355 BC

THE ORATION ON THE CLASSES

Demosthenes
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Notes and Introduction by Thomas Leland, D.D.

Demosthenes (383-322 BC) - Athenian statesman and the most famous of Greek orators. He was leader of a patriotic party opposing Philip of Macedon.

The Oration on the Classes (355 BC) - One of Demosthenes' earliest extant orations, its title is taken from one part of the oration in which he enlarges on the method of dividing citizens into classes. Though commonly known for the fire and energy with which he rouses his countrymen, Demosthenes here demonstrates his great delicacy and artifice.

INTRODUCTION

To the Oration on the Classes

THE title of this oration is taken from one particular part of it, in which the speaker enlarges on the method of dividing the citizens into Summoriai, or Classes, in order to raise the supplies, and to answer the exigencies of the state.

The design of it was to allay an extravagant ferment which had been raised at Athens, and to recommend caution and circumspection, at a time when danger was apprehended. Artaxerxes Ochus, King of Persia, had been for some time employed in making preparations for war. These were represented to the Athenians as the effect of a design formed against Greece, and against their state in particular. They were conscious of having given this prince sufficient umbrage, by the assistance which their general Chares had afforded to some of his rebellious subjects: they were entirely possessed by the notions of their own importance, and therefore readily listened to their suggestions who endeavored to persuade them that some important blow was meditated against their dominions. An assembly of the people was convened; and the general temper both of the speakers and auditors is distinctly marked out in several passages of the following oration. The bare mention of a war with Persia at once recalled to their minds the glorious days of their ancestors, and the great actions of Athens and her generals against the Barbarians. These were now displayed with all the address and force of eloquence, and the people urged to imitate the bright examples of antiquity; to rise up in arms against the Persian and to send their ambassadors through Greece to summon all the states to unite with Athens against the common enemy. To flatter the national vanity of their countrymen was an expedient which many speakers had found effectual for establishing their power and credit in the assembly. And possibly some might have spoken with a corrupt design of diverting the attention of their countrymen from those contests and dangers in which they were now immediately concerned. But, however this may be, the impropriety of those bold and precipitate measures which they recommended is urged with the utmost force in the following oration; in which we shall find the speaker moderating the unseasonable zeal of his countrymen without absolutely shocking their prejudices. Demosthenes is more generally known as an orator by the fire and energy with which he rouses his countrymen to arms. But the delicacy of address and artifice which he displays in this and many of the following orations is a part of his character no less worthy of attention. A youth of twenty-eight years, thoroughly acquainted with the constitution, interests, and connections of his country, rising for the first time in a debate on public affairs, opposing himself with boldness and resolution, and at the same time with the utmost art and insinuation, to the general bent of the assembly, calming the turbulence of his countrymen, and presenting their true interests to their view in the strongest and most striking colors, is an object truly pleasing and affecting.

THE ORATION ON THE CLASSES

Pronounced in the Archonship of Diotimus, the Third Year of the One Hundred and Sixth Olympiad *(1)

THE men who thus dwell on the praises of your ancestors seem to me, ye men of Athens, to have chosen a subject fitted rather to gratify the assembly than to do the due honor to those on whom they lavish their applause. As they attempt to speak of actions which no words can worthily describe, the illustrious subject adorns their speech and gives them the praise of eloquence; while their hearers are made to think of the virtues of those heroes with much less elevation than these virtues of themselves inspire. To me, time itself seems to be the noblest witness to their glory. A series of so many years hath now passed over, and still no men have yet appeared whose actions could surpass those patterns of perfection.

It shall be my part, therefore, solely to endeavor to point out the means which may enable you most effectually to prepare for war: for, in fact, were all our speakers to proceed in a pompous display of their abilities, such parade and ostentation could not possibly prove of the least advantage to the public; but if any man whatever will appear, and can explain to your full satisfaction what kind of armament, how great, and how supported, may serve the present exigences of the state, then all these alarms must instantly be dispelled. This I shall endeavor to the utmost of my abilities, having first briefly declared my opinion of our situation with respect to the king.

