

THE THIRD PHILIPPIC

ARGUMENT

THIS speech was delivered about three months after the last, while Philip was advancing into Thrace, and threatening both the Chersonese and the Propontine coast. No new event had happened, which called for any special consultation; but Demosthenes, alarmed by the formidable character of Philip's enterprise and vast military preparations, felt the necessity of rousing the Athenians to exertion. He repeats in substance the arguments which he had used in the Oration on the Chersonese; points out the danger to be apprehended from the disunion among the Greek states, from their general apathy and lack of patriotism, which he contrasts with the high and noble spirit of ancient times. From the past conduct of Philip he shows what is to be expected in future; explains the difference between Philip's new method of warfare and that adopted in the Peloponnesian war, and urges the necessity of corresponding measures for defence. The peaceful professions of Philip were not to be trusted; he was never more dangerous than when he made overtures of peace and friendship. The most powerful instruments that he employed for gaining ascendancy were the venal orators, who were to be found in every Grecian city, and on whom it was necessary to inflict signal punishment before they had a chance of opposing foreign enemies. The advice of Demosthenes now is, to despatch reinforcements to the Chersonese, to stir up the people of Greece, and even to solicit the assistance of the Persian king, who had no less reason than themselves to dread the ambition of Philip.

The events of the following year, when Philip attacked the Propontine cities, fully justified the warnings of Demosthenes. And the extraordinary activity which the Athenians displayed in resisting him shows that the exertions of the orator had their due effect.

MANY speeches, men of Athens, are made in almost every assembly about the hostilities of Philip, hostilities which ever since the treaty of peace he has been committing as well against you as against the rest of the Greeks; and all (I am sure) are ready to avow, though they forbear to do so, that our counsels and our measures should be directed to his humiliation and chastisement: nevertheless, so low have our affairs been brought by inattention and negligence, I fear it is a harsh truth to say, that if all the orators had sought to suggest, and you to pass resolutions for the utter ruining of

the commonwealth, we could not, methinks, be worse off than we are. A variety of circumstances may have brought us to this state; our affairs have not declined from one or two causes only: but, if you rightly examine, you will find it chiefly owing to the orators, who study to please you rather than advise for the best. Some of whom, Athenians, seeking to maintain the basis of their own power and repute, have no forethought for the future, and therefore think you also ought to have none; others, accusing and calumniating practical statesmen, labour only to make Athens punish Athens, and in such occupation to engage her, that Philip may have liberty to say and do what he pleases. Politics of this kind are common here, but are the causes of your failures and embarrassment. I beg, Athenians, that you will not resent my plain speaking of the truth. Only consider. You hold liberty of speech in other matters to be the general right of all residents in Athens, insomuch that you allow a measure of it even to foreigners and slaves, and many servants may be seen among you speaking their thoughts more freely than citizens in some other states; and yet you have altogether banished it from your councils. The result has been that in the assembly you give yourselves airs and are flattered at hearing nothing but compliments, in your measures and proceedings you are brought to the utmost peril. If such be your disposition now, I must be silent: if you will listen to good advice without flattery, I am ready to speak. For though our affairs are in a deplorable condition, though many sacrifices have been made, still, if you will choose to perform your duty, it is possible to repair it all. A paradox, and yet a truth, am I about to state. That which is the most lamentable in the past is best for the future. How is this? Because you performed no part of your duty, great or small, and therefore you fared ill: had you done all that became you, and your situation were the same, there would be no hope of amendment. Philip has indeed prevailed over your sloth and negligence, but not over the country:

you have not been worsted; you have not even bestirred yourselves.

If now we were all agreed that Philip is at war with Athens and infringing the peace, nothing would a speaker need to urge or advise but the safest and easiest way of resisting him. But since, at the very time when Philip is capturing cities and retaining divers of our dominions and assailing all people, there are men so unreasonable as to listen to repeated declarations in the assembly, that some of us are kindling war, one must be cautious and set this matter right: for whoever moves or advises a measure of defence is in danger of being accused afterwards as author of the war.

