

THE FIRST PHILIPPIC

ARGUMENT

PHILIP, after the defeat of Onomarchus, had marched towards the pass of Thermopylæ, which, however, he found occupied by the Athenians, who had sent a force for the purpose of preventing his advance. Being baffled there, he directed his march into Thrace, and alarmed the Athenians for the safety of their dominions in the Chersonese. At the same time he sent a fleet to attack the islands of Lemnos and Imbrus, infested the commerce of Athens with his cruisers, and even insulted her coast. In Thrace he became involved in the disputes between the rival kings Amadocus and Cersobleptes, espousing the cause of the former; and for some time he was engaged in the interior of the country, either at war with Cersobleptes, or extending his own influence over other parts of Thrace, where he established or expelled the rulers, as it suited him. It was just at that time that Demosthenes spoke the following oration, the first on which he called the attention of his countrymen to the dangerous increase of Philip's power. He had become convinced by the course of events, and by observing the restless activity of Philip, that Athens had more to fear from him than from Thebes, or from any new combination of the Grecian republics. The orator himself, perhaps, hardly appreciated the extent of Philip's resources, strengthened as he was now by the friendship of Thessaly, possessed of a navy and maritime towns, and relieved from the presence of any powerful neighbours. What were the precise views of Demosthenes as to the extent of the impending danger, we cannot say. It was not for him to frighten the Athenians too much, but to awaken them from their lethargy. This he does in a speech, which, without idle declamation or useless ornament, is essentially practical. He alarms, but encourages, his countrymen; points out both their weakness and their strength; rouses them to a sense of danger, and shows the way to meet it; recommends not any extraordinary efforts, for which at the moment there was no urgent necessity, and to make which would have exceeded their power, but unfolds a scheme, simple and feasible, suiting the occasion, and calculated (if Athenians had not been too degenerate) to lay the foundation of better things.

HAD the question for debate been anything new, Athenians, I should have waited till most of the usual speakers¹ had

¹ By an ancient ordinance of Solon, those who were above fifty years of age were first called on to deliver their opinion. The law had ceased to be in force; but, as a decent custom, the older men usually commenced the debate. There would be frequent occasions for departing from such a custom, and Demosthenes, who was now thirty-three, assigns his reason for speaking first.

been heard; if any of their counsels had been to my liking, I had remained silent, else proceeded to impart my own. But as the subject of discussion is one upon which they have spoken oft before, I imagine, though I rise the first, I am entitled to indulgence. For if these men had advised properly in time past, there would be no necessity for deliberating now.

First I say, you must not despond, Athenians, under your present circumstances, wretched as they are; for that which is worst in them as regards the past, is best for the future. What do I mean? That your affairs are amiss, men of Athens, because you do nothing which is needful; if, notwithstanding you performed your duties, it were the same, there would be no hope of amendment.

Consider next, what you know by report, and men of experience remember; how vast a power the Lacedæmonians had not long ago, yet how nobly and becomingly you consulted the dignity of Athens, and undertook the war¹ against them for the rights of Greece. Why do I mention this? To show and convince you, Athenians, that nothing, if you take precaution, is to be feared, nothing, if you are negligent, goes as you desire. Take for examples the strength of the Lacedæmonians then, which you overcame by attention to your duties, and the insolence of this man now, by which through neglect of our interests we are confounded. But if any among you, Athenians, deem Philip hard to be conquered, looking at the magnitude of his existing power, and the loss by us of all our strongholds, they reason rightly, but should reflect, that once we held Pydna and Potidæa and Methone and all the region round about as our own, and many of the nations now leagued with him were independent and free, and preferred our friendship to his. Had Philip then taken it into his head, that it was difficult to contend

¹ He refers to the war in which Athens assisted the Thebans against Lacedæmon, and in which Chabrias won the naval battle of Naxos. That war commenced twenty-six years before the speaking of the first Philippic, and would be well remembered by many of the hearers.

