XI.

Seneca Lycilio suo saltem

1 Locutus est mecum amicus tuus bonae indolis, in quo quantum esset animi, quantum ingenii, quantum iam etiam profectus, sermo primus ostendit. Dedit nobis gustum, ad quem respondebit. Non enim ex praeparato locutus est, sed subito deprehensus. Ubi se colligebat, verecundiam, bonum in adulescente signum, vix potuit excutere; adeo illi ex alto suffusus est rubor. Hic illum, quantum suspicor, etiam cum se confirmaverit et omnibus vitis exuerit, sapientem quoque sequetur. Nulla enim sapientia naturalia corporis\(^1\) vitia ponunt. Quicquid infixum et in-

2 genitum est, lenitur arte, non vincitur. Quibusdam etiam constantissimis in conspectu populi sudor erumpit, non aliter quam fatigatis et auestantibus solet, quibusdam tremunt genua dicturis, quorundam dentes colliduntur, lingua titubat, labra concurrunt. Haec nec disciplina nec usus unquam excutit, sed natura vim suam exercet et illo\(^2\) vitio sui etiam ro-

3 bustissimos admonet. Inter haec esse et ruborem scio, qui gravissimis quoque viris subitus adfunditur. Magis quidem in iuvenibus appareat, quibus et plus caloris est et tenera frons; nihilominus et veteranos et senes tangit. Quidam numquam magis, quam cum erubuerint, timendi sunt, quasi omnem vere-

4 cundiam effuderint. Sulla tunc erat violentissimus,

\(^1\) aut animi after corporis deleted by Madvig.

\(^2\) illo Schweighäuser; illos MSS.
XI. ON THE BLUSH OF MODESTY

Your friend and I have had a conversation. He is a man of ability; his very first words showed what spirit and understanding he possesses, and what progress he has already made. He gave me a foretaste, and he will not fail to answer thereto. For he spoke not from forethought, but was suddenly caught off his guard. When he tried to collect himself, he could scarcely banish that hue of modesty, which is a good sign in a young man; the blush that spread over his face seemed so to rise from the depths. And I feel sure that his habit of blushing will stay with him after he has strengthened his character, stripped off all his faults, and become wise. For by no wisdom can natural weaknesses of the body be removed. That which is implanted and inborn can be toned down by training, but not overcome. The steadiest speaker, when before the public, often breaks into a perspiration, as if he had wearied or over-heated himself; some tremble in the knees when they rise to speak; I know of some whose teeth chatter, whose tongues falter, whose lips quiver. Training and experience can never shake off this habit; nature exerts her own power and through such a weakness makes her presence known even to the strongest. I know that the blush, too, is a habit of this sort, spreading suddenly over the faces of the most dignified men. It is, indeed more prevalent in youth, because of the warmer blood and the sensitive countenance; nevertheless, both seasoned men and aged men are affected by it. Some are most dangerous when they redden, as if they were letting all their sense of shame escape. Sulla, when
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cum faciem eius sanguis invaserat. Nihil erat mollius
ore Pompei; numquam non coram pluribus rubuit,
utique in contentionibus. Fabianum, cum in senatum
testis esset induxit, erubuisse memini, et hic illum
5 mire pudor decuit. Non accidit hoc ab infirmitate
mentis, sed a novitate rei, quae inexcitatos,
etiamsi non concutit, movet naturali in hoc facilitate
corporis pronos. Nam ut quidam boni sanguinis
sunt, ita quidam incitati et mobilis et cito in os
prodeuntis.

6 Haec, ut dixi, nulla sapientia abigit; alioquin
haberet rerum naturam sub imperio, si omnia eraderet
vitia. Quaecumque adtribuit condicio nascendi et
corporis temperatura, cum multum se diuque animus
composuerit, haerebunt. Nihil horum vetari potest,
7 non magis quam accersi. Artifices scaenici, qui
imitantur adfectus, qui metum et trepidationem
exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio
imitantur verecundiam: deiciunt enim vultum, verba
submittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt.
Ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt; nec prohibitur
hie nec adducitur. Nihil adversus haec sapientia
promittit, nihil proficit; sui iuris sunt, iniussa veniunt,
iniussa discendunt.

