

THE SEVENTH ORATION OF M. T. CICERO AGAINST MARCUS ANTONIUS.

CALLED ALSO THE SEVENTH PHILIPPIC.

THE ARGUMENT.

After the senate had decided on sending them, the ambassadors immediately set out, though Servius Sulpicius was in a very bad state of health. In the mean time the partisans of Antonius in the city, with Calenus at their head, were endeavoring to gain over the rest of the citizens, by representing him as eager for an accommodation; and they kept up a correspondence with him, and published such of his letters as they thought favorable for their views. Matters being in this state, Cicero, at an ordinary meeting of the senate, made the following speech to counteract the machinations of this party, and to warn the citizens generally of the danger of being deluded by them.

I. WE are consulted to-day about matters of small importance, but still perhaps necessary, O conscript fathers. The consul submits a motion to us about the Appian road, and about the coinage; the tribune of the people one about the Luperici. And although it seems easy to settle such matters as those, still my mind can not fix itself on such subjects, being anxious about more important matters. For our affairs, O conscript fathers, are come to a crisis, and are in a state of almost extreme danger. It is not without reason that I have always feared, and never approved of that sending of ambassadors. And what their return is to bring us I know not; but who is there who does not see with how much languor the expectation of it infects our minds? For those men put no restraint on themselves who grieve that the senate has revived so as to entertain hopes of its former authority, and that the Roman people is united to this our order; that all Italy is animated by one common feeling; that armies are prepared, and generals ready for the armies; even already they are inventing replies for Antonius, and defending them. Some pretend that his demand is that all the armies be disbanded. I suppose then we sent ambassadors to him, not that he should submit and obey this our body, but that he should offer us conditions, impose laws upon us, order us to open Italy to foreign nations; espe-

cially while we were to leave him in safety from whom there is more danger to be feared than from any nation whatever. Others say that he is willing to give up the nearer Gaul to us, and that he will be satisfied with the farther Gaul. Very kind of him! in order that from thence he may endeavor to bring not merely legions, but even nations against this city. Others say that he makes no demands now but such as are quite moderate. Macedonia he calls absolutely his own, since it was from thence that his brother Caius was recalled. But what province is there in which that fire-brand may not kindle a conflagration? Therefore those same men, like provident citizens and diligent senators, say that I have sounded the charge, and they undertake the advocacy of peace. Is not this the way in which they argue? "Antonius ought not to have been irritated; he is a reckless and a bold man; there are many bad men besides him." (No doubt, and they may begin and count themselves first.) And they warn us to be on our guard against them. Which conduct then is it which shows the more prudent caution; chastising wicked citizens when one is able to do so, or fearing them?

II. And these men speak in this way, who on account of their trifling disposition used to be considered friends of the people. From which it may be understood that they in their hearts have at all times been disinclined to a good constitution of the state, and they were not friends of the people from inclination. For how comes it to pass that those men who were anxious to gratify the people in evil things, now, on an occasion which above all others concerns the people's interests, because the same thing would be also salutary for the republic, now prefer being wicked to being friends of the people? This noble cause of which I am the advocate has made me popular, a man who (as you know) have always opposed the rashness of the people. And those men are called, or rather they call themselves, consulars; though no man is worthy of that name except those who can support so high an honor. Will you favor an enemy? Will you let him send you letters about his hopes of success? Will you be glad to produce them? to read them? Will you even give them to wicked citizens to take copies of? Will you thus raise their courage? Will you thus damp the hopes and valor of the good? And then will you think yourself

a consular, or a senator, or even a citizen? Caius Pansa, a most fearless and virtuous consul, will take what I say in good part. For I will speak with a disposition most friendly to him; but I should not consider him himself a consul, though a man with whom I am most intimate, unless he was such a consul as to devote all his vigilance, and cares, and thoughts to the safety of the republic.

Although long acquaintance, and habit, and a fellowship and resemblance in the most honorable pursuits, has bound us together from his first entrance into life; and his incredible diligence, proved at the time of the most formidable dangers of the civil war, showed that he was a favorer not only of my safety, but also of my dignity; still, as I said before, if he were not such a consul as I have described, I should venture to deny that he was a consul at all. But now I call him not only a consul, but the most excellent and virtuous consul within my recollection; not but that there have been others of equal virtue and equal inclination, but still they have not had an equal opportunity of displaying that virtue and inclination. But the opportunity of a time of most formidable change has been afforded to his magnanimity, and dignity, and wisdom. And that is the time when the consulship is displayed to the greatest advantage, when it governs the republic during a time which, if not desirable, is at all events critical and momentous. And a more critical time than the present, O conscript fathers, never was.

