

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

8 pariter incedunt ; spem metus sequitur. Nec miror ista sic ire ; utrumque pendentis animi est, utrumque futuri exspectatione solliciti. Maxima autem utriusque causa est, quod non ad praesentia aptamur, sed cogitationes in longinqua praemittimus. Itaque providentia, maximum bonum condicionis humanae, 9 in malum versa est. Ferae pericula, quae vident, fugiunt ; cum effugere, securae sunt ; nos et venturo torquemur et praeterito. Multa bona nostra nobis nocent, timoris enim tormentum memoria reducit, providentia anticipat. Nemo tantum praesentibus miser est. VALE.

VI.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Intellego, Lucili, non emendari me tantum sed transfigurari. Nec hoc promitto iam aut spero, nihil in me superesse, quod mutandum sit. Quidni multa habeam, quae debeant colligi, quae extenuari, quae attolli? Et hoc ipsum argumentum est in melius translatis animi, quod vitia sua, quae adhuc ignorabat, videt. Quibusdam aegris gratulatio fit, cum ipsi aegros se esse senserunt.
- 2 Cuperem itaque tecum communicare tam subitam mutationem mei ; tunc amicitiae nostrae certiore fiduciam habere coepissem, illius verae, quam non

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are, keep step together; fear follows hope. I am not surprised that they proceed in this way; each alike belongs to a mind that is in suspense, a mind that is fretted by looking forward to the future. But the chief cause of both these ills is that we do not adapt ourselves to the present, but send our thoughts a long way ahead. And so foresight, the noblest blessing of the human race, becomes perverted. Beasts avoid the dangers which they see, and when they have escaped them are free from care; but we men torment ourselves over that which is to come as well as over that which is past. Many of our blessings bring bane to us; for memory recalls the tortures of fear, while foresight anticipates them. The present alone can make no man wretched. Farewell.

VI. ON SHARING KNOWLEDGE

I feel, my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed. I do not yet, however, assure myself, or indulge the hope, that there are no elements left in me which need to be changed. Of course there are many that should be made more compact, or made thinner, or be brought into greater prominence. And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better,—that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant. In certain cases sick men are congratulated because they themselves have perceived that they are sick.

I therefore wish to impart to you this sudden change in myself; I should then begin to place a surer trust in our friendship,—*the true friendship,*

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spes, non timor, non utilitatis suae cura divellit, illius, cum qua homines moriuntur, pro qua moriuntur.

3 Multos tibi dabo, qui non amico, sed amicitia caruerunt. Hoc non potest accidere, cum animos in societatem honesta cupiendi par voluntas trahit. Quidni non possit? Sciunt enim ipsos omnia habere communia, et quidem magis adversa.

Concipere animo non potes, quantum momenti

4 adferre mihi singulos dies videam. "Mitte," inquis, "et nobis ista, quae tam efficacia expertus es." Ego vero omnia in te cupio transfundere, et in hoc aliquid gaudeo discere, ut doceam. Nec me ulla res delectabit, licet sit eximia et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sum. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam nec enuntiem, reiciam. Nullius boni sine socio iucunda possessio est.

5 Mittam itaque ipsos tibi libros et ne multum operae inpendas, dum passim profutura sectaris, inponam notas, ut ad ipsa protinus, quae probo et miror, accedas. Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit. In rem praesentem venias oportet, primum, quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt; deinde, quia longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla.

6 Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si tantummodo audisset; vitae eius interfuit, secreta perspexit,

^a Cf. Herodotus, i. 8 ὦτα τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἔντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν.

EPISTLE VI.

which hope and fear and self-interest cannot sever, the friendship in which and for the sake of which men meet death. I can show you many who have lacked, not a friend, but a friendship; this, however, cannot possibly happen when souls are drawn together by identical inclinations into an alliance of honourable desires. And why can it not happen? Because in such cases men know that they have all things in common, especially their troubles.

You cannot conceive what distinct progress I notice that each day brings to me. And when you say: "Give me also a share in these gifts which you have found so helpful," I reply that I am anxious to heap all these privileges upon you, and that I am glad to learn in order that I may teach. Nothing will ever please me, no matter how excellent or beneficial, if I must retain the knowledge of it to myself. And if wisdom were given me under the express condition that it must be kept hidden and not uttered, I should refuse it. No good thing is pleasant to possess, without friends to share it.

I shall therefore send to you the actual books; and in order that you may not waste time in searching here and there for profitable topics, I shall mark certain passages, so that you can turn at once to those which I approve and admire. Of course, however, the living voice and the intimacy of a common life will help you more than the written word. You must go to the scene of action, first, because men put more faith in their eyes than in their ears,^a and second, because the way is long if one follows precepts, but short and helpful, if one follows patterns. Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his

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observavit illum, an ex formula sua viveret. Platon et Aristoteles et omnis in diversum itura sapientium turba plus ex moribus quam ex verbis Socratis traxit; Metrodorum et Hermarchum et Polyænum magnos viros non schola Epicuri sed contubernium fecit. Nec in hoc te accerso tantum, ut proficias, sed ut prosis; plurimum enim alter alteri conferemus.

- 7 Interim quoniam diurnam tibi mercedulam debeo, quid me hodie apud Hecatonem delectaverit dicam. "Quæris," inquit, "quid profecerim? Amicus esse mihi coepi." Multum profecit; numquam erit solus. Scito hunc amicum omnibus esse. VALE.

VII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Quid tibi vitandum præcipue existimes, quæris? Turbam. Nondum illi tuto committeris. Ego certe confitebor inbecillitatem meam; numquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo, quod composui, turbatur; aliquid ex iis, quæ fugavi, redit. Quod ægris evenit, quos longa inbecillitas usque eo adfecit, ut nusquam sine offensa proferantur, hoc

^a Frag. 26 Fowler.

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hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates. It was not the class-room of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made great men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyænus. Therefore I summon you, not merely that you may derive benefit, but that you may confer benefit; for we can assist each other greatly.

Meanwhile, I owe you my little daily contribution; you shall be told what pleased me to-day in the writings of Hecato^a; it is these words: "What progress, you ask, have I made? I have begun to be a friend to myself." That was indeed a great benefit; such a person can never be alone. You may be sure that such a man is a friend to all mankind. Farewell.

VII. ON CROWDS

Do you ask me what you should regard as especially to be avoided? I say, crowds; for as yet you cannot trust yourself to them with safety. I shall admit my own weakness, at any rate; for I never bring back home the same character that I took abroad with me. Something of that which I have forced to be calm within me is disturbed; some of the foes that I have routed return again. Just as the sick man, who has been weak for a long time, is in such a condition that he cannot be taken out of

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