brevis es, si ferre non possum.

#### EPISTLE LXXVIII.

and cavity of which are affected; or to sail and shake up your bowels by a little mild motion; he will recommend the proper food, and the suitable time for aiding your strength with wine or refraining from it in order to keep your cough from being irritated and hacking. But as for me, my counsel to you is this, -- and it is a cure, not merely of this disease of yours, but of your whole life,—"Despise death." There is no sorrow in the world, when we have escaped from the fear of death. these three serious elements in every disease: fear of death, bodily pain, and interruption of pleasures. Concerning death enough has been said, and I shall add only a word: this fear is not a fear of disease, but a fear of nature. Disease has often postponed death, and a vision of dying has been many a man's salvation.a You will die, not because you are ill, but because you are alive; even when you have been cured, the same end awaits you; when you have recovered, it will be not death, but ill-health, that you have escaped.

Let us now return to the consideration of the characteristic disadvantage of disease: it is accompanied by great suffering. The suffering, however, is rendered endurable by interruptions; for the strain of extreme pain must come to an end.<sup>b</sup> No man can suffer both severely and for a long time; Nature, who loves us most tenderly, has so constituted us as to make pain either endurable or short.<sup>c</sup> The severest pains have their seat in the most slender parts of our body; nerves, joints, and any other of the narrow passages, hurt most cruelly when they have developed trouble within their contracted spaces. But these parts soon become numb, and by reason of the pain itself lose the sensation of pain,

sive quia spiritus naturali prohibitus cursu et mutatus in peius vim suam, qua viget admonetque nos, perdit, sive quia corruptus umor, cum desiit habere, quo confluat, ipse se elidit et iis, quae nimis implevit, 9 excutit sensum. Sic podagra et cheragra et omnis vertebrarum dolor nervorumque 1 interquiescit,2 cum illa, quae torquebat, hebetavit<sup>3</sup>; omnium istorum prima verminatio vexat, impetus mora extinguitur et finis dolendi est optorpuisse. Dentium, oculorum, aurium dolor ob hoc ipsum acutissimus est, quod inter angusta corporis nascitur, non minus, mehercule, quam capitis ipsius; sed si incitatior est, in aliena-

10 tionem soporemque convertitur. Hoc itaque solacium vasti doloris est, quod necesse est desinas illum Illud autem est, quod sentire, si nimis senseris. imperitos in vexatione corporis male habet: non adsueverunt animo esse contenti. Multum illis cum corpore fuit. Ideo vir magnus ac prudens animum diducit a corpore et multum cum meliore ac divina parte versatur, cum hac querula et fragili quantum necesse est.

"Sed molestum est," inquit, "carere adsuetis 11 voluptatibus, abstinere cibo, sitire, esurire." prima abstinentia gravia sunt. Deinde cupiditas relanguescit ipsis per quae 4 cupimus fatigatis ac

<sup>2</sup> interquiescit later MSS.; interciet (sciet b) scit Pb; in

tertiae scitscit V.

3 hebetavit later MSS.; hebetabit VPb. 4 per quae Muretus; per se quae MSS.

<sup>1</sup> nervorumque later MSS.; et nervorumq. PbV'; et nervorum edition of Mentelin.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> See also Ep. xcv. 17. The word literally means "maggots," "bots," in horses or cattle.

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