

which we have promised them. For that is what I hope that the immortal gods will consider just.

And as this is the case, I give my vote for the proposition which I have made to you, O conscript fathers, being adopted by you.

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

CALLED ALSO THE TWELFTH PHILIPPIC.

THE ARGUMENT.

Decimus Brutus was in such distress in Mutina, that his friends began to be alarmed, fearing that, if he fell into the hands of Antonius, he would be treated as Trebonius had been. And, as the friends of Antonius gave out that he was now more inclined to come to terms with the senate, a proposition was made and supported by Pansa, to send a second embassy to him. And even Cicero at first consented to it, and allowed himself to be nominated with Servilius and three other senators, all of consular rank; but on more mature reflection he was convinced that he had been guilty of a blunder, and that the object of Antonius and his friends was only to gain time for Ventidius to join him with his three legions. Accordingly, at the next meeting of the senate, he delivered the following speech, retracting his former sanction of the proposed embassy. And he spoke so strongly against it, that the measure was abandoned, and Pansa soon afterward marched with his army to join Hirtius and Octavius, with the intention of forcing Antonius to a battle.

I. **ALTHOUGH, O conscript fathers,** it seems very unbecoming for that man whose counsels you have so often adopted in the most important affairs, to be deceived and deluded, and to commit mistakes; yet I console myself, since I made the mistake in company with you, and in company also with a consul of the greatest wisdom. For when two men of consular rank had brought us hope of an honorable peace, they appeared, as being friends and extremely intimate with Marcus Antonius, to be aware of some weak point about him with which we were unacquainted. His wife and children are in the house of one; the other is known every day to send letters to, to receive letters from, and openly to favor Antonius.

These men, then, appeared likely to have some reason for exhorting us to peace, which they had done for some time.

The consul, too, added the weight of his exhortation; and what a consul! If we look for prudence, one who was not easily to be deceived; if for virtue and courage, one who would never admit of peace unless Antonius submitted and confessed himself to be vanquished; if for greatness of mind, one who would prefer death to slavery. You, too, O conscript fathers, appeared to be induced to think not of accepting but of imposing conditions, not so much because you were forgetful of your most important and dignified resolutions, as because you had hopes suggested you of a surrender on the part of Antonius, which his friends preferred to call peace. My own hopes, and I imagine yours also, were increased by the circumstance of my hearing that the family of Antonius was overwhelmed with distress, and that his wife was incessantly lamenting. And in this assembly, too, I saw that the partisans, on whose countenance my eyes are always dwelling, looked more sorrowful than usual. And if that is not so, why on a sudden has mention been made of peace by Piso and Calenus of all people in the world, why at this particular moment, why so unexpectedly? Piso declares that he knows nothing, that he has not heard any thing. Calenus declares that no news has been brought. And they make that statement now, after they think that we are involved in a pacific embassy. What need have we, then, of any new determination, if no new circumstances have arisen to call for one?

II. We have been deceived,—we have, I say, been deceived, O conscript fathers. It is the cause of Antonius that has been pleaded by his friends, and not the cause of the public. And I did indeed see that, though through a sort of mist; the safety of Decimus Brutus had dazzled my eyesight. But if in war, substitutes were in the habit of being given, I would gladly allow myself to be hemmed in, so long as Decimus Brutus might be released. But we were caught by this expression of Quintus Fufius; “Shall we not listen to Antonius, even if he retires from Mutina? Shall we not, even if he declares that he will submit himself to the authority of the senate?” It seemed harsh to say that. Thus it was that we were broken; we yielded. Does he then retire from Mutina? “I don’t know.” Is he obeying the senate? “I think so,” says Calenus, “but so as to preserve his own dignity at the same time.” You then, O conscript fathers, are to make great exertions for the express purpose of losing your own dignity, which is very

great, and of preserving that of Antonius, which neither has nor can have any existence; and of enabling him to recover that by your conduct, which he has lost by his own. "But, however, that matter is not open for consideration now; an embassy has been appointed." But what is there which is not open for consideration to a wise man, as long as it can be remodeled? Any man is liable to a mistake; but no one but a downright fool will persist in error. For second thoughts, as people say, are best. The mist which I spoke of just now is dispelled: light has arisen: the case is plain: we see every thing, and that not by our own acuteness, but we are warned by our friends.

