

341 BC

THE ORATION ON THE STATE OF THE CHERSONESUS

Demosthenes

translated by Thomas Leland, D.D.

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 State of the Chersonesus (341 BC) - Spoken within a short space of the Third Philippic. While the Third Philippic takes a broad look at the state of affairs with Philip, "The Oration on the State of the Chersonesus" regards the situation chiefly from an Athenian point of view.

THE ORATION ON THE STATE OF THE CHERSONESUS

INTRODUCTION

To the Oration on the State of the Chersonesus

IN the foregoing oration (The Second Philippic) the vehemence of Demosthenes determined the Athenians to oppose the attempts of Philip; and his representations to the Argians and Messenians inspired them with suspicion, and at length detached them from all connections with Macedon. When Philip, therefore, found his practices in Peloponnesus unsuccessful, he began to turn his thoughts to other enterprises; to pursue his conquests in Thrace, and cross the Athenian interest in the Chersonesus. This peninsula had, with some little interruption, been for many years in the hands of the Athenians. Cotis, as king of the country, had lately wrested it from them, and left it in succession to his son Cersobleptes. But he, being unable to support himself against the power of Philip, resigned it again to the Athenians; and they, according to custom, sent in a colony, which the inhabitants received, and freely shared their lands and habitations with their new guests. The people of Cardia, the principal city, however, still asserted their independence; and when Diopithes, the commander of the Athenian colony, would have reduced them by force of arms, had recourse to Philip, who immediately detached a body of forces to their support. Diopithes considered this proceeding as an act of hostility against Athens: without waiting for instructions from his state, raised a considerable force; and, while Philip was engaged in war in the inland parts of Thrace, entered the maritime parts (which were his territories) with fire and sword, and brought off a great booty, which he lodged safe in the Chersonesus. Philip was not at leisure to repel this insult: he therefore contented himself with complaining by letters to the Athenians of this conduct of their general. The pensioners which he had at Athens immediately exerted themselves for their master. They inveighed loudly against Diopithes; accused him of violating the peace which then subsisted between them and Philip; of involving the state in war; of exaction, rapine, and piracy; and pressed for his being recalled.

Demosthenes, judging that at such a juncture the public interest was connected with that of Diopithes, undertakes his defence in the following oration; throws the whole blame of the exactions and piracies he is accused of on the Athenians themselves; turns their attention to Philip and his hostilities; and concludes, that whoever opposes or distresses him in any manner does a service to the state; and that, instead of disavowing what Diopithes had done, or directing him to dismiss his army, they should reinforce him, and show the king of Macedon they know how to protect their territories, and to maintain the dignity of their country as well as their ancestors.

It appears, from the beginning of this oration, that before Demosthenes arose the affair had been violently contested in the assembly. Possibly the heat of opposition added to the natural fire of the orator; for the style of the oration is, in my opinion, remarkably animated; and we find an extraordinary degree of severity and indignation breaking out in every part of it.

THE ORATION ON THE STATE OF THE CHERSONESUS

Pronounced in the Archonship of Sosigenes, two years after the Second Philippic IT were to be wished, Athenians, that they who speak in public would never suffer hatred or affection to influence their counsels; but, in all that they propose, be directed by unbiassed reason; particularly when affairs of state, and those of highest moment, are the object of our attention. But since there are persons whose speeches are partly dictated by a spirit of contention, partly by other like motives, it is your duty, Athenians, to exert that power which your numbers give you, and in all your resolutions and in all your actions to consider only the interest of your country.

Our present concernment is about the affairs of the Chersonesus, and Philip's expedition into Thrace, which hath now engaged him eleven months: but most of our orators insist on the actions and designs of Diopithes. As to crimes objected to those men whom our laws can punish when we please, I, for my part, think it quite indifferent whether they be considered now or at some other time; nor is this a point to be violently contested by me or any other speaker. But when Philip, the enemy of our country, is now actually hovering about the Hellespont *(1) with a numerous army, and making attempts on our dominions, which, if one moment neglected, the loss may be irreparable; here our attention is instantly demanded: we should resolve, we should prepare with all possible expedition, and not run from our main concern in the midst of foreign clamors and accusations.