I do regard the king as the common enemy of all the Greeks: *(2) but I cannot for that reason advise that we should be the only people to undertake a war against him; for I do not find the Greeks themselves united to each other in sincere affection: *(3) nay, some among them seem to have more confidence in him than in certain of their own body. In such circumstances, I account it of the utmost moment that we should be strictly attentive to the origin of this war, that it may be free from every imputation of injustice. Let our armament be carried on with vigor; but let us carefully adhere to the principles of equity: for, in my opinion, Athenians, the states of Greece (if it be once evident and incontestable that the king makes attempts against them) will instantly unite and express the most ardent gratitude to those who arose before them, who, with them, still stand faithfully and bravely to repel these attempts. But while this is yet uncertain, should you begin hostilities, I fear we may be obliged to fight against an enemy reinforced by those very men for whose interests we were so forward to express our zeal. Yes! he will suspend his designs (if he hath really designs against the Greeks): his gold will be dispersed liberally among them; his promises of friendship will be lavished on them; while they, distressed in their private wars, and attentive only to support them, will disregard the general welfare of the nation.

Into such confusion, into such weak measures let us not precipitate the state.

With respect to the king, you cannot pursue the same counsels with some others of the Greeks. Of these many might, without the charge of inconsistency, neglect the rest of Greece, while engaged in the pursuit of private interest; but of you it would be unworthy, even though directly injured, to inflict so severe a punishment on the guilty as to abandon them to the power of the barbarian.

Thus are we circumstanced; and let us then be careful that we do not engage in this war upon unequal terms; that he whom we suppose to entertain designs against the Greeks may not recommend himself to their confidence so as to be deemed their friend. And how shall these things be effected? By giving public proof that the forces of this state

are well appointed and complete for action; but that in this our procedure we are determined to adhere inviolably to justice.

Let the bold and hazardous, who are vehement in urging you to war, attend to this. It is not difficult when an assembly is convened to acquire the reputation of courage: no; nor when dangers are actually impending to speak with an impassioned boldness: but it is truly difficult, and it is our duty in the time of danger, to support the character of superior bravery; in our councils, to display the same superiority of wisdom.

I, on my part, ye men of Athens, think that a war with the king may prove dangerous; in a battle, the consequence of such a war, I see no danger. And why? Because wars of every kind require many advantages of naval force, of money, and of places. Here he is superior to the state. In a battle, nothing is so necessary to insure success as valiant troops; and of these we and our confederates can boast the greater number. For this reason I earnestly recommend to you by no means to be the first to enter on a war; but for an engagement I think you should be effectually prepared. Were there one method of preparing to oppose barbarians, and another for engaging with Greeks, then we might expect with reason that any hostile intentions against the Persian must be at once discovered: but as in every armament the manner is the same, the general provisions equally the same, whether our enemies are to be attacked, or our allies to be protected and our rights defended; why, when we have avowed enemies, *(4) should we seek for others? Shall we not prepare against the one, and be ready to oppose the other, should he attempt to injure us? Call now on the Greeks to unite with you. But suppose you should not readily concur with them in all their measures (as some are by no means favorably inclined to this state), can it be imagined that they will obey your summons? “Certainly; for we shall convince them that the king forms designs against their interests which they do not foresee.” Ye powers! is it possible that you can be thus persuaded? Yes; I know you are: but whatever apprehensions you may raise, they must influence these Greeks less forcibly than their disputes with you and with each other; and therefore the remonstrances of your ambassadors will but appear like the tales of idle wanderers. *(5) If, on the other hand, you pursue the measures now proposed, there is not a single state of Greece that will hesitate a moment to come in and to solicit your alliance when they see our thousand horse, *(6) our infantry as numerous as could be wished, our three hundred ships; an armament which they must regard as their surest refuge and defence. Should you apply for their assistance, you must appear as supplicants; should they refuse it, you incur the shame of a repulse: but if, while your forces are completed, you suspend your operations, the protection you then grant to them must appear as the consequence of their request; and be assured they will all fly to you for this protection.

With these and the like reflections deeply impressed on my mind, I have not labored to prepare a bold, vain, tedious harangue. No, my fellow-citizens! our preparations have been the sole object of my thoughts, and the manner of conducting them with effect and expedition. Grant me your attention, and if my sentiments be approved, confirm them by your voices.

