

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

aperto ostio vivere. Ianitores conscientia nostra, non superbia opposuit; sic vivimus, ut deprendi sit subito adspici. Quid autem prodest recondere se et oculos  
5 hominum auresque vitare? Bona conscientia turbam advocat, mala etiam in solitudine anxia atque sollicita est. Si honesta sunt quae facis, omnes sciant, si turpia, quid refert neminem scire, cum tu scias? O te miserum, si contemnis hunc testem! VALE.

### XLIIII.

#### SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Iterum tu mihi te pusillum facis et dicis malignius tecum egisse naturam prius, deinde fortunam, cum possis eximere te vulgo et ad felicitatem hominum maximam emergere. Si quid est aliud in philosophia boni, hoc est, quod stemma non inspicit. Omnes, si  
2 ad originem primam revocantur, a dis sunt. Eques Romanus es, et ad hunc ordinem tua te perduxit industria; at mehercules multis quattuordecim clausa sunt; non omnes curia admittit; castra quoque, quos ad laborem et periculum recipiant, fastidiose legunt. Bona mens omnibus patet, omnes ad hoc sumus nobiles. Nec reicit quemquam philosophia nec  
3 eligit; omnibus lucet. Patricius Socrates non fuit.

---

<sup>a</sup> Alluding to the seats reserved for the knights at the theatre.

## EPISTLES XLIII., XLIV.

who can live with his door wide open. It is our conscience, not our pride, that has put doorkeepers at our doors; we live in such a fashion that being suddenly disclosed to view is equivalent to being caught in the act. What profits it, however, to hide ourselves away, and to avoid the eyes and ears of men? A good conscience welcomes the crowd, but a bad conscience, even in solitude, is disturbed and troubled. If your deeds are honourable, is everybody know them; if base, what matters it that no one knows them, as long as you yourself know them? How wretched you are if you despise such a witness! Farewell.

### XLIV. ON PHILOSOPHY AND PEDIGREES

You are again insisting to me that you are a nobody, and saying that nature in the first place, and fortune in the second, have treated you too scurvily, and this in spite of the fact that you have it in your power to separate yourself from the crowd and rise to the highest human happiness! If there is any good in philosophy, it is this,—that it never looks into pedigrees. All men, if traced back to their original source, spring from the gods. You are a Roman knight, and your persistent work promoted you to this class; yet surely there are many to whom the fourteen rows are barred;<sup>a</sup> the senate-chamber is not open to all; the army, too, is scrupulous in choosing those whom it admits to toil and danger. But a noble mind is free to all men; according to this test, we may all gain distinction. Philosophy neither rejects nor selects anyone; its light shines for all. Socrates was no aristocrat. Cleanthes

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

Cleanthes aquam traxit et rigando horto locavit manus. Platonem non accepit nobilem philosophia, sed fecit. Quid est quare desperes his te posse fieri parem? Omnes hi maiores tui sunt, si te illis geris dignum; geres autem, si hoc protinus tibi ipse per-  
 4 suaseris, a nullo te nobilitate superari. Omnibus nobis totidem ante nos sunt; nullius non origo ultra memoriam iacet. Platon ait neminem regem non ex servis esse oriundum, neminem servum non<sup>1</sup> ex regibus. Omnia ista longa varietas miscuit et sursum deorsum  
 5 fortuna versavit. Quis est generosus? Ad virtutem bene a natura compositus. Hoc unum intuendum est; alioquin si ad vetera revocas, nemo non inde est, ante quod nihil est. A primo mundi ortu usque in hoc tempus perduxit nos ex splendidis sordisque alternata series. Non facit nobilem atrium plenum fumosis imaginibus. Nemo in nostram gloriam vixit nec quod ante nos fuit, nostrum est; animus facit nobilem, cui ex quacumque condicione supra fortunam licet surgere.

6 Puta itaque te non equitem Romanum esse, sed libertinum; potes hoc consequi, ut solus sis liber inter ingenuos. "Quomodo?" inquis. Si mala bona- que non populo auctore distinxeris. Intuendum est

<sup>1</sup> *servum non* Madvig; *non servum* MSS.

<sup>a</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, p. 174 E.

<sup>b</sup> Compare with the whole argument Menander, Frag. 533 Kock, ending: *ὅς ἂν εὖ γεγωνῶς ἢ τῆ φύσει πρὸς τὰγαθά, κἂν Αἰθιοψ ἦ, μήτηρ, ἔστιν εὐγενής.*

## EPISTLE XLIV.

worked at a well and served as a hired man watering a garden. Philosophy did not find Plato already a nobleman; it made him one. Why then should you despair of becoming able to rank with men like these? They are all your ancestors, if you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of them; and you will do so if you convince yourself at the outset that no man outdoes you in real nobility. We have all had the same number of forefathers; there is no man whose first beginning does not transcend memory. Plato says: "Every king springs from a race of slaves, and every slave has had kings among his ancestors." <sup>a</sup> The flight of time, with its vicissitudes, has jumbled all such things together, and Fortune has turned them upside down. Then who is well-born? He who is by nature well fitted for virtue. That is the one point to be considered; otherwise, if you hark back to antiquity, every one traces back to a date before which there is nothing. From the earliest beginnings of the universe to the present time, we have been led forward out of origins that were alternately illustrious and ignoble. A hall full of smoke-begrimed busts does not make the nobleman. No past life has been lived to lend us glory, and that which has existed before us is not ours; the soul alone renders us noble, and it may rise superior to Fortune out of any earlier condition, no matter what that condition has been. <sup>b</sup>

Suppose, then, that you were not a Roman knight, but a freedman, you might nevertheless by your own efforts come to be the only free man amid a throng of gentlemen. "How?" you ask. Simply by distinguishing between good and bad things without patterning your opinion from the populace. You should look, not to the source from which these

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

non unde veniant, sed quo eant. Si quid est, quod vitam beatam potest facere, id bonum est suo iure. 7 Depravari enim in malum non potest. Quid est ergo, in quo erratur, cum omnes beatam vitam optent? Quod instrumenta eius pro ipsa habent et illam, dum petunt, fugiunt. Nam cum summa vitae beatæ sit solida securitas et eius inconcussa fiducia, sollicitudinis colligunt causas et per insidiosum iter vitae non tantum ferunt sarcinas, sed trahunt; ita longius ab effectu eius, quod petunt, semper abscedunt et quo plus operæ inpendunt, hoc se magis impediunt et feruntur retro. Quod evenit in labyrintho prope- rantibus; ipsa illos velocitas implicat. VALE.

### XLV.

#### SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Librorum istic inopiam esse quereris. Non refert, quam multos, sed quam bonos habeas; lectio certa prodest, varia delectat. Qui, quo destinavit, pervenire vult, unam sequatur viam, non per multas vagetur. Non ire istuc, sed errare est.
- 2 "Vellem,"<sup>1</sup> inquis, "magis consilium mihi quam libros dares." Ego vero quoscumque habeo, mittere paratus sum et totum horreum excutere. Me quoque

<sup>1</sup> As Hense suggests, we should from the context expect *nollem* rather than *vellem*.

## EPISTLES XLIV., XLV.

things come, but to the goal towards which they tend. If there is anything that can make life happy, it is good on its own merits ; for it cannot degenerate into evil. Where, then, lies the mistake, since all men crave the happy life ? It is that they regard the means for producing happiness as happiness itself, and, while seeking happiness, they are really fleeing from it. For although the sum and substance of the happy life is unalloyed freedom from care, and though the secret of such freedom is unshaken confidence, yet men gather together that which causes worry, and, while travelling life's treacherous road, not only have burdens to bear, but even draw burdens to themselves ; hence they recede farther and farther from the achievement of that which they seek, and the more effort they expend, the more they hinder themselves and are set back. This is what happens when you hurry through a maze ; the faster you go, the worse you are entangled. Farewell.

### XLV. ON SOPHISTICAL ARGUMENTATION

You complain that in your part of the world there is a scant supply of books. But it is quality, rather than quantity, that matters ; a limited list of reading benefits ; a varied assortment serves only for delight. He who would arrive at the appointed end must follow a single road and not wander through many ways. What you suggest is not travelling ; it is mere tramping.

“ But,” you say, “ I should rather have you give me advice than books.” Still, I am ready to send you all the books I have, to ransack the whole storehouse. If it were possible, I should join you there

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:  
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature**  
which can be purchased on our **Website :**  
[www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :  
**Brainfly Inc.**  
**5100 Garfield Ave. #46**  
**Sacramento CA 95841-3839**

## **TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:**

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website ([www.Brainfly.net](http://www.Brainfly.net)) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)