

PART II

THE FIRST OLYNTHIAC

ARGUMENT

OLYNTHUS was a city in Macedonia, at the head of the Toronaic gulf, and north of the peninsula of Pallene. It was colonised by a people from Chalcis in Eubœa, and commanded a large district called Chalcidice, in which there were thirty-two cities. Over all this tract the sway of Olynthus was considerable, and she had waged wars anciently with Athens and Sparta, and been formidable to Philip's predecessors on the throne of Macedon. Soon after Philip's accession, the Olynthians had disputes with him, which were at first accommodated, and he gratified them by the cession of Anthemus. They then joined him in a war against Athens, and he gave up to them Potidæa, which had yielded to their united arms. After the lapse of some years, during which Philip had greatly increased his power, and acquired considerable influence in Thessaly and Thrace, the Olynthians became alarmed, and began to think him too dangerous a neighbour. The immediate cause of rupture was an attack which he made on one of the Chalcidian towns. An embassy was instantly sent to Athens to negotiate an alliance. Philip, considering this as an infraction of their treaty with him, declared war against them, and invaded their territory. A second embassy was sent to Athens, pressing for assistance. The question was debated in the popular assembly. Demades, an orator of considerable ability, but profligate character, opposed the alliance. Many speakers were heard; and at length Demosthenes rose to support the prayer of the embassy, delivering one of those clear and forcible speeches which seldom failed to make a strong impression on his audience. The alliance was accepted, and succours voted.

The orator here delicately touches on the law of Eubulus, which had made it capital to propose that the Theoric fund should be applied to military service. This fund was in fact the surplus revenue of the civil administration, which by the ancient law was appropriated to the defence of the commonwealth; but it had by various means been diverted from that purpose, and expended in largesses to the people, to enable them to attend the theatre, and other public shows and amusements. The law of Eubulus perpetuated this abuse. Demosthenes, seeing the necessity of a war supply, hints that this absurd law ought to be abolished, but does not openly propose it.

There has been much difference of opinion among the learned as to the order of the three Olynthiac orations; nor is it certain whether they were spoken on the occasion of one embassy, or several embassies. The curious may consult Bishop Thirlwall's Appendix to the fifth volume of his Grecian History, and Jacobs' Introduction to his translation. I have followed the common order, as adopted by Bekker, whose edition of Demosthenes is the text of this translation; and indeed my opinion is, on the whole, in favour of preserving the common

order, though the plan of this work prevents my entering into controversy on the question. The historical abstract prefixed to this volume is intended chiefly to assist the reader in reference to dates. Such occurrences only are noticed as may be useful to illustrate Demosthenes.

I BELIEVE, men of Athens, you would give much to know, what is the true policy to be adopted in the present matter of inquiry. This being the case, you should be willing to hear with attention those who offer you their counsel. Besides that you will have the benefit of all preconsidered advice, I esteem it part of your good fortune that many fit suggestions will occur to some speakers at the moment, so that from them all you may easily choose what is profitable.

The present juncture, Athenians, all but proclaims aloud that you must yourselves take these affairs in hand, if you care for their success. I know not how we seem disposed in the matter. My own opinion is, vote succour immediately and make the speediest preparations for sending it off from Athens, that you may not incur the same mishap as before; send also ambassadors to announce this, and watch the proceedings. For the danger is that this man, being unscrupulous and clever at turning events to account, making concessions when it suits him, threatening at other times (his threats may well be believed), slandering us and urging our absence against us, may convert and wrest to his use some of our main resources. Though, strange to say, Athenians, the very cause of Philip's strength is a circumstance favourable to you. His having it in his sole power to publish or conceal his designs, his being at the same time general, sovereign, paymaster, and everywhere accompanying his army, is a great advantage for quick and timely operations in war; but, for a peace with the Olynthians, which he would gladly make, it has a contrary effect. For it is plain to the Olynthians that now they are fighting, not for glory or a slice of territory, but to save their country from destruction and servitude. They know how he treated those Amphipolitans who surrendered to him their city, and those Pydneans

who gave him admittance.¹ And generally, I believe, a despotic power is mistrusted by free states, especially if their dominions are adjoining. All this being known to you, Athenians, all else of importance considered, I say, you must take heart and spirit, and apply yourselves more than ever to the war, contributing promptly, serving personally, leaving nothing undone. No plea or pretence is left you for declining your duty. What you were all so clamorous about, that the Olynthians should be pressed into a war with Philip, has of itself come to pass, and in a way most advantageous to you. For, had they undertaken the war at your instance, they might have been slippery allies, with minds but half resolved perhaps: but since they hate him on a quarrel of their own, their enmity is like to endure on account of their fears and their wrongs. You must not then, Athenians, forego this lucky opportunity, nor commit the error which you have often done heretofore. For example, when we returned from succouring the Eubœans, and Hierax and Stratocles of Amphipolis came to this platform,² urging us to sail and receive possession of their city, if we had shown the same zeal for ourselves as for the safety of Eubœa, you would have held Amphipolis then and been rid of all the