III. Therefore I, who have been at all times an adviser of peace, and who, though all good men always considered peace, and especially internal peace, desirable, have desired it more than all of them;—for the whole of the career of my industry has been passed in the forum and in the senate-house, and in warding off dangers from my friends; it is by this course that I have arrived at the highest honors, at moderate wealth, and at any dignity which we may be thought to have: I therefore, a nursling of peace, as I may call myself, I who, whatever I am (for I arrogate nothing to myself), should undoubtedly not have been such without internal peace: I am speaking in peril: I shudder to think how you will receive it, O conscript fathers; but still, out of regard for my unceasing desire to support and increase your dignity, I beg and entreat you, O conscript fathers, although it may be a bitter thing to hear, or an incredible thing that it should be said by Marcus Cicero, still to re-

ceive at first, without offense, what I am going to say, and not to reject it before I have fully explained what it is;—I, who, I will say so over and over again, have always been a panegyrist, have always been an adviser of peace, do not wish to have peace with Marcus Antonius. I approach the rest of my speech with great hope, O conscript fathers, since I have now passed by that perilous point amid your silence.

Why then do I not wish for peace? Because it would be shameful; because it would be dangerous; because it can not possibly be real. And while I explain these three points to you, I beg of you, O conscript fathers, to listen to my words with the same kindness which you usually show to me.

What is more shameful than inconsistency, fickleness, and levity, both to individuals, and also to the entire senate? Moreover, what can be more inconsistent than on a sudden to be willing to be united in peace with a man whom you have lately adjudged to be an enemy, not by words, but by actions and by many formal decrees? Unless, indeed, when you were decreeing honors to Caius Cæsar, well deserved indeed by and fairly due to him, but still unprecedented and never to be forgotten, for one single reason,—because he had levied an army against Marcus Antonius,—you were not judging Marcus Antonius to be an enemy; and unless Antonius was not pronounced an enemy by you, when the veteran soldiers were praised by your authority, for having followed Cæsar; and unless you did not declare Antonius an enemy when you promised exemptions and money and lands to those brave legions, because they had deserted him who was consul while he was an enemy.

IV. What? when you distinguished with the highest praises Brutus, a man born under some omen, as it were, of his race and name, for the deliverance of the republic, and his army which was waging war against Antonius on behalf of the liberty of the Roman people, and the most loyal and admirable province of Gaul, did you not then pronounce Antonius an enemy? What? when you decreed that the consuls, one or both of them, should go to the war, what war was there if Antonius was not an enemy? Why then was it that most gallant man, my own colleague and intimate friend, Aulus Hirtius the consul, has set out? And in what delicate health he is; how wasted away! *But the weak state of his body could not repress the vigor of his mind.* He thought it fair,

I suppose, to expose to danger in defense of the Roman people that life which had been preserved to him by their prayers. What? when you ordered levies of troops to be made throughout all Italy, when you suspended all exemptions from service, was he not by those steps declared to be an enemy? You see manufactories of arms in the city; soldiers, sword in hand, are following the consul; they are in appearance a guard to the consul, but in fact and reality to us; all men are giving in their names, not only without any shirking, but with the greatest eagerness; they are acting in obedience to your authority. Has not Antonius been declared an enemy by such acts?

“Oh, but we have sent ambassadors to him.” Alas, wretched that I am! why am I compelled to find fault with the senate whom I have always praised? Why? Do you think, O conscript fathers, that you have induced the Roman people to approve of the sending ambassadors? Do you not perceive, do you not hear, that the adoption of my opinion is demanded by them? that opinion which you, in a full house, agreed to the day before, though the day after you allowed yourselves to be brought down to a groundless hope of peace. Moreover, how shameful it is for the legions to send out ambassadors to the senate, and the senate to Antonius! Although that is not an embassy; it is a denunciation that destruction is prepared for him if he do not submit to this order. What is the difference? At all events, men’s opinions are unfavorable to the measure; for all men see that ambassadors have been sent, but it is not all who are acquainted with the terms of your decree.