It is, then, the first and most important part of preparation to possess your minds with due resolution, so that every citizen when called to action may exert himself with alacrity and zeal. You know that in every instance where, having first resolved on your designs in concert, every single member deemed it incumbent on him to labor vigorously in the execution, you have never once proved unsuccessful: but whenever we have first decreed, and then each man hath turned his eyes on others, fondly imagining that he himself need not act, that his neighbor would do all, our designs have never once been executed.

With these sentiments, and these vigorous resolutions, I recommend that you should proceed to the appointment of your twelve hundred, and raise them to two thousand, by a further addition of eight hundred. Thus, when all necessary deductions are made of those who by their condition *(7) are excused from contributing, or by any circumstances are unable to contribute, still the original number of twelve hundred will remain complete. These I would have formed into twenty classes, each consisting of sixty citizens, agreeably to the present constitution.

And it is my opinion, that of these classes each should be divided into five parts, consisting of twelve persons, ever attending to a just and equal distribution of the richer with the poorer. Thus should our citizens be arranged: the reason will appear when the whole scheme of the regulation hath been explained.

But our ships; how are they to be appointed? Let their whole number be fixed to three hundred, divided by fifteenth parts into twenty portions. Of the first hundred, let five such parts, *(8) of the second hundred, five parts; and of the third hundred, five be appointed to each class. Thus shall a fifteenth of the whole be allotted to every class, three ships to each subdivision.

When these establishments are made, I propose, *(9) as the revenue arising from our lands amounts to six thousand talents, that in order to have our funds duly regulated, this sum may be divided into a hundred parts of sixty talents each: that five of these parts may be assigned to each of the twenty great classes; which may thus give severally to each of their divisions a single part of sixty talents. So that, if we should have occasion for a hundred ships, *(10) sixty talents may be granted to each, and twelve trierarchs; if for two hundred, there may be thirty talents assigned, and six trierarchs to each; if for three hundred, twenty talents may be supplied for each, and four trierarchs.

In like manner, my fellow-citizens, on a due estimate of the stores necessary for our ships, I propose that, agreeably to the present scheme, they should be divided into twenty parts: that one good and effectual part should be assigned to each of the great classes, to be distributed among the small divisions in the just proportion. Let the twelve, in every such division, demand their respective shares; and let them have those ships which it is their lot to provide thoroughly and expeditiously equipped. Thus may our supplies, our ships, our trierarchs, our stores, be best provided and supplied. And now I am to lay before you a plain and easy method of completing this scheme.

I say, then, that your generals should proceed to mark out ten dock-yards, as contiguous as may be to each other, and capable of containing thirty vessels each.

When this is done, they should assign two classes, and thirty ships to each of these docks. Among these also they should divide the tribes and the respective trierarchs; so that two classes, thirty ships, and one tribe may be assigned to each.

Let then each tribe divide its allotted station into three parts, and the ships in like manner. Let these third parts be distributed by lot. Thus shall one tribe preside over one entire division of your shipping, and each third of a tribe take care of one-third of such division; and thus shall you know at all times, first, where each tribe is stationed; then, where each third; then, who are the trierarchs; and, lastly, the number of your ships. Let affairs be once set in motion after this manner; and if anything hath been omitted (as it is by no means easy to provide accurately for every circumstance), the execution will itself discover it: and thus may your whole marine and all its several parts be uniformly and exactly regulated.

And now, as to money, as to any immediate supplies; sensible as I am that the opinion I am now to declare must appear extraordinary, yet I will declare it; for I trust, that when duly weighed it will be found the only one which reason can recommend, and which