¹ Amphipolis was a city at the head of the Strymonic gulf, in that part of Macedonia which approaches western Thrace. It had been built formerly by an Athenian colony, and was taken by the Spartan general Brasidas in the Peloponnesian war. Ever since Athens regained her character of an imperial state, she had desired to recover Amphipolis, which was important for its maritime position, its exportation of iron, and especially from the vicinity of the forests near the Strymon, which afforded an inexhaustible supply of ship-timber. But she had never been able to accomplish that object. Philip, who at that time possessed no maritime town of importance, was for obvious reasons anxious to win Amphipolis for himself; and he got possession of it partly by force of arms, partly by the treachery of certain Amphipolitans who were attached to his interest. It seems the Athenians had been amused by a promise of Philip to give up the town to them. The non-performance of this compact led to their first long war with him. Immediately after the capture of Amphipolis, Philip marched against Pydna, and was admitted into the town.

² The hustings from which the speakers addressed the people. It was cut to the height of ten feet out of the rock which formed the boundary wall of the assembly; and was ascended by a flight of steps.

troubles that ensued. Again, when news came that Pydna,¹ Potidæa, Methone, Pagasæ, and the other places (not to waste time in enumerating them) were besieged, had we to any one of these in the first instance carried prompt and reasonable succour, we should have found Philip far more tractable and humble now. But, by always neglecting the present, and imagining the future would shift for itself, we, O men of Athens, have exalted Philip, and made him greater than any king of Macedon ever was. Here then is come a crisis, this of Olynthus, self-offered to the state, inferior to none of the former. And methinks, men of Athens, any man fairly estimating what the gods have done for us, notwithstanding many untoward circumstances, might with reason be grateful to them. Our numerous losses in war may justly be charged to our own negligence; but that they happened not long ago, and that an alliance, to counterbalance them, is open to our acceptance, I must regard as manifestations of divine favour. It is much the same as in money matters. If a man keep what he gets, he is thankful to fortune; if he lose it by imprudence, he loses withal his memory of the obligation. So in political affairs, they who misuse their opportunities forget even the good which the gods send them; for every prior event is judged commonly by the last result. Wherefore, Athenians, we must be exceedingly careful of our future measures, that by amendment therein we may efface the shame of the past. Should we abandon these men² too, and Philip reduce Olynthus, let any one tell me what is to prevent him marching where he pleases? Does any one of you Athenians compute or consider the means by which

¹ Potidæa was in the peninsula of Pallene, near Olynthus, and was therefore given by Philip to the Olynthians, as mentioned in the argument. Methone and Pydna are on the Macedonian coast approaching Thessaly. Pagasæ is a Thessalian town in the Magnesian district. It was the seaport of Pheræ, capital of the tyrant Lycophron, against whom Philip was invited to assist the Thessalians. Philip overcame Lycophron, and restored republican government at Pheræ; but Pagasæ he garrisoned himself, and also Magnesia, a coast-town in the same district.

² Here he points to the Olynthian ambassadors.

Philip, originally weak, has become great? Having first taken Amphipolis, then Pydna, Potidæa next, Methone afterwards, he invaded Thessaly. Having ordered matters at Pheræ, Pegasæ, Magnesia, everywhere exactly as he pleased, he departed for Thrace; where, after displacing some kings and establishing others, he fell sick; again recovering, he lapsed not into indolence, but instantly attacked the Olynthians. I omit his expeditions to Illyria and Pæonia, that against Arymbas,¹ and some others.

Why, it may be said, do you mention all this now? That you, Athenians, may feel and understand both the folly of continually abandoning one thing after another, and the activity which forms part of Philip's habit and existence, which makes it impossible for him to rest content with his achievements. If it be his principle, ever to do more than he has done, and yours, to apply yourselves vigorously to nothing, see what the end promises to be. Heavens! which of you is so simple as not to know that the war yonder will soon be here, if we are careless? And should this happen, I fear, O Athenians, that as men who thoughtlessly borrow on large interest, after a brief accommodation, lose their estate, so will it be with us: found to have paid dear for our idleness and self-indulgence, we shall be reduced to many hard and unpleasant shifts, and struggle for the salvation of our country.