8 Iam clausulam epistula poscit. Accipe, et quidem 1
utilem ac salutarem, quam te affigere animo volo:
"Aliquis vir bonus nobis diligendus est ac semper
ante oculos habendus, ut sic tamquam illo spectante

1 et quidem Erasmus; equidem MSS.

* Epicurus, Frag. 210 Usener.
the blood mantled his cheeks, was in his fiercest mood. Pompey had the most sensitive cast of countenance; he always blushed in the presence of a gathering, and especially at a public assembly. Fabianus also, I remember, reddened when he appeared as a witness before the senate; and his embarrassment became him to a remarkable degree. Such a habit is not due to mental weakness, but to the novelty of a situation; an inexperienced person is not necessarily confused, but is usually affected, because he slips into this habit by natural tendency of the body. Just as certain men are full-blooded, so others are of a quick and mobile blood, that rushes to the face at once.

As I remarked, Wisdom can never remove this habit; for if she could rub out all our faults, she would be mistress of the universe. Whatever is assigned to us by the terms of our birth and the blend in our constitutions, will stick with us, no matter how hard or how long the soul may have tried to master itself. And we cannot forbid these feelings any more than we can summon them. Actors in the theatre, who imitate the emotions, who portray fear and nervousness, who depict sorrow, imitate bashfulness by hanging their heads, lowering their voices, and keeping their eyes fixed and rooted upon the ground. They cannot, however, muster a blush; for the blush cannot be prevented or acquired. Wisdom will not assure us of a remedy, or give us help against it; it comes or goes unbidden, and is a law unto itself.

But my letter calls for its closing sentence. Hear and take to heart this useful and wholesome motto: "Cherish some man of high character, and keep him ever before your eyes, living as if he were watching
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vivamus et omnia tamquam illo videntem faciamus."

XII.

SENeca Lucilio svelat

1 Quocumque me verti, argumenta senectatis meae video. Veneram in suburbanum meum et querebar de inspensis aedificii dilabentis. Ait vinicus mihi non esse neglectiae suae vitium, omnia se facere, sed villam veterem esse. Haece villa inter manus meas crevit; quid mihi futurum est, si tam putria sunt

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* Frag. 210 Usener.
† The figure is taken from the ἄνωτος, the Holy of Holies in a temple. Cf. Vergil, Aeneid, vi. 10 secceta Sibyllae.
you, and ordering all your actions as if he beheld them.” Such, my dear Lucilius, is the counsel of Epicurus; he has quite properly given us a guardian and an attendant. We can get rid of most sins, if we have a witness who stands near us when we are likely to go wrong. The soul should have someone whom it can respect,—one by whose authority it may make even its inner shrine more hallowed. Happy is the man who can make others better, not merely when he is in their company, but even when he is in their thoughts! And happy also is he who can so revere a man as to calm and regulate himself by calling him to mind! One who can so revere another, will soon be himself worthy of reverence. Choose therefore a Cato; or, if Cato seems too severe a model, choose some Laelius, a gentler spirit. Choose a master whose life, conversation, and soul-expressing face have satisfied you; picture him always to yourself as your protector or your pattern. For we must indeed have someone according to whom we may regulate our characters; you can never straighten that which is crooked unless you use a ruler. Farewell.

XII. ON OLD AGE

Wherever I turn, I see evidences of my advancing years. I visited lately my country-place, and protested against the money which was spent on the tumble-down building. My bailiff maintained that the flaws were not due to his own carelessness; “he was doing everything possible, but the house was old.” And this was the house which grew under my own hands! What has the future in store for
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