must be approved by the event. I say, then, that at this time we should not speak at all of money: we have a fund, if occasions call for it- a great, and honorable, and an equitable fund. Should you attempt to raise it now, far from succeeding in such an attempt, you could not depend on gaining it when really wanted; but suspend your inquiries, and you will secure it. What fund is this which now hath no being, yet will be found hereafter? This appears a kind of mystery; but I shall explain it. Cast your eyes round through all this city. Within these walls, Athenians, there are treasures- I had almost said, equal to those of all other states. But such is the disposition of their possessors, that if all our speakers were to rise with the most alarming declarations, "that the king was marching against us; that he was at our gates; that the danger did not admit of any possibility of doubt";- if with these speakers as many ministers of heaven were to rise, and pronounce the same declarations as the warning of the gods; so far would these men be from contributing, that they would not even discover their riches; they would not acknowledge the possession of them. But should it once appear that all those dangers denounced with so much terror were really and in fact impending, where is the wretch that would not give freely, that would not urge to be admitted to contribute? For who would choose to abandon his life and fortune to the fury of an enemy rather than give up a small portion of his abundance for the safety of himself and all the rest of his possessions? Thus shall we find treasures when occasions really demand them, but not till then. Let us not, therefore, inquire for them now. Suppose that we were now strictly to exact the subsidies from all our citizens, the utmost we should raise would be more contemptible than none. Imagine the experiment made: it is proposed to exact a hundredth part of the revenue arising from our lands. Well, then, this makes just sixty talents. "Nay, but we will raise a fiftieth part." This doubles the sum: we have then one hundred and twenty talents. But what is this to those hundreds or those thousands of camels which, they assure us, are employed to carry the king's money? But suppose it were agreed to raise a twelfth part, amounting to five hundred talents. This, in the first place, would be too great a burden, and, if imposed, still the fund produced would be insufficient for the war. Let, then, all our other preparations be completed; but as to money, let the possessors keep it, and never can they keep it for a nobler public service. When their country calls for it, then shall they freely and zealously contribute.

This, my fellow-citizens, is a practicable scheme- a scheme highly honorable and advantageous, worthy of this state to be reported to the king, and which must strike him with no small terror. He knows, that by three hundred vessels, of which one hundred only were supplied by us, his ancestors lost a thousand ships. *(11) He will hear, that now we have ourselves equipped three hundred. He cannot, then- if he hath not lost all reason- he cannot deem it a trivial matter to make this state his enemy. If from a dependence on his treasures he is tempted to entertain proud thoughts, he will find this but a vain dependence when compared with your resources. *(12) They tell us he is coming with heaps of gold; but when these are once dispersed he must look for new supplies. Not the richest streams, not the deepest sources but must at length be totally exhausted when we copiously and constantly drain away their waters. But we, he will be told, have a perpetual resource in our lands- a fund of six thousand talents. And with what spirit we defend these lands against invaders his ancestors who fought at Marathon could best inform him. Let us continue to conquer, and our treasures cannot ever fail.

Nor yet do I think their terrors justly founded who apprehend that he may employ his gold in raising a large army of mercenaries. I do indeed believe, that in an expedition against Egypt, against Orontes, *(13) or any of the other barbarians, there are many of the Greeks that would gladly receive his pay, not from any zeal for aggrandizing him, but each in order to obtain such a supply as might relieve their present necessities. But I never can persuade myself that any one Greek would assist him to conquer Greece.

Whither should he turn after such an event? Would he go and be a slave in Phrygia? He must know that when we take up arms against the barbarian, we take them up for our country, for our lives, for our customs, for our liberty, and all such sacred rights. Who, then, could be so base as to sacrifice himself, his parents, the sepulchres of his ancestors, his country, to a trifling pittance? Surely, no man. *(14) Nor is it the interest of the Persian that his mercenaries should subdue the Greeks; for they who can conquer us must first prove superior to him. And it is by no means his scheme, by destroying us, to lose his own empire. His wishes are to command all; if this cannot be obtained, at least he would secure his power over his own slaves.

If, then, it be imagined that the Thebans will unite with him, *(15) it is a hard part to speak of Thebes in this assembly; for such is your aversion to this people, that you will not hear the voice of truth itself if it seems at all to favor them. However, it is the duty of those who debate on great affairs by no means, and on no pretence whatever, to suppress any argument which may prove of use. I say, then, that so far are the Thebans from ever at any time uniting with the king against the Greeks, that they would freely give the greatest treasures, were they possessed of them, to purchase a fair occasion of atoning for their ancient errors with respect to Greece. But let the Thebans be ever so unhappily disposed, still we must all be sensible, that if they unite with him, their enemies must necessarily unite with the Greeks. And I trust that the cause of justice and the friends to this cause will ever prove superior to traitors and to all the force of the barbarian. Let us not, then, yield to these extravagant alarms, nor rashly brave all consequences by being first to take up arms.

Nor do I think that any other of the Grecian states should look on this war with terror. *(16) Is there a man among them who is not sensible, that while they regarded the Persian as their common enemy and maintained a firm union with each other, their fortune was completely happy; but when, by a fatal reliance on his friendship, they were betrayed into contests and dissensions among themselves, their calamities were so great as to exceed all the imprecations which the most inveterate malice could invent? And shall that man, whom fortune, whom Heaven itself pronounces as a friend unprofitable, as an enemy of advantageshall he, I say, be feared? By no means. Yet let us have the due regard to ourselves; let us have the due attention to the disorders and suspicions of the rest of Greece; and let us not incur the charge of injustice. Could we, indeed, with all the Greeks united firmly on our side, attack him single and unsupported, I would not then suppose that you could be charged with injustice. But, as this is not to be expected, let us be cautious; let us afford him no pretence of appearing to assert the rights of the other Greeks. If we continue quiet, his applications to them will be suspicious; if we are the first to take up arms, he will seem justified by our hostilities in his attempts to gain their friendship.

Do not, then, discover to the world the melancholy state of Greece, by inviting those to an alliance whom you cannot gain, and by engaging in a war which you cannot support. Be quiet; be resolute; be prepared. Let not the emissaries of Persia report to their king that Greece and Athens are distracted in their councils, are confounded by their fears, are torn by dissensions. No; let them rather tell him, that if it were not equally shameful for the Greeks to violate their honor and their oaths as it is to him matter of triumph, they would have long since marched against him, and that if you now do not march, you are restrained solely by a regard to your own dignity; that it is your prayer to all the gods that he may be seized with the infatuation which once possessed his ancestors, and then he would find no defect of vigor in your measures. He knows that by our wars with his ancestors this state became happy and powerful; that by our peaceful demeanor before these wars we acquired a superiority over the other Grecian states never more

observable than at present. He knows that the affairs of Greece require some power to be either voluntarily or accidentally the instrument of a general peace.

He knows that he himself must prove that instrument if he once attempts to raise a war; and, therefore, these informations will have their due weight and credit.

That I may not longer abuse your patience, I shall repeat the sum of my advice, and then descend.

You should prepare your force against your present enemies; you should use this force against the king; against any power that may attempt to injure you; but never be the first to break through the bounds of justice either in council or in action. You should be solicitous, not that our speeches, but that our conduct may be worthy of our illustrious descent. Act thus, and you will serve, not yourselves only, but the men who oppose these measures; for they will not feel your resentment hereafter if they be not suffered to mislead you now. *(17)

NOTES

To the Orations on the Classes

*(1) That this oration was pronounced in the third year of the hundred and sixth Olympiad we are assured by Dionysius (in "Epist. ad Ammaeum"), and that Demosthenes was at this time in his twenty-eighth year. Plutarch indeed (if he be the author of the lives of the Ten Orators) places his nativity in the fourth year of the ninety-eighth Olympiad. But, not to mention the inaccuracies in this tract, the orator himself declares, in his oration against Midias, that he was then in his thirty-second year. This oration was spoken in the archonship of Callimachus, that is, according to Diodorus, in the fourth year of the hundred and seventh Olympiad; and therefore, by calculating from hence, the reader will find the authority of Dionysius, as to the time of our orator's birth, clearly and fully confirmed. How then came it to pass that he was allowed to speak on public affairs before the age of thirty years? for in the Attic laws respecting public speakers it is expressly enacted, Me eiselthein tina eipein mepo triakonta ete gegonota: Let no man enter the assembly to speak who hath not yet attained to the age of thirty.

The solution of this difficulty by Lucchesini seems solid and satisfactory. I know, says he, there are some who assert that this, as well as some other laws of Athens, fell into disuse; but such a method of solving the difficulties of antiquity, without any manner of proof or authority, is unsafe and fallacious. Besides, the assertion is contradicted by Aeschines, who, in his oration against Timarchus, declares, that not only this, but other severer laws relative to public speakers were in full force.

It is the consensus of opinion that the difficulty should rather be explained in this manner. Among the other magistrates who were chosen every year at Athens, there were ten orators appointed by lot, whose business it was to deliver their opinions in the assemblies on all affairs that concerned the state, and for which they received the gratuity of a drachma (seven pence three farthings) from the treasury. To these only must that law of Athens which determines the age of orators be construed to extend. As it was their duty to deliver their opinions in the Senate, they ought of course to be of the senatorial age: but no person could be admitted to the senate who had not completed his thirtieth year. But as for the law of Solon, it excludes no citizen whatsoever from the liberty of speaking who might attend the assembly; nor had the seniors any other privilege than that of speaking first. The law runs thus: "Let the senior first propose such measures as he thinks most expedient for the republic, and after him such other

citizens as choose it, according to the order of their age." Aeschines cites it in the same words against Ctesiphon. No mention is here made of thirty years. Such of the citizens as were in their twentieth year might attend the assembly, and had their names enrolled.

That they had a share in the administration, and might speak in public at this age, is confirmed by Lucian in his Jupiter Tragoedus, where Momus thus addresses Apollo: "You are now become a legal speaker, having long since left the class of young men, and enrolled your name in the books of the duodecemviri." Now that the citizens were considered as having arrived at the age of manhood in their eighteenth year we learn from Demosthenes in his oration against Aphobus; for his father died when he was but seven years old, and he remained for ten years under the care of his guardian, at which time, being released from his hands, he pleaded his own cause against him. Now his father had given directions that he should be under a guardian till be had arrived at the age of manhood, and this he did as soon as he had reached his eighteenth year; all which is collected from his own words. These circumstances considered, it is very easy to suppose that Demosthenes spoke in public, as he really did, in his eight-and-twentieth year. Nor does any manner of difficulty arise from what he says himself in his Oration for the Crown: "When the Phocian War was raised, for I had then no hand in the administration;" that war being begun in the second year of the hundred and sixth Olympiad, under the archonship of Callistratus, at a time when our orator was only in the twenty-seventh year of his age. *(2) The commentators who endeavor to account for this assertion by considering the present state of Greece, or any late transactions with Persia, seem to examine the orator too rigidly, and with too much coldness and abstraction. It is by no means the result of any recent events. It had been the language of Greece for ages; the language of poets, historians, and orators. Even in those times of corruption the popular leaders seldom ventured to use any other, particularly in an assembly where national vanity was so predominant as in that of Athens. Whatever treaties had been made with the King of Persia, however peace might have now subsisted between him and the Greeks, still he was their natural enemy. *(3) The Sacred War now raged in Greece. The Phocians, Lacedaemonians, and Athenians were engaged on one side; the Boeotians, Thessalians, Locrians, and some other inferior states on the other: each party was harassed and exhausted by the war. The Phocians had reason to complain of the Athenians, who proved a useless and inactive ally. Whatever connections had lately subsisted between Athens and Sparta, this latter state still hated its ancient rival, and was impatient to recover its former splendor and power. A prospect of assistance from Persia must have at once determined the Lacedaemonians to detach themselves from the confederacy, and to act against the Athenians; particularly if any plausible pretence could be alleged for uniting with the Persian. The Phocians, who were not always influenced by the most religious engagements, might fairly be suspected of making no scruple of accepting effectual assistance from the great king, and at once renouncing their alliance with the Athenians. The Italian commentator supposes that the orator expresses his apprehensions only of the Lacedaemonians, and that they are particularly pointed out as the men who have more confidence in the Persian than in their own brethren, and who would sacrifice every consideration to the support of their wars with the Greeks. The Phocians, he observes, could not possibly unite with the Persians, on account of the former injuries they had received from them, as well as of their invariable union with Athens. But in view of the politics of Greece, and indeed of the politics of all ages and nations, may convince us that too much stress is not to be laid on such an argument. Nor was there less to fear from the confederates on the other side.

They fought with an inveterate and implacable rancor, and all their efforts were scarcely sufficient to support the quarrel. Their strength was continually wasting, and their

treasures were quite exhausted; the most favorable occasion for the great king to gain them to his purposes. The speaker indeed declares, in another part of this oration, that the Thebans would not concur with the Persian in any design confessedly formed against the nation of Greece. Yet still they might, in their present circumstances, and in a cause which they affected to consider as the cause of the nation, accept his assistance. They actually did accept it in the course of the war. *(4) The Boeotians, Thessalians, etc., were the avowed enemies of Athens, in consequence of the attachment of this state to Phocis; and the king of Macedon, by his invasion of their settlements in Thrace, and other acts of hostility. *(5) In the original, ouden oun alle RHAPSODESOUSIN oi presbeis periiontes. It was urged by the speakers on the other side that ambassadors should be sent through Greece to represent the dangerous designs of the Persian, and to exhort the several states to suspend their private animosities, and to unite with the Athenians against the common enemy. The orator, who is endeavoring to represent the useless and ineffectual nature of such a measure, compares these ambassadors to the ancient rhapsodists, or bards, whose lives were spent in travelling, and amusing their entertainers with songs and poems. And this similitude seems to arise not only from their repeating the same declarations, but from the circumstance of going from city to city, and exciting curiosity by their speeches, without any other effect. *(6) At first sight it may appear extraordinary that the orator should speak in high terms of such a body as one thousand horse. But we must consider that Attica was a mountainous country, and therefore unfit for breeding horses. In the infancy of the state, when Athens was governed by kings, their cavalry amounted to no more than ninety-six, each naukraria, or twelfth part of a tribe, furnishing two.

But the number of such divisions was then but forty-eight, as the tribes were originally but four. This small body was at first an object of derision to the Persians at Marathon, but afterward proved formidable and dangerous. After the defeat of the Persians the city began to increase in power, and was enabled to raise a body of three hundred horse, which in the time of the Peloponnesian War was augmented to twelve hundred. This was the greatest body of cavalry the Athenians ever possessed, which seems by the distresses of the state to have been reduced to a thousand in the time of Demosthenes, as he mentions no greater number, though it was his business rather to magnify their force in this passage than to extenuate it.

The equestrian order was a rank of dignity at Athens as among the Romans. But in latter times the citizens were allowed to keep this rank and to substitute others to serve in their stead. *(7) These are particularly specified in the original, epikleron, maiden-heiresses; orphanon, orphans of the other sex; klerouchikon, men appointed to form a colony; and koinonikon, men incorporated into certain societies which were exempted from contributing. From whence it seems evident that the duty and honor of composing the twelve hundred, who were to supply the exigencies of the state, must have been annexed to certain families, and continued to them when time and various circumstances might have produced alterations of fortune in many. The inconveniences which arose from hence were partly removed by the antidoseis, or exchanges of fortunes, and by allowing exemptions to persons in certain circumstances: yet both these expedients must have occasioned delays, and retarded the business of the public. Hence the orator recommends the appointment of the additional eight hundred. *(8) It should seem, from this passage, that each century of the three hundred ships were to be of a different rate and order, by this minute specification of “five of the first hundred, five of the second,” etc. *(9) When and in what manner this estimate of the lands was made, we learn from Polybius, whose words shall be quoted immediately. That the barren lands of Attica should produce such a revenue (amounting, according to Arbuthnot’s computation, to L1,162,500) seems wonderful; especially as the lower ranks of citizens held their lands

free from all taxation. The soil of Athens itself was celebrated by Homer for its fertility. But this is of little moment when the barrenness of the Attic territory in general is considered. But what says Polybius? Tis gar uper Athenaion ouch istoreke dioti kath ous kairous meta Thebaion eis ton pros tous Lakedaimonious anebainon polemon, kai murious men exepempon stratiotas, ekaton de epleroun triereis, oti tote krinantes apo tes axias poieisthai tas eis ton polemon eis phoras, etimesanto ten te choran, kai ten Attiken, apasan, kai tas oikias, omoios de kai ten loipen ousian. All omos to sumpan timema tes axias enlipe ton exakischilion diakosiois kai pentekonta talantois; "What historian hath not informed us that the Athenians, at the time when they engaged in war, on the part of the Thebes against the Lacedaemonians sent ten thousand men to the field, and manned a hundred ships; that the Athenians, I say, in order to make a just estimate of the subsidy they might properly grant for this war, then proceeded to a general valuation of their lands, of the whole territory of Attica, their houses, and all their effects? And yet the whole valuation fell short of six thousand talents by two hundred and fifty." Which agrees pretty exactly with this passage of Demosthenes. *(10) One hundred ships seem to have been the ordinary marine establishment at Athens; and to this the ordinary revenues seem to have been proportioned. When it was necessary to fit out an extraordinary number the additional charge was answered by an extraordinary taxation on the richer members of the state. The passage before us is indeed concisely expressed, as became a speaker who addressed himself to persons to whom the least hint was sufficient. But the full meaning of it I take to be this: "If we have occasion but for a hundred ships, the charge of furnishing each may be divided among twelve trierarchs, who are to be supplied for the expense of this and other preparations with sixty talents. If for two hundred, these twelve trierarchs must provide two ships; if for three hundred, three. In every case the revenues of the state are to be equally divided among them. But the greater the force required, the greater must be the burden on the trierarchs, who are to be taxed for the additional expense, if any such may be required for fitting out the fleet, and completing the other parts of the intended armament." This latter part, indeed, is not expressed, or insinuated; but I take it to be understood. But, if my explanation should not be entirely consonant to the sentiments of the learned reader, who may have the curiosity to examine this part of the oration with accuracy, I must endeavor to screen myself from the severity of his censure by subscribing to the following ingenious declaration of Wolfius:

"Whatever is here said of fleets, stores, armaments, and supplies must, to us, who never saw a fleet, or war, and never were conversant in affairs of state, be attended with considerable obscurity." *(11) Whoever consults Herodotus will find that Demosthenes is by no means exact in his account either of the Athenian or Persian fleets; but we are not to expect historical precision from the orator. His representations are suited to delight and animate his hearers; and probably his success was too great to give them leisure to attend to any inaccuracy in his account. *(12) It is just now the orator has represented the wealth of Athens as contemptible, that of Persia as magnificent and great. Now, on the contrary, the resources of Persia are neither solid nor permanent; the riches of Athens great and inexhaustible. Various are the instances of this artifice in Demosthenes, which the judicious reader cannot fail to observe without the direction of the annotator. *(13) Two of this name are mentioned in history. The first was put to death by the younger Cyrus on account of a conspiracy. The other, whom Demosthenes points out, was a satrap of Mysia, and served in the army which Artaxerxes sent against Cyprus, under the command of Teribazus. On this occasion he attempted to ruin the reputation of his general, was detected and disgraced, and, in revenge, joined with the rebels of Egypt, Caria, and Phrygia, and headed the army they had raised against the king. But, in hopes of recovering his credit at the Persian court, and of gaining the command of some maritime towns, he betrayed the forces of the rebels into the hands of

the king's lieutenants. History speaks no farther of this Orontes; but as in this year (the eighth from the time of his revolt) Demosthenes mentions him as an enemy to the Persian, we may conjecture that his last services had been disregarded, and that he had again taken up arms. *(14) To be assured of the true signification of the phrase pros ton barbaron, we need but cast our eyes to a sentence a little farther on- ek men ge ton PROS tous eautou progonous polemon- from the wars waged against his ancestors. *(15) The history of both nations accounts for the detestation with which the Athenians are supposed to hear the name of the Thebans; and perhaps it were impossible that two nations so different in genius and manners ever should entertain any sentiments of friendship and esteem for each other. Our orator, however, was far superior to vulgar national prejudices. He considered without partiality the real interests of his country, whose welfare should be a statesman's passion. Yet his regard for the people of Thebes was numbered by Aeschines among his crimes. The error which, he says, they would if possible redeem, was their joining with Xerxes in his invasion of Greece. *(16) The well-known and great events described in the history of Greece confirm these observations of the orator fully with respect to all the Grecian states.

Yet we may concur with the Italian commentator in supposing that they had the Lacedaemonians particularly in view; to whom they are, indeed, eminently applicable. -

*(17) What effect this oration had on the people we may learn from a passage in the oration for the Rhodians, of which the following is a translation: "There are some among you who may remember, that at the time when the affairs of Persia were the subject of our consultations, I was the first, the only, or almost the only, one to recommend it as the wisest measure not to assign your enmity to the king as the motive of your armament; to make your preparations against your avowed adversaries, and to employ them even against him should he attempt to injure you. Nor did I urge these things without your full concurrence: they were received with applause."

THE END OF THE ORATIONS ON THE CLASSES