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## [The Sacred Tales - suite]

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THE ELDER SENECA

bat et ipse, cum se assidua et numquam intermissa contentione fregerat, sentire ingenii lassitudinem, quae non minor est quam corporis, sed occultior.

10 Corpus illi erat et natura solidum et multa exercitatione duratum, ideoque numquam impetus ardentis animi deseruit. Vox robusta, sed surda, lucubrationibus et negligentia, non natura infuscata; beneficio tamen laterum extollebatur, et, quamvis inter initia parum attulisse virium videretur, ipsa actione aderescebat. Nulla umquam illi cura vocis exercendae fuit; illum fortem et agrestem et Hispanae consuetudinis morem non poterat dediscere: utcumque res tulerat, ita vivere, nihil vocis causa facere, non illam per gradus paulatim ab imo ad summum perducere, non rursus a summa contentione paribus intervallis descendere, non sudorem unctione dis- 10M  
17 cutere, non latus ambulatione reparare. Saepe cum per totam lucubraverat noctem, ab ipso cibo statim ad declamandum veniebat. Iam vero quin rem inimicissimam corpori faceret vetari nullo modo poterat: post cenam fere lucubrabat, nec patiebatur alimenta per somnum quietemque aequaliter digeri, sed perturbata ac dissipata in caput agebat; itaque et oculorum aciem contuderat et colorem mutaverat.

Memoria ei natura quidem felix, plurimum tamen arte adiuta. Numquam ille quae dicturus erat ediscendi causa relegebat: edidicerat illa cum scriperat. Id eo magis in illo mirabile videri potest quod non lente et anxie sed eodem paene quo dicebat 18 impetu scribebat. Illi qui scripta sua torquent, qui

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situde of mind that is as debilitating as bodily tiredness, though less obvious.

He had a body that nature had made strong and 16 exercise hard, so that it never failed the impulses of his passionate spirit. His voice was strong but dull, thickened not by nature but by over-work and lack of care. But it was capable of being raised, thanks to the strength of his lungs, and though at the start of a speech it might be thought to have too little power in reserve it grew with the impetus of the speech itself. He never took any trouble to exercise his voice; he could not put off his steadfast, rustic, Spanish character: his motto was to live as circumstances suggested, without doing anything for the sake of his voice (such as gradually taking it up from low to high, and then going down again from the highest pitch by equal intervals), and without inhibiting sweat by means of oil or renewing his lungs by walking. Often, having 17 stayed up all night, he would come to declaim straight from a meal. Again, he could just not be put off doing something very harmful to the body: he generally worked into the night after dinner,<sup>1</sup> so that his food, instead of being smoothly digested in a restful sleep, was driven to his head, disturbed and scattered—hence his weak eyesight and bad complexion.

His memory was naturally good, and much improved by technique. He would never read over again what he was going to say in order to learn it off—he had learnt it off as he wrote: which is the more remarkable because he used to write not slowly and painstakingly but with almost the same impetuosity as marked his speech. Those who put their writings 18

<sup>1</sup> Compare the remarks of Celsus 1.2.5; Sen. Ep. 94.20.

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