You heard just now what was the statement made by a most admirable man. I found, said he, his house, his wife, his children, all in great distress. Good men marveled at me, my friends blamed me for having been led by the hope of peace to undertake an embassy. And no wonder, O Publius Servilius. For by your own most true and most weighty arguments Antonius was stripped, I do not say of all dignity, but of even every hope of safety. Who would not wonder if you were to go as an ambassador to him? I judge by my own case; for with regard to myself I see how the same design as you conceived is found fault with. And are we the only people blamed? What? did that most gallant man speak so long and so precisely a little while ago without any reason? What was he laboring for, except to remove from himself a groundless suspicion of treachery? And whence did that suspicion arise? From his unexpected advocacy of peace, which he adopted all on a sudden, being taken in by the same error that we were.

But if an error has been committed, O conscript fathers, owing to a groundless and fallacious hope, let us return into the right road. The best harbor for a penitent is a change of intention.

III. For what, in the name of the immortal gods! what good can our embassy do to the republic? What good, do I say? What will you say if it will even do us harm? *Will* do us harm? What if it already *has* done us harm? Do you suppose that that most energetic and fearless desire shown by the Roman people for recovery of their liberty has been *dampened and weakened by hearing of this embassy for peace?* What do you think the municipal towns feel? and the colonies?

What do you think will be the feelings of all Italy? Do you suppose that it will continue to glow with the same zeal with which it burned before to extinguish this common conflagration? Do we not suppose that those men will repent of having professed and displayed so much hatred to Antonius, who promised us money and arms; who devoted themselves wholly, body, heart, and soul, to the safety of the republic? How will Capua, which at the present time feels like a second Rome, approve of this design of yours? That city pronounced them impious citizens, cast them out, and kept them out. Antonius was barely saved from the hands of that city, which made a most gallant attempt to crush him. Need I say more? Are we not by these proceedings cutting the sinews of our own legions; for what man can engage with ardor in a war, when the hope of peace is suggested to him? Even that godlike and divine Martial legion will grow languid at and be cowed by the receipt of this news, and will lose that most noble title of Martial; their swords will fall to the ground; their weapons will drop from their hands. For, following the senate, it will not consider itself bound to feel more bitter hatred against Antonius than the senate.

I am ashamed for this legion, I am ashamed for the fourth legion, which, approving of our authority with equal virtue, abandoned Antonius, not looking upon him as their consul and general, but as an enemy and attacker of their country. I am ashamed for that admirable army which is made up of two armies; which has now been reviewed, and which has started for Mutina, and which, if it hears a word of peace, that is to say, of our fear, even if it does not return, will at all events halt. For who, when the senate recalls him and sounds a retreat, will be eager to engage in battle?

IV. For what can be more unreasonable than for us to pass resolutions about peace without the knowledge of those men who wage the war? And not only without their knowledge, but even against their will? Do you think that Aulus Hirtius, that most illustrious consul, and that Caius Cæsar, a man born by the especial kindness of the gods for this especial crisis, whose letters, announcing their hope of victory, I hold in my hand, are desirous of peace? They are anxious to conquer; and they wish to obtain that most delightful and

¹ Compare St. Paul,—“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle!” 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

beautiful condition of peace, as the consequence of victory, not of some agreement. What more? With what feelings do you think that Gaul will hear of this proceeding? For that province performs the chief part in repelling, and managing, and supporting this war. Gaul, following the mere nod, for I need not say the command of Decimus Brutus, has strengthened the beginning of the war with her arms, her men, and her treasures: she has exposed the whole of her body to the cruelty of Marcus Antonius: she is drained, laid waste, attacked with fire and sword. She is enduring all the injuries of war with equanimity, contented as long as she can ward off the danger of slavery. And, to say nothing of the other parts of Gaul (for they are all alike), the people of Patawium have excluded some men who were sent to them by Antonius, and have driven out others, and have assisted our generals with money and soldiers, and with what was above all things wanting, arms. The rest have done the same; even those who formerly were of the party of Antonius, and who were believed to have been alienated from the senate by the injuries of many years. Men, who indeed there is no great reason to wonder at being faithful now, after the freedom of the republic has been shared with them, when, even before they had been admitted to those privileges, they always behaved with loyalty and good faith.

V. All these men, then, who are now sanguine of victory, we are to meet with the name of peace; that is to say, with a complete despair of victory.

What more? What if it is even absolutely impossible for there to be any real peace at all? For what sort of peace is that in which nothing can be granted to the man with whom one is making peace? Antonius has been invited to peace by us by many circumstances; but he has preferred war. Embassadors were sent. I opposed it, indeed, but still they were sent. Commands were taken to him: he did not obey them. He was ordered not to besiege Brutus, and to retire from before Mutina. He attacked that town even more vigorously. And shall we send an embassy to treat of peace to a man who has rejected ambassadors of peace? Do we suppose that when we talk to him face to face he will be more moderate in his demands than he was when he sent commands to the senate? But at that time he demanded things which appeared indeed unreasonable, but still such as it might have been pos-

sible to concede; he had not at that time been branded by such heavy and such numerous decisions and condemnations of yours. At present he is demanding things which we can not by any possibility grant, unless we are willing first to confess ourselves defeated in war.

We have pronounced that resolutions of the senate which have been produced by him are forged. Can we now pronounce them genuine? We have declared that laws have been carried by him by means of violence, and in a manner contrary to the auspices, and that neither the burgesses nor the common people are bound by them. Do you consider it possible that those laws should be re-established? You have judicially decided that Antonius has embezzled seven hundred millions of sesterces of the public money. Can he now be released from the charge of peculation? Exemptions, grants of the freedom of the city, priesthoods, kingdoms have been sold by him. Can those tablets again be put up which you took down by your decrees?

VI. But if we can rescind those decrees which we have passed, can we also efface the memory of the facts? For where will any posterity forget to whose wickedness it was owing that we have been arrayed in these unseemly garments? Although the blood of the centurions of the Martial legion shed at Brundisium be washed out, can the notoriety of that inhuman act be washed out too? To pass over things which happened in the interval, what lapse of time will ever efface the foul memorials of his military works around Mutina, the tokens of his wickedness, the traces of his piratical conduct?

What then, in the name of the immortal gods! have we which we can grant in the way of concession to this polluted and impious parricide? Are we to yield up to him the farther Gaul, and an army? This is not making peace, but only deferring war. Indeed, it is not only prolonging the war, but even conceding the victory. Is it not a victory for him to enter this city with his troops, on any conditions whatever? At present we are masters of every thing by our arms; we are of great influence from the authority of this order; numbers of desperate citizens are absent, following their infamous leader; and still we can not bear the countenances or support the language of those men who are left behind in the city out of their number. What do you think will be the result when

such numbers force their way into the city at one time? when we have laid aside our arms, and they have not laid aside theirs? Must we not be defeated for everlasting, in consequence of our own counsels?

Place before your eyes Marcus Antonius, as a man of consular rank; add to him Lucius, hoping to obtain the consulship; join to them all the rest, and those too not confined to our order, who are fixing their thoughts on honors and commands. Do not despise the Tiros, and the Numisii, or the Mustellæ, or the Seii. A peace made with those men will not be peace, but a covenant of slavery. That was an admirable expression of Lucius Piso, a most honorable man, and one which has been deservedly praised by you, O Pansa, not only in this order, but also in the assembly of the people. He said, that he would depart from Italy, and leave his household gods and his native home, if (but might the gods avert such a disaster!) Antonius overwhelmed the republic.

VII. I ask, therefore, of you, O Lucius Piso, whether you would not think the republic overwhelmed if so many men of such impiety, of such audacity, and such guilt, were admitted into it? Can you think that men whom we could hardly bear when they were not yet polluted with such parricidal treasons, will be able to be borne by the city now that they are immersed in every sort of wickedness? Believe me, we must either adopt your plan, and retire, depart, embrace a life of indigence and wandering, or else we must offer our throats to those robbers, and perish in our country. What has become, O Caius Pansa, of those noble exhortations of yours, by which the senate was roused, and the Roman people stimulated, not only hearing but also learning from you that there is nothing more disgraceful to a Roman than slavery? Was it for this that we assumed the garb of war, and took arms, and roused up all the youth all over Italy, in order that, while we had a most flourishing and numerous army, we might send ambassadors to treat for peace? If that peace is to be received by others, why do we not wait to be entreated for it? If our ambassadors are to beg it, what is it that we are afraid of? Shall I make one of this embassy, or shall I be mixed up with this design, in which, even if I should dissent from the rest of my colleagues, the Roman people will not know it? The result will be, that if any thing be granted or conceded, it will be my danger if Antonius commits any offenses, since the

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