

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- dilatione perlegerim. Sol me invitabat, fames ad-  
monebat, nubes minabantur; tamen exhausti totum.
- 2 Non tantum delectatus, sed gavisus sum. Quid  
ingenii iste habuit, quid animi! Dicerem, quid  
inpetus, si interquievisset, si ex intervallo<sup>1</sup> surrexis-  
set; nunc non fuit inpetus, sed tenor, compositio  
virilis et sancta; nihilominus interveniebat dulce  
illud et loco lene. Grandis, erectus es; hoc te volo  
tenere, sic ire. Fecit aliquid et materia; ideo  
eligenda est fertilis, quae capiat ingenium, quae  
incitet.
- 3 De libro<sup>2</sup> plura scribam cum illum retractavero;  
nunc parum mihi sedet iudicium, tamquam audierim  
illa, non legerim. Sine me et inquirere. Non est  
quod verearis; verum audies. O te hominem felicem,  
quod nihil habes, propter quod quisquam tibi tam  
longe mentiatur! Nisi quod iam etiam ubi causa  
sublata est, mentimur consuetudinis causa. VALE.

### XLVII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Libenter ex is,<sup>3</sup> qui a te veniunt, cognovi fami-  
liariter te cum servis tuis vivere. Hoc prudentiam  
tuam, hoc eruditionem decet. "Servi sunt." Immo  
homines. "Servi sunt." Immo contubernales.

<sup>1</sup> *si ex intervallo* Madvig; *si intervallo* LPb.

<sup>2</sup> *de libro* later MSS.; *libro* pLPb.

<sup>3</sup> *is* Hense: *his* or *iis* MSS.

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<sup>a</sup> Much of the following is quoted by Macrobius, *Sat.*  
i. 11. 7 ff., in the passage beginning *vis tu cogitare eos, quos*  
*ius tuum vocas, eisdem seminibus ortos eodem frui caelo*, etc.

## EPISTLES XLVI., XLVII.

any postponement. The sunlight called to me, hunger warned, and clouds were lowering; but I absorbed the book from beginning to end.

I was not merely pleased; I rejoiced. So full of wit and spirit it was! I should have added "force," had the book contained moments of repose, or had it risen to energy only at intervals. But I found that there was no burst of force, but an even flow, a style that was vigorous and chaste. Nevertheless I noticed from time to time your sweetness, and here and there that mildness of yours. Your style is lofty and noble; I want you to keep to this manner and this direction. Your subject also contributed something; for this reason you should choose productive topics, which will lay hold of the mind and arouse it.

I shall discuss the book more fully after a second perusal; meantime, my judgment is somewhat unsettled, just as if I had heard it read aloud, and had not read it myself. You must allow me to examine it also. You need not be afraid; you shall hear the truth. Lucky fellow, to offer a man no opportunity to tell you lies at such long range! Unless perhaps, even now, when excuses for lying are taken away, custom serves as an excuse for our telling each other lies! Farewell.

## XLVII. ON MASTER AND SLAVE

I am glad to learn, through those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This befits a sensible and well-educated man like yourself. "They are slaves," people declare.<sup>a</sup> Nay, rather they are men. "Slaves!" No, comrades.

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“*Servi sunt.*” Immo humiles amici. “*Servi sunt.*” Immo conservi, si cogitaveris tantundem in utrosque licere fortunae.

2 Itaque rideo istos, qui turpe existimant cum servo suo cenare. Quare, nisi quia superbissima consuetudo cenanti domino stantium servorum turbam circumdedit? Est ille plus quam capit, et ingenti aviditate onerat distentum ventrem ac desuetum iam ventris officio, ut maiore opera omnia egerat quam ingessit;

3 at infelicibus servis movere labra ne in hoc quidem, ut loquantur, licet. Virga murmur omne conpescitur, et ne fortuita quidem verberibus excepta sunt, tussis, sternumenta, singultus. Magno malo ulla voce interpellatum silentium luitur. Nocte tota ieiuni mutique perstant.

4 Sic fit, ut isti de domino loquantur, quibus coram domino loqui non licet. At illi, quibus non tantum coram dominis, sed cum ipsis erat sermo, quorum os non consuebatur, parati erant pro domino porrigere cervicem, periculum inminens in caput suum avertere; in conviviis loquebantur, sed in tormentis tacebant.

5 Deinde eiusdem arrogantiae proverbium iactatur, totidem hostes esse quot servos. Non habemus illos hostes, sed facimus.

Alia interim crudelia, inhumana praetereo, quod ne tamquam hominibus quidem, sed tamquam

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“Slaves!” No, they are unpretentious friends.  
“Slaves!” No, they are our fellow-slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike.

That is why I smile at those who think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave. But why should they think it degrading? It is only because purse-proud etiquette surrounds a householder at his dinner with a mob of standing slaves. The master eats more than he can hold, and with monstrous greed loads his belly until it is stretched and at length ceases to do the work of a belly; so that he is at greater pains to discharge all the food than he was to stuff it down. All this time the poor slaves may not move their lips, even to speak. The slightest murmur is repressed by the rod; even a chance sound,—a cough, a sneeze, or a hiccup,—is visited with the lash. There is a grievous penalty for the slightest breach of silence. All night long they must stand about, hungry and dumb.

The result of it all is that these slaves, who may not talk in their master's presence, talk about their master. But the slaves of former days, who were permitted to converse not only in their master's presence, but actually with him, whose mouths were not stitched up tight, were ready to bare their necks for their master, to bring upon their own heads any danger that threatened him; they spoke at the feast, but kept silence during torture. Finally, the saying, in allusion to this same high-handed treatment, becomes current: “As many enemies as you have slaves.” They are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies.

