

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

et quemadmodum adgredi debeas ; non incidēs  
5 rebus. Neminem mihi dabis, qui sciat, quomodo  
quod vult, coeperit velle ; non consilio adductus illo,  
sed inpetu inpactus est. Non minus saepe fortuna  
in nos incurrit quam nos in illam. Turpe est non  
ire, sed ferri et subito in medio turbine rerum  
stupentem quaerere : “ Huc ego quemadmodum  
veni ? ” VALE.

### XXXVIII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Merito exigis, ut hoc inter nos epistularum com-  
mercium frequentemus. Plurimum proficit sermo,  
quia minutatim inrepat animo. Disputationes prae-  
paratae et effusae audiente populo plus habent  
strepitus, minus familiaritatis. Philosophia bonum  
consilium est ; consilium nemo clare dat.<sup>1</sup> Aliquando  
utendum est et illis, ut ita dicam, contionibus, ubi  
qui dubitat, impellendus est ; ubi vero non hoc  
agendum est, ut velit discere, sed ut discat, ad haec  
submitiora verba veniendum est. Facilius intrant  
et haerent ; nec enim multis opus est, sed efficacibus.
- 2 Seminis modo spargenda sunt, quod quamvis sit  
exiguum, cum occupavit idoneum locum, vires suas  
explicat et ex minimo in maximos auctus diffunditur.

<sup>1</sup> Georges conjectures *clamitat* for *clare dat*, perhaps  
rightly.

## EPISTLES XXXVII., XXXVIII.

You will learn from her what you should undertake, and how it should be done; you will not blunder into things. You can show me no man who knows how he began to crave that which he craves. He has not been led to that pass by forethought; he has been driven to it by impulse. Fortune attacks us as often as we attack Fortune. It is disgraceful, instead of proceeding ahead, to be carried along, and then suddenly, amid the whirlpool of events, to ask in a dazed way: "How did I get into this condition?" Farewell.

### XXXVIII. ON QUIET CONVERSATION

You are right when you urge that we increase our mutual traffic in letters. But the greatest benefit is to be derived from conversation, because it creeps by degrees into the soul. Lectures prepared beforehand and spouted in the presence of a throng have in them more noise but less intimacy. Philosophy is good advice; and no one can give advice at the top of his lungs. Of course we must sometimes also make use of these harangues, if I may so call them, when a doubting member needs to be spurred on; but when the aim is to make a man learn, and not merely to make him wish to learn, we must have recourse to the low-toned words of conversation. They enter more easily, and stick in the memory; for we do not need many words, but, rather, effective words.

Words should be scattered like seed; no matter how small the seed may be, if it has once found favourable ground, it unfolds its strength and from an insignificant thing spreads to its greatest growth.

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

Idem facit ratio; non late patet, si aspicias; in opere crescit. Pauca sunt, quae dicuntur, sed si illa animus bene exceptit, conualescunt et exurgunt. Eadem est, inquam, praeceptorum condicio quae seminum; multum efficiunt, et angusta sunt. Tantum, ut dixi, idonea mens capiat<sup>1</sup> illa et in se trahat. Multa invicem et ipsa generabit et plus reddet quam acceperit. VALE.

### XXXIX.

SENECA LUCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Commentarios, quos desideras, diligenter ordinatos et in angustum coactos ego vero componam. Sed vide, ne plus profutura sit ratio ordinaria quam haec, quae nunc vulgo breviarium dicitur, olim cum latine loqueremur, summarium vocabatur. Illa res discenti magis necessaria est, haec scienti. Illa enim docet, haec admonet. Sed utriusque rei tibi copiam faciam. Tu a me non est quod illum aut illum exigas; qui  
2 notorem dat, ignotus est. Scribam ergo quod vis,

<sup>1</sup> *capiat* later MSS.; *rapiat* pLPb.

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“ The regular method of studying philosophy was, as we infer from this letter, a course of reading in the philosophers. Seneca deprecates the use of the “cram,” which is only a memory-help, as a substitute for reading, on the ground that by its use one does not, in the first place, learn the subject, and, in the second place and chiefly, that one loses the inspiration to be derived by direct contact with great thinkers. The request of Lucilius for a cram thus suggests the main topic of the letter, which is taken up in the second paragraph.

## EPISTLES XXXVIII., XXXIX.

Reason grows in the same way; it is not large to the outward view, but increases as it does its work. Few words are spoken; but if the mind has truly caught them, they come into their strength and spring up. Yes, precepts and seeds have the same quality; they produce much, and yet they are slight things. Only, as I said, let a favourable mind receive and assimilate them. Then of itself the mind also will produce bounteously in its turn, giving back more than it has received. Farewell.

### XXXIX. ON NOBLE ASPIRATIONS

I shall indeed arrange for you, in careful order and narrow compass, the notes which you request. But consider whether you may not get more help from the customary method<sup>a</sup> than from that which is now commonly called a "breviary," though in the good old days, when real Latin was spoken, it was called a "summary."<sup>b</sup> The former is more necessary to one who is learning a subject, the latter to one who knows it. For the one teaches, the other stirs the memory. But I shall give you abundant opportunity for both.<sup>c</sup> A man like you should not ask me for this authority or that; he who furnishes a voucher for his statements argues himself unknown. I shall therefore write exactly what you wish, but I shall

<sup>b</sup> *i.e.*, the word *breviarium*, "abridgment," "abstract," has displaced the better word *summarium*, "outline of chief points."

<sup>c</sup> *i.e.*, to do the reading and to review it by means of the summary. The reading will enable Lucilius to identify for himself the authors of the several passages or doctrines.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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