I have frequently been surprised at assertions made in public; but never more than when I lately heard it affirmed in the Senate, *(2) that there are but two expedients to be proposed- either absolutely to declare war, or to continue in peace.

The point is this: if Philip acts as one in amity with us; if he does not keep possession of our dominions contrary to his treaty; if he be not everywhere spiring up enemies against us, all debates are at an end; we are undoubtedly obliged to live in peace, and I find it perfectly agreeable to you. But if the articles of our treaty, ratified by the most solemn oaths, remain on record, open to public inspection; if it appears that long before the departure of Diopithes and his colony, who are now accused of involving us in a war, Philip had unjustly seized many of our possessions (for which I appeal to your own decrees); if, ever since that time, he has been constantly arming himself with all the powers of Greeks and barbarians to destroy us- what do these men mean who affirm we are either absolutely to declare war, or to observe the peace? You have no choice at all; you have but one just and necessary measure to pursue, which they industriously pass over. And what is this? To repel force by force. Unless they will affirm, that, while Philip keeps from Attica and the Piraeus, *(3) he does our state no injury, makes no war against us. If it be thus they state the bounds of peace and justice, we must all acknowledge that their sentiments are inconsistent with the common rights of mankind- with the dignity and the safety of Athens.

Besides, they themselves contradict their own accusation of Diopithes. For shall Philip be left at full liberty to pursue all his other designs, provided he keeps from Attica; and shall not Diopithes be permitted to assist the Thracians? And if he does, shall we accuse him of involving us in a war? But this is their incessant cry: "Our foreign troops commit outrageous devastations on the Hellespont: Diopithes, without regard to justice, seizes and plunders vessels! These things must not be suffered." Be it so: I acquiesce! but while they are laboring to have our troops disbanded, by inveighing against that man whose care and industry support them (if they really speak from a regard to justice), they should show us, that if we yield to their remonstrances Philip's army also will be

disbanded: else it is apparent that their whole aim is to reduce the state to those circumstances which have occasioned all the losses we have lately suffered. For be assured of this, that nothing hath given Philip such advantage over us as his superior vigilance in improving all opportunities. For, as he is constantly surrounded by his troops, and his mind perpetually engaged in projecting his designs, he can in a moment strike the blow where he pleases. But we wait till some event alarms us; then we are in motion; then we prepare. To this alone I can impute it, that the conquests he hath lately made he now enjoys in full security; while all your efforts are too late, all your vast expenses ineffectual: your attempts have served only to discover your enmity and inclination to oppose him; and the consequences of your misconduct are still further aggravated by the disgrace.

Know then, Athenians, that all our orators allege at present are but words, but idle pretences. Their whole designs, their whole endeavors are to confine you within the city; that, while we have no forces in the field, Philip may be at full liberty to act as he pleases. Consider the present posture of affairs. Philip is now stationed in Thrace, at the head of a large army, and (as we are here informed) sends for reinforcements from Macedon and Thessaly. Now, should he watch the blowing of the Etesian winds, march his forces to Byzantium, and invest it; in the first place, can you imagine that the Byzantines would persist in their present folly; or that they would not have recourse to you for assistance? I cannot think it. No: if there were a people in whom they less confided ⁽⁴⁾ than in us, they would receive even these into their city rather than give it up to him, unless prevented by the quickness of his attack. And should we be unable to sail thither, should there be no forces ready to support them, nothing can prevent their ruin. "But the extravagance and folly of these men exceed all bounds." I grant it. Yet still they should be secured from danger; for this is the interest of our state. Besides, it is by no means clear that he will not march into the Chersonesus itself. On the contrary, if we may judge from the letter which he sent to you, he is determined to oppose us in that country. If then the forces stationed there be still kept up, we may defend our own dominions, and infest those of our enemy; if they be once dispersed and broken, what shall we do if he attempt the Chersonesus? "Bring Diopithes to a trial." And how will that serve us? "No: but we will despatch succors from hence." What if the winds prevent us? "But he will not turn his arms thither." Who will be our surety for this? Consider, Athenians, is not the season of the year approaching in which it is thought by some that you are to withdraw your forces from the Hellespