

THE THIRD OLYNTHIAC

ARGUMENT

THE Athenians had despatched succours to Olynthus, and received, as Libanius says, some favourable intelligence; more probably, however, some vague rumours, which led them to imagine the danger was for the time averted. They began, very prematurely, as the result showed, to be confident of success, and talked of punishing Philip for his presumption. In this they were encouraged by certain foolish orators, who sought to flatter the national prejudices. Demosthenes in this oration strives to check the arrogance of the people; reminds them of the necessity of defensive rather than offensive measures, and especially of the importance of preserving their allies. He again adverts (and this time more boldly) to the law of Eubulus, which he intimates ought to be repealed; and he exhorts the Athenians generally to make strenuous exertions against Philip.

NOT the same ideas, men of Athens, are presented to me, when I look at our condition, and when at the speeches which are delivered. The speeches, I find, are about punishing Philip; but our condition is come to this, that we must mind we are not first damaged ourselves. Therefore, it seems to me, these orators commit the simple error of not laying before you the true subject of debate. That once we might safely have held our own and punished Philip too, I know well enough; both have been possible in my own time, not very long ago. But now, I am persuaded, it is sufficient in the first instance to effect the preservation of our allies. When this has been secured, one may look out for revenge on Philip; but before we lay the foundation right, I deem it idle to talk about the end.

The present crisis, O Athenians, requires, if any ever did, much thought and counsel. Not that I am puzzled what advice to give in the matter; I am only doubtful in what way, Athenians, to address you thereupon. For I have been taught, both by hearsay and experience, that most of your

advantages have escaped you from unwillingness to do your duty not from ignorance. I request you, if I speak my mind, to be patient, and consider only, whether I speak the truth, and with a view to future amendment. You see to what wretched plight we are reduced by some men haranguing for popularity.

I think it necessary, however, first to recall to your memory a few past events. You remember, Athenians, when news came three or four years ago that Philip was in Thrace besieging Heræum.¹ It was then the fifth month,² and after much discussion and tumult in the assembly you resolved to launch forty galleys, that every citizen under forty-five should embark, and a tax be raised of sixty talents. That year passed; the first, second, third month arrived; in that month, reluctantly, after the mysteries,³ you despatched Charidemus with ten empty ships and five talents in money; for as Philip was reported to be sick or dead (both rumours came) you thought there was no longer any occasion for succours, and discontinued the armament. But that was the very occasion; if we had then sent our succours quickly, as we resolved, Philip would not have been saved to trouble us now.

Those events cannot be altered. But here is the crisis of another war, the cause why I mentioned the past, that you may not repeat your error. How shall we deal with it, men of Athens? If you lend not the utmost possible aid, see how you will have manœuvred everything for Philip's benefit. There were the Olynthians, possessed of some power; and matters stood thus: Philip distrusted them, and they Philip. We negotiated for peace with them; this hampered (as it were) and annoyed Philip, that a great city, reconciled to us,

¹ A fortress on the Propontis (now Sea of Marmora), near Perinthus. This was a post of importance to the Athenians, who received large supplies of corn from that district.

² Corresponding nearly to our November. The Attic year began in July, and continued twelve lunar months, of alternately 29 and 30 days.

³ The Eleusinian Mysteries, in honour of Ceres and Proserpine, called *The Mysteries* from their peculiar sanctity.

should be watching opportunities against him. We thought it necessary by all means to make that people his enemies; and lo, what erewhile you clamoured for, has somehow or other been accomplished. Then what remains, Athenians, but to assist them vigorously and promptly? I know not. For besides the disgrace that would fall upon us, if we sacrificed any of our interests, I am alarmed for the consequences, seeing how the Thebans are affected towards us, the Phocian treasury exhausted, nothing to prevent Philip when he has subdued what lies before him, from turning to matters here. Whoever postpones until then the performance of his duty, wishes to see the peril at hand, when he may hear of it elsewhere, and to seek auxiliaries for himself, when he may be auxiliary to others; for that this will be the issue, if we throw away our present advantage, we all know pretty well.

But, it may be said, we have resolved that succours are necessary, and we will send them; tell us only how. Marvel not then, Athenians, if I say something to astonish the multitude. Appoint law-revisors: at their session enact no statutes, for you have enough, but repeal those which are at present injurious; I mean, just plainly, the laws concerning our theatrical fund, and some concerning the troops, whereof the former divide the military fund among stayers-at-home for theatrical amusement, the latter indemnify deserters, and so dishearten men well inclined to the service. When you have repealed these, and made the road to good counsel safe, then find a man to propose what you all know to be desirable. But before doing so, look not for one who will advise good measures and be destroyed by you for his pains. Such a person you will not find, especially as the only result would be, for the adviser and mover to suffer wrongfully, and, without forwarding matters, to render good counsel still more dangerous in future. Besides, Athenians, you should require the same men to repeal these laws who have introduced them. It is unjust that their authors should enjoy a popu-

larity which has injured the commonwealth, while the adviser of salutary measures suffers by a displeasure that may lead to general improvement. Till this is set right, Athenians, look not that any one should be so powerful with you as to transgress these laws with impunity, or so senseless as to plunge into ruin right before him.

Another thing, too, you should observe, Athenians, that a decree is worth nothing, without a readiness on your part to do what you determine. Could decrees of themselves compel you to perform your duty, or execute what they prescribe, neither would you with many decrees have accomplished little or nothing, nor would Philip have insulted you so long. Had it depended on decrees, he would have been chastised long ago. But the course of things is otherwise. Action, posterior in order of time to speaking and voting, is in efficacy prior and superior. This requisite you want; the others you possess. There are among you, Athenians, men competent to advise what is needful, and you are exceedingly quick at understanding it; aye, and you will be able now to perform it, if you act rightly. For what time or season would you have better than the present? When will you do your duty, if not now? Has not the man got possession of all our strongholds? And if he become master of this country, shall we not incur foul disgrace? Are not they to whom we promised sure protection in case of war at this moment in hostilities? Is he not an enemy, holding our possessions—a barbarian¹—anything you like to call him? But, O heavens! after permitting, almost helping him to accomplish these things, shall we inquire who were to blame for them? I know we shall not take the blame to ourselves. For so in battles, no runaway accuses himself, but his general,

¹ *Barbarians* (among the Greeks) designates persons who were not of Hellenic origin. Alexander, an ancestor of Philip, had obtained admission to the Olympic games by proving himself to be of Argive descent. But the Macedonian people were scarcely considered as Greeks till a much later period; and Demosthenes speaks rather with reference to the nation than to Philip personally.

his neighbour, any one rather; though, sure enough, the defeat is owing to all the runaways; for each who accuses the rest might have stood his ground, and had each done so, they would have conquered. Now then, does any man not give the best advice? Let another rise and give it, but not censure the last speaker. Does a second give better advice? Follow it, and success attend you! Perhaps it is not pleasant: but that is not the speaker's fault, unless he omits some needful prayer.¹ To pray is simple enough, Athenians, collecting all that one desires in a short petition: but to decide, when measures are the subject of consideration, is not quite so easy; for we must choose the profitable rather than the pleasant, where both are not compatible.

But if any one can let alone our theatrical fund, and suggest other supplies for the military, is he not cleverer? it may be asked. I grant it, if this were possible: but I wonder if any man ever was or will be able, after wasting his means in useless expenses, to find means for useful. The wishes of men are indeed a great help to such arguments, and therefore the easiest thing in the world is self-deceit, for every man believes what he wishes, though the reality is often different. See then, Athenians, what the realities allow, and you will be able to serve and have pay. It becomes not a wise or magnanimous people to neglect military operations for want of money, and bear disgraces like these; or, while you snatch up arms to march against Corinthians and Megarians, to let Philip enslave Greek cities for lack of provisions for your troops.

I have not spoken for the idle purpose of giving offence: I am not so foolish or perverse as to provoke your displeasure without intending your good: but I think an upright citizen should prefer the advancement of the commonwealth to the gratification of his audience. And I hear, as perhaps you do,

¹ Demosthenes sneers at the custom of introducing into the debate sententious professions of good-will, and prayers for prosperity; a poor substitute (he would say) for good counsel.

that the speakers in our ancestors' time, whom all that address you praise, but not exactly imitate, were politicians after this form and fashion;—Aristides, Nicias, my namesake,¹ Pericles. But since these orators have appeared who ask, What is your pleasure? what shall I move? how can I oblige you? the public welfare is complimented away for a moment's popularity, and these are the results; the orators thrive, you are disgraced. Mark, O Athenians, what a summary contrast may be drawn between the doings in our olden time and in yours. It is a tale brief and familiar to all; for the examples by which you may still be happy are found not abroad, men of Athens, but at home. Our forefathers, whom the speakers humoured not nor caressed, as these men caress you, for five-and-forty years took the leadership of the Greeks by general consent, and brought above ten thousand talents into the citadel; and the king of this country was submissive to them, as a barbarian should be to Greeks; and many glorious trophies they erected for victories won by their own fighting on land and sea, and they are the sole people in the world who have bequeathed a renown superior to envy. Such were their merits in the affairs of Greece: see what they were at home, both as citizens and as men. Their public works are edifices and ornaments of such beauty and grandeur in temples and consecrated furniture, that posterity have no power to surpass them. In private they were so modest and attached to the principle of our constitution, that whoever knows the style of house which Aristides had, or Miltiades, and the illustrious of that day, perceives it to be no grander than those of the neighbours. Their politics were not for money-making; each felt it his duty to exalt the commonwealth. By a conduct honourable towards the Greeks, pious to the gods, brotherlike among themselves, they justly attained a high prosperity.

¹ Demosthenes, the general so distinguished in the Peloponnesian war, who defeated the Spartans at Pylus, and afterwards lost his life in Sicily.

So fared matters with them under the statesmen I have mentioned. How fare they with you under the worthies of our time? Is there any likeness or resemblance? I pass over other topics on which I could expatiate; but observe: in this utter absence of competitors (Lacedæmonians depressed, Thebans employed, none of the rest capable of disputing the supremacy with us) when we might hold our own securely and arbitrate the claims of others, we have been deprived of our rightful territory, and spent above fifteen hundred talents to no purpose; the allies, whom we gained in war, these persons have lost in peace, and we have trained up against ourselves an enemy thus formidable. Or let any one come forward and tell me, by whose contrivance but ours Philip has grown strong. Well, sir, this looks bad, but things at home are better. What proof can be adduced? The parapets that are whitewashed? The roads that are repaired? fountains, and fooleries? Look at the men of whose statesmanship these are the fruits. They have risen from beggary to opulence, or from obscurity to honour; some have made their private houses more splendid than the public buildings; and in proportion as the state has declined, their fortunes have been exalted.

What has produced these results? How is it that all went prosperously then, and now goes wrong? Because anciently the people, having the courage to be soldiers, controlled the statesmen, and disposed of all emoluments; any of the rest was happy to receive from the people his share of honour, office, or advantage. Now, contrariwise, the statesmen dispose of emoluments; through them everything is done; you the people, enervated, stripped of treasure and allies, are become as underlings and hangers-on, happy if these persons dole you out show-money or send you paltry beeves; and, the unmanliest part of all, you are grateful for receiving your own. They, cooping you in the city, lead you to your pleasures, and make you tame and submissive to their hands. It is impossible, I say, to have a high and noble

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:
Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature
which can be purchased on our Website :
www.Brainfly.net

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

webcomments@brainfly.net