To censure, I may be told, is easy for any man; to show what measures the case requires, is the part of a counsellor. I am not ignorant, Athenians, that frequently, when any disappointment happens, you are angry, not with the parties in fault, but with the last speakers on the subject; yet never, with a view to self-protection, would I suppress what I deem for your interest. I say then, you must give a two-fold assistance here; first, save the Olynthians their towns,² and

¹ Arymbas was a king of the Molossians in Epirus, and uncle of Olympias, Philip's wife.

² The Chalcidian towns. See the Argument. Philip commenced his aggressions upon the Olynthians by reducing several of these.

send out troops for that purpose; secondly, annoy the enemy's country with ships and other troops; omit either of these courses, and I doubt the expedition will be fruitless. For should he, suffering your incursion, reduce Olynthus, he will easily march to the defence of his kingdom; or, should you only throw succour into Olynthus, and he, seeing things out of danger at home, keep up a close and vigilant blockade, he must in time prevail over the besieged. Your assistance therefore must be effective, and two-fold.

Such are the operations I advise. As to a supply of money: you have money, Athenians; you have a larger military fund than any people; and you receive it just as you please. If ye will assign this to your troops, ye need no further supply; otherwise ye need a further, or rather ye have none at all. How then? some man may exclaim: do you move that this be a military fund? Verily, not I.¹ My opinion indeed is, that there should be soldiers raised, and a military fund, and one and the same regulation for receiving and performing what is due; only you just without trouble take your allowance for the festivals. It remains then, I imagine, that all must contribute, if much be wanted, much, if little, little. Money must be had; without it nothing proper can be done. Other persons propose other ways and means. Choose which ye think expedient; and put hands to the work, while it is yet time.

It may be well to consider and calculate how Philip's affairs now stand. They are not as they appear, or as an inattentive observer might pronounce, in very good trim,

¹ There is some studied obscurity in this passage, owing to the necessity under which the speaker lay of avoiding the penalty of the law; and a little quiet satire on his countrymen, who seemed desirous of eating their pudding and having it too. The logic of the argument runs thus—My opinion is, that we ought to have a military fund, and that no man should receive public money without performing public service. However, as you prefer taking the public money to pay for your places at the festivals, I will not break the law by moving to apply that money to another purpose. Only you gain nothing by it; for, as the troops must be paid, there must be an extraordinary contribution, or property tax, to meet the exigency of the case.

or in the most favourable position. He would never have commenced this war had he imagined he must fight. He expected to carry everything on the first advance, and has been mistaken. This disappointment is one thing that troubles and dispirits him; another is, the state of Thessaly.¹ That people were always, you know, treacherous to all men; and just as they ever have been, they are to Philip. They have resolved to demand the restitution of Pagasæ, and have prevented his fortifying Magnesia; and I was told, they would no longer allow him to take the revenue of their harbours and markets, which they say should be applied to the public business of Thessaly, not received by Philip. Now, if he be deprived of this fund, his means will be much straitened for paying his mercenaries. And surely we must suppose, that Pæonians and Illyrians, and all such people, would rather be free and independent than under subjection; for they are unused to obedience, and the man is a tyrant. So report says, and I can well believe it; for undeserved success leads weak-minded men into folly; and thus it appears often, that to maintain prosperity is harder than to acquire it. Therefore must you, Athenians, looking on his difficulty as your opportunity, assist cheerfully in the war, sending embassies where required, taking arms yourselves, exciting all other people; for if Philip got such an opportunity against us, and there was a war on our frontier, how eagerly think ye he would attack you! Then are you not ashamed that the

¹ Philip's influence in Thessaly was of material assistance to him in his ambitious projects. It was acquired in this way. The power established by Jason of Pheræ, who raised himself to a sort of royal authority under the title of *Tagus*, had devolved upon Lycophron. His sway extended more or less over the whole of Thessaly; but was, if not generally unpopular, at least unacceptable to the great families in the northern towns, among whom the Aleuadæ of Larissa held a prominent place. They invoked Philip's aid, while Lycophron was assisted by the Phocian Onomarchus. After various success, Onomarchus was defeated and slain, and Lycophron expelled from Pheræ. This established Philip's influence, and led to his being afterwards called in to terminate the Sacred War. How far the assertions of Demosthenes, respecting the discontent of the Thessalians, are true, cannot exactly be told. They are confirmed, however, in some degree by the fact, that at the close of the Sacred War Philip restored to them Magnesia.

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