with Athens, when she had so many fortresses to infest his country, and he was destitute of allies, nothing that he has accomplished would he have undertaken, and never would he have acquired so large a dominion. But he saw well, Athenians, that all these places are the open prizes of war, that the possessions of the absent naturally belong to the present, those of the remiss to them that will venture and toil. Acting on such principle, he has won everything and keeps it, either by way of conquest, or by friendly attachment and alliance; for all men will side with and respect those whom they see prepared and willing to make proper exertion. If you, Athenians, will adopt this principle now, though you did not before, and every man, where he can and ought to give his service to the state, be ready to give it without excuse, the wealthy to contribute, the able-bodied to enlist; in a word, plainly, if you will become your own masters, and cease each expecting to do nothing himself, while his neighbour does everything for him, you shall then with heaven's permission recover your own, and get back what has been frittered away, and chastise Philip. Do not imagine that his empire is everlastingly secured to him as a god. There are who hate and fear and envy him, Athenians, even among those that seem most friendly; and all feelings that are in other men belong, we may assume, to his confederates. But now they are all cowed, having no refuge through your tardiness and indolence, which I say you must abandon forthwith. For you see, Athenians, the case, to what pitch of arrogance the man has advanced who leaves you not even the choice of action or inaction, but threatens and uses (they say) outrageous language, and, unable to rest in possession of his conquests, continually widens their circle, and, whilst we dally and delay, throws his net all around us. When then, Athenians, when will ye act as becomes you? In what event? In that of necessity, I suppose. And how should we regard the events happening now? Methinks, to freemen the strongest necessity is the disgrace of their condition. Or

tell me, do ye like walking about and asking one another:— Is there any news? Why, could there be greater news than a man of Macedonia subduing Athenians, and directing the affairs of Greece? Is Philip dead? No, but he is sick. And what matters it to you? Should anything befall this man, you will soon create another Philip, if you attend to business thus. For even he has been exalted not so much by his own strength as by our negligence. And again; should anything happen to him; should fortune, which still takes better care of us than we of ourselves, be good enough to accomplish this; observe that, being on the spot, you would step in while things were in confusion, and manage them as you pleased; but as you now are, though occasion offered Amphipolis, you would not be in a position to accept it, with neither forces nor counsels at hand.

However, as to the importance of a general zeal in the discharge of duty, believing you are convinced and satisfied, I say no more.

As to the kind of force which I think may extricate you from your difficulties, the amount, the supplies of money, the best and speediest method (in my judgment) of providing all the necessaries, I shall endeavour to inform you forthwith, making only one request, men of Athens. When you have heard all, determine; prejudge not before. And let none think I delay our operations, because I recommend an entirely new force. Not those that cry, quickly! to-day! speak most to the purpose (for what has already happened we shall not be able to prevent by our present armament); but he that shows what and how great and whence procured must be the force capable of enduring, till either we have advisedly terminated the war, or overcome our enemies: for so shall we escape annoyance in future. This I think I am able to show, without offence to any other man who has a plan to offer. My promise indeed is large; it shall be tested by the performance; and you shall be my judges.

First, then, Athenians, I say we must provide fifty war-

ships,¹ and hold ourselves prepared, in case of emergency, to embark and sail. I require also an equipment of transports for half the cavalry² and sufficient boats. This we must have ready against his sudden marches from his own country to Thermopylæ, the Chersonese, Olynthus, and anywhere he likes. For he should entertain the belief, that possibly you may rouse from this over-carelessness, and start off, as you did to Eubœa,³ and formerly (they say) to Haliartus,⁴ and very lately to Thermopylæ. And although you should not pursue just the course I would advise, it is no slight matter that Philip, knowing you to be in readiness—know it he will for certain; there are too many among our own people who report everything to him—may either keep quiet from apprehension, or, not heeding your arrangements, be taken off his guard, there being nothing to prevent your sailing, if he give you a chance, to attack his territories. Such an armament, I say, ought instantly to be agreed upon and provided. But besides, men of Athens, you should keep in hand some force that will incessantly make war and annoy him: none of your ten or twenty thousand mercenaries, not your forces on paper, but one that shall belong to the state, and, whether you appoint one or more generals, or this or that man or any other, shall obey and follow him. Subsistence too I require for it. What the force shall be, how large, from what source maintained, how rendered efficient, I will show you, stating every particular. Mercenaries I recommend—and beware of

¹ The Athenian ship of war at this time was the Trireme, or galley with three ranks of oars. It had at the prow a beak with a sharp iron head, which, in a charge (generally made at the broadside), was able to shatter the planks of the enemy's vessel. An ordinary trireme carried two hundred men, including the crew and marines. These last were usually ten for each ship, but the number was often increased.

² The total number was one thousand, each tribe furnishing one hundred.

³ The expedition about five years before, when the Thebans had sent an army to Eubœa, and Timotheus roused his countrymen to expel them from the island. Of this, Demosthenes gives an animated account at the close of the oration on the Chersonese.

⁴ B.C. 395, when the war between Thebes and Sparta had begun, and Lysander besieged Haliartus. He was slain in a sally by the Thebans and Athenians.

doing what has often been injurious—thinking all measures below the occasion, adopting the strongest in your decrees, you fail to accomplish the least—rather, I say, perform and procure a little, add to it afterwards, if it prove insufficient. I advise then two thousand soldiers in all, five hundred to be Athenians, of whatever age you think right, serving a limited time, not long, but such time as you think right, so as to relieve one another: the rest should be mercenaries. And with them two hundred horse, fifty at least Athenians, like the foot, on the same terms of service; and transports for them. Well; what besides? Ten swift galleys: for, as Philip has a navy, we must have swift galleys also, to convoy our power. How shall subsistence for these troops be provided? I will state and explain; but first let me tell you why I consider a force of this amount sufficient, and why I wish the men to be citizens.

Of that amount, Athenians, because it is impossible for us now to raise an army capable of meeting him in the field: we must plunder and adopt such kind of warfare at first: our force, therefore, must not be over-large (for there is not pay or subsistence) nor altogether mean. Citizens I wish to attend and go on board, because I hear that formerly the state maintained mercenary troops at Corinth,¹ commanded by Polystratus and Iphicrates and Chabrias and some others, and that you served with them yourselves; and I am told that these mercenaries fighting by your side and you by theirs defeated the Lacedæmonians. But ever since your hirelings have served by themselves, they have been vanquishing your friends and allies, while your enemies have become unduly great. Just glancing at the war of our state, they go off to Artabazus² or anywhere rather, and the

¹ He alludes to the time when Corinth, Athens, Thebes, and Argos were allied against Sparta, and held a congress at Corinth, B.C. 394. The allies were at first defeated, but Iphicrates gained some successes, and acquired considerable reputation by cutting off a small division of Spartan infantry.

² Diodorus relates that Chares, in the Social War, having no money to pay his troops, was forced to lend them to Artabazus, then in

general follows, naturally; for it is impossible to command without giving pay. What therefore ask I? To remove the excuses both of general and soldiers, by supplying pay, and attaching native soldiers, as inspectors of the general's conduct. The way we manage things now is a mockery. For if you were asked: Are you at peace, Athenians? No, indeed, you would say; we are at war with Philip. Did you not choose from yourselves ten captains and generals, and also captains and two generals¹ of horse? How are they employed? Except one man, whom you commission on service abroad, the rest conduct your processions with the sacrificers. Like puppet-makers, you elect your infantry and cavalry officers for the market-place, not for war. Consider, Athenians, should there not be native captains, a native general of horse, your own commanders, that the force might really be the state's? Or should your general of horse sail to Lemnos,² while Menelaus commands the cavalry fighting for your possessions? I speak not as objecting to the man, but he ought to be elected by you, whoever the person be.

Perhaps you admit the justice of these statements, but wish principally to hear about the supplies, what they must be and whence procured. I will satisfy you. Supplies, then, for maintenance, mere rations for these troops, come to

rebellion against the king of Persia. Chares gained a victory for the satrap, and received a supply of money. But this led to a complaint and menace of war by the king, which brought serious consequences.

¹ There were chosen at Athens every year

Ten generals (one for each tribe),

Ten captains (one for each tribe),

Two generals of cavalry,

Ten cavalry officers (one for each tribe).

In a regular army of citizens, when each tribe formed its own division, both of horse and foot, all these generals and officers would be present. Thus, there were ten generals at Marathon. A change took place in later times when the armies were more miscellaneous. Three Athenian generals were frequently employed, and at a still later period only one. Demosthenes here touches on a very important matter, which we can well understand, viz., the necessity of officering the foreign mercenaries from home.

² To assist at a religious ceremony held annually at Lemnos, where many Athenians resided.

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