I will first then examine and determine this point, whether it be in our power to deliberate on peace or war. If the country may be at peace, if it depends on us (to begin with this), I say we ought to maintain peace, and I call upon the affirmant to move a resolution, to take some measure, and not to palter with us. But if another, having arms in his hand and a large force around him, amuses you with the name of peace, while he carries on the operations of war, what is left but to defend yourselves? You may profess to be at peace, if you like, as he does; I quarrel not with that. But if any man supposes this to be a peace, which will enable Philip to master all else and attack you last, he is a madman, or he talks of a peace observed towards him by you, not towards you by him. This it is that Philip purchases by all his expenditure, the privilege of assailing you without being assailed in turn.

If we really wait until he avows that he is at war with us, we are the simplest of mortals: for he would not declare that, though he marched even against Attica and Piræus, at least if we may judge from his conduct to others. For example, to the Olynthians he declared, when he was forty furlongs from their city, that there was no alternative, but either they must quit Olynthus or he Macedonia; though before that time, whenever he was accused of such an intent,

he took it ill and sent ambassadors to justify himself. Again, he marched towards the Phocians as if they were allies, and there were Phocian envoys who accompanied his march, and many among you contended that his advance would not benefit the Thebans. And he came into Thessaly of late as a friend and ally, yet he has taken possession of Pheræ: and lastly he told these wretched people of Oreus,¹ that he had sent his soldiers out of good-will to visit them, as he heard they were in trouble and dissension, and it was the part of allies and true friends to lend assistance on such occasions. People who would never have harmed him, though they might have adopted measures of defence, he chose to deceive rather than warn them of his attack; and think ye he would declare war against you before he began it, and that while you are willing to be deceived? Impossible. He would be the silliest of mankind, if, whilst you the injured parties make no complaint against him, but are accusing your own countrymen, he should terminate your intestine strife and jealousies, warn you to turn against him, and remove the pretexts of his hirelings for asserting, to amuse you, that he makes no war upon Athens. O heavens! would any rational being judge by words rather than by actions, who is at peace with him and who at war? Surely none. Well then; Philip immediately after the peace, before Diopithes was in command or the settlers in the Chersonese had been sent out, took Serrium and Doriscus, and expelled from Serrium and the Sacred Mount the troops whom your general had stationed there.² What do you call such conduct? He

¹ When he established his creature Philistides in the government of Oreus, as mentioned in the last oration and at the end of this.

² This general was Chares, to whom Cersobleptes had entrusted the defence of those places. The Sacred Mount was a fortified position on the northern coast of the Hellespont. It was here that Miltocythes intrenched himself, when he rebelled against Cotys; and Philip took possession of it just before the peace with Athens was concluded, as being important to his operations against Cersobleptes. The statement of Demosthenes, that the oaths had then been taken, is incorrect, for they were sworn afterwards in Thessaly. But the argument is substantially the same; for the peace had been agreed to, and the ratification was purposely delayed by Philip, to gain time for the completion of his designs.

had sworn the peace. Don't say—what does it signify? how is the state concerned?—Whether it be a trifling matter, or of no concernment to you, is a different question: religion and justice have the same obligation, be the subject of the offence great or small. Tell me now; when he sends mercenaries into Chersonesus, which the king and all the Greeks have acknowledged to be yours, when he avows himself an auxiliary and writes us word so, what are such proceedings? He says he is not at war; I cannot however admit such conduct to be an observance of the peace; far otherwise: I say, by his attempt on Megara,¹ by his setting up despotism in Eubœa, by his present advance into Thrace, by his intrigues in Peloponnesus, by the whole course of operations with his army, he has been breaking the peace and making war upon you; unless indeed you will say that those who establish batteries are not at war until they apply them to the walls. But that you will not say: for whoever contrives and prepares the means for my conquest is at war with me before he darts or draws the bow. What, if anything should happen, is the risk you run? The alienation of the Hellespont, the subjection of Megara and Eubœa to your enemy, the siding of the Peloponnesians with him. Then can I allow that one who sets such an engine at work against Athens is at peace with her? Quite the contrary. From the day that he destroyed the Phocians I date his commencement of hostilities. Defend yourselves instantly, and I say you will be wise: delay it, and you may wish in vain to do so hereafter. So much do I dissent from your other counsellors, men of Athens, that I deem any discussion about Chersonesus or Byzantium out of place. Succour them—I advise that—watch that no harm befalls them, send all necessary supplies to your troops in that quarter; but let your deliberations be for the safety of all Greece, as being in the utmost peril. I must tell you why I am so alarmed at the state of our affairs: that, if my

¹ Not long before this oration was delivered, Philip was suspected of a design to seize Megara.

reasonings are correct, you may share them, and make some provision at least for yourselves, however disinclined to do so for others: but if, in your judgment, I talk nonsense and absurdity, you may treat me as crazed, and not listen to me, either now or in future.

That Philip from a mean and humble origin has grown mighty, that the Greeks are jealous and quarrelling among themselves, that it was far more wonderful for him to rise from that insignificance than it would now be, after so many acquisitions, to conquer what is left; these and similar matters, which I might dwell upon, I pass over. But I observe that all people, beginning with you, have conceded to him a right, which in former times has been the subject of contest in every Grecian war. And what is this? The right of doing what he pleases, openly fleecing and pillaging the Greeks, one after another, attacking and enslaving their cities. You were at the head of the Greeks for seventy-three years,¹ the Lacedæmonians for twenty-nine;² and the Thebans had some power in these latter times after the battle of Leuctra. Yet neither you, my countrymen, nor Thebans, nor Lacedæmonians, were ever licensed by the Greeks to act as you pleased; far otherwise. When you, or rather the Athenians of that time, appeared to be dealing harshly with certain people, all the rest, even such as had no complaint against Athens, thought proper to side with the injured parties in a war against her. So, when the Lacedæmonians became masters and succeeded to your empire, on their attempting to encroach and make oppressive innovations,³ a general war was declared against them, even

¹ This would be from about the end of the Persian war to the end of the Peloponnesian, B.C. 405.

² From the end of the Peloponnesian war to the battle of Naxos, B.C. 376.

³ The Spartans, whose severe military discipline rendered them far the best soldiers of Greece, were totally unfit to manage the empire, at the head of which they found themselves after the humiliation of Athens. Their attempt to force an oligarchy upon every dependent state was an unwise policy, which made them generally odious. The decemvirates of Lysander, and the governors established in various

by such as had no cause of complaint. But wherefore mention other people? We ourselves and the Lacedæmonians, although at the outset we could not allege any mutual injuries, thought proper to make war for the injustice that we saw done to our neighbours. Yet all the faults committed by the Spartans in those thirty years, and by our ancestors in the seventy, are less, men of Athens, than the wrongs which, in thirteen incomplete years that Philip has been uppermost, he has inflicted on the Greeks: nay they are scarcely a fraction of these, as may easily be shown in a few words. Olynthus and Methone and Apollonia, and thirty-two cities¹ on the borders of Thrace, I pass over; all which he has so cruelly destroyed that a visitor could hardly tell if they were ever inhabited: and of the Phocians, so considerable a people exterminated, I say nothing. But what is the condition of Thessaly? Has he not taken away her constitutions and her cities, and established tetrarchies, to parcel her out, not only by cities, but also by provinces, for subjection? Are not the Eubœan states governed now by despots, and that in an island near to Thebes and Athens? Does he not expressly write in his epistles, "I am at peace with those who are willing to obey me?" Nor does he write so and not act accordingly. He is gone to the Hellespont; he marched formerly against Ambracia; Elis, such an important city in Peloponnesus, he possesses; he plotted lately to get Megara: neither Hellenic nor Barbaric land contains the man's ambition. And we, the Greek community, seeing and hearing this, instead of sending embassies to one another about it and expressing indignation, are in such a miserable state, so intrenched in our separate towns, that to

Greek cities to maintain Lacedæmonian influence, were regarded as instruments of tyranny. It was found that Spartan governors and generals, when away from home, gave loose to their vicious inclinations, as if to indemnify themselves for the strictness of domestic discipline. It became a maxim in their politics that the end justified the means. The most flagrant proof was given by the seizure of the Cadmea at Thebes; a measure which led to a formidable confederacy against Sparta, and brought her to the verge of destruction.

¹ The Chalcidian cities.

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