I shall pass over other cruel and inhuman conduct towards them; for we maltreat them, not as if they

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iumentis abutimur. Cum<sup>1</sup> ad cenandum discubimus, alius sputa detergit, alius reliquias temulentorum  
6 toro<sup>2</sup> subditus colligit. Alius pretiosas aves scindit ; per pectus et clunes certis ductibus circumferens eruditam manum frustra excutit, infelix, qui huic uni rei vivit, ut altilia decenter secet, nisi quod miserior est, qui hoc voluptatis causa docet quam  
7 qui necessitatis discit. Alius vini minister in muliebrem modum ornatus cum aetate luctatur ; non potest effugere pueritiam, retrahitur, iamque militari habitu glaber retritit pilis aut penitus evulsis tota nocte pervigilat, quam inter ebrietatem domini ac libidinem dividit et in cubiculo vir, in convivio puer  
8 est. Alius, cui convivarum censura permissa est, perstat infelix et exspectat, quos adulatio et intemperantia aut gulae aut linguae revocet in crastinum. Adice obsonatores, quibus dominici palati notitia subtilis est, qui sciunt, cuius illum rei sapor excitet, cuius delectet aspectus, cuius novitate nauseabundus erigi possit, quid iam ipsa satietate fastidiat, quid illo die esuriat. Cum his cenare non sustinet et maiestatis suae deminutionem putat ad eandem mensam cum servo suo accedere. Di melius !

<sup>1</sup> Before *cum* MSS. give *quod* ; Buecheler removed it.

<sup>2</sup> *toro* was inserted by O. Rossbach.

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<sup>a</sup> *Glabri, delicati, or exoleti* were favourite slaves, kept artificially youthful by Romans of the more dissolute class. Cf. Catullus, lxi. 142, and Seneca, *De Breuitate Vitae*, 12. 5 (a passage closely resembling the description given above by Seneca), where the master prides himself upon the elegant appearance and graceful gestures of these favourites.

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were men, but as if they were beasts of burden. When we recline at a banquet, one slave mops up the disgorged food, another crouches beneath the table and gathers up the left-overs of the tipsy guests. Another carves the priceless game birds; with unerring strokes and skilled hand he cuts choice morsels along the breast or the rump. Hapless fellow, to live only for the purpose of cutting fat capons correctly,—unless, indeed, the other man is still more unhappy than he, who teaches this art for pleasure's sake, rather than he who learns it because he must. Another, who serves the wine, must dress like a woman and wrestle with his advancing years; he cannot get away from his boyhood; he is dragged back to it; and though he has already acquired a soldier's figure, he is kept beardless by having his hair smoothed away or plucked out by the roots, and he must remain awake throughout the night, dividing his time between his master's drunkenness and his lust; in the chamber he must be a man, at the feast a boy.<sup>a</sup> Another, whose duty it is to put a valuation on the guests, must stick to his task, poor fellow, and watch to see whose flattery and whose immodesty, whether of appetite or of language, is to get them an invitation for to-morrow. Think also of the poor purveyors of food, who note their masters' tastes with delicate skill, who know what special flavours will sharpen their appetite, what will please their eyes, what new combinations will rouse their cloyed stomachs, what food will excite their loathing through sheer satiety, and what will stir them to hunger on that particular day. With slaves like these the master cannot bear to dine; he would think it beneath his dignity to associate with his slave at the same table! Heaven forfend!

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- 9 Quot ex istis dominos habet<sup>1</sup>! Stare ante limen Callisti dominum suum vidi et eum, qui illi inpegerat titulum, qui inter reicula<sup>2</sup> mancipia produxerat, aliis intransibilibus excludi. Rettulit illi gratiam servus ille in primam decuriam coniectus, in qua vocem praeco experitur; et ipse illum invicem apologavit, et ipse non iudicavit domo sua dignum. Dominus Callistum vendidit; sed domino quam multa Callistus!
- 10 Vis tu cogitare istum, quem servum tuum vocas, ex isdem seminibus ortum eodem frui caelo, aequae spirare, aequae vivere, aequae mori! tam tu<sup>3</sup> illum videre ingenuum potes quam ille te servum. Mariana clade multos splendidissime natos, senatorium per militiam auspicantes gradum, fortuna depressit, alium ex illis pastorem, alium custodem casae fecit; contemne nunc eius fortunae hominem, in quam transire, dum contemnis, potes.
- 11 Nolo in ingentem me locum inmittere et de usu servorum disputare, in quos superbissimi, crudelissimi, contumeliosissimi sumus. Haec tamen praecepti mei summa est: sic cum inferiore vivas, quemadmodum tecum superiorem velis vivere. Quotiens in mentem venerit, quantum tibi in servum<sup>4</sup> liceat, veniat in mentem tantundem in te domino tuo licere.
- 12 "At ego," inquis, "nullum habeo dominum." Bona

<sup>1</sup> *habet* Haase; *habent* MSS.

<sup>2</sup> *reicula* Muretus; *ridicula* MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *tam tu* the inferior MSS. and Macrobius; *quam tu* pb; *tam quam tu* Lg.

<sup>4</sup> Gertz adds *tuum*.

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<sup>a</sup> The master of Callistus, before he became the favourite of Caligula, is unknown.

<sup>b</sup> There is some doubt whether we should not read *Variana*, as Lipsius suggests. This method of qualifying for senator suits the Empire better than the Republic. *Variana* would refer to the defeat of Varus in Germany,

A. D. 9.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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