V. You must, therefore, preserve your consistency, your wisdom, your firmness, your perseverance. You must go back to the old-fashioned severity, if at least the authority of the senate is anxious to establish its credit, its honor, its renown, and its dignity, things which this order has been too long deprived of. But there was some time ago some excuse for it, as being oppressed; a miserable excuse indeed, but still a fair one; now there is none. We appeared to have been delivered from kingly tyranny; and afterward we were oppressed much more severely by domestic enemies. We did indeed turn their arms aside; we must now wrest them from their hands. And if we can not do so (*I will say what it becomes one who is both a senator and a Roman to say*), let

us die. For how just will be the shame, how great will be the disgrace, how great the infamy to the republic, if Marcus Antonius can deliver his opinion in this assembly from the consular bench. For, to say nothing of the countless acts of wickedness committed by him while consul in the city, during which time he has squandered a vast amount of public money, restored exiles without any law, sold our revenues to all sorts of people, removed provinces from the empire of the Roman people, given men kingdoms for bribes, imposed laws on the city by violence, besieged the senate, and, at other times, excluded it from the senate-house by force of arms;—to say nothing, I say, of all this, do you not consider this, that he who has attacked Mutina, a most powerful colony of the Roman people—who has besieged a general of the Roman people, who is consul elect—who has laid waste the lands,—do you not consider, I say, how shameful and iniquitous a thing it would be for that man to be received into this order, by which he has been so repeatedly pronounced an enemy for these very reasons?

I have said enough of the shamefulness of such a proceeding; I will now speak next, as I proposed, of the danger of it; which, although it is not so important to avoid as shame, still offends the minds of the greater part of mankind even more.

VI. Will it then be possible for you to rely on the certainty of any peace, when you see Antonius, or rather the Antonii, in the city? Unless, indeed, you despise Lucius: I do not despise even Caius. But, as I think, Lucius will be the dominant spirit,—for he is the patron of the five-and-thirty tribes, whose votes he took away by his law, by which he divided the magistracies in conjunction with Caius Cæsar. He is the patron of the centuries of the Roman knights, which also he thought fit to deprive of the suffrages: he is the patron of the men who have been military tribunes; he is the patron of the middle of Janus. O ye gods! who will be able to support this man's power? especially when he has brought all his dependents into the lands. Who ever was the patron of all the tribes? and of the Roman knights? and of the military tribunes? Do you think that the power of even the Gracchi was greater than that of this gladiator will be? whom I have called gladiator, not in the sense in which sometimes Marcus Antonius too is called gladiator, but as men call him who are speaking plain Latin. He has fought in Asia as a mirmillo.

After having equipped his own companion and intimate friend in the armor of a Thracian, he slew the miserable man as he was dying; but he himself received a palpable wound, as the scar proves.

What will the man who murdered his friend in this way, when he has an opportunity, do to an enemy? and if he did such a thing as this for the fun of the thing, what do you think he will do when tempted by the hope of plunder? Will he not again meet wicked men in the decuries? will he not again tamper with those men who have received lands? will he not again seek those who have been banished? will he not, in short, be Marcus Antonius; to whom, on the occasion of every commotion, there will be a rush of all profligate citizens? Even if there be no one else except those who are with him now, and these who in this body now openly speak in his favor, will they be too small in number? especially when all the protection which we might have had from good men is lost, and when those men are prepared to obey his nod? But I am afraid, if at this time we fail to adopt wise counsels, that that party will in a short time appear too numerous for us. Nor have I any dislike to peace; only I do dread war disguised under the name of peace. Wherefore, if we wish to enjoy peace we must first wage war. If we shrink from war, peace we shall never have.

VII. But it becomes your prudence, O conscript fathers, to provide as far forward as possible for posterity. That is the object for which we were placed in this garrison, and as it were on this watch-tower; that by our vigilance and foresight we might keep the Roman people free from fear. It would be a shameful thing, especially in so clear a case as this, for it to be notorious that wisdom was wanting to the chief council of the whole world. We have such consuls, there is such eagerness on the part of the Roman people, we have such an unanimous feeling of all Italy in our favor, such generals, and such armies, that the republic can not possibly suffer any disaster without the senate being in fault. I, for my part, will not be wanting. I will warn you, I will forewarn you, I will give you notice, I will call gods and men to witness what I do really believe. Nor will I display my good faith alone, which perhaps may seem to be enough, but which in a chief citizen is not enough: *I will exert all my care, and prudence, and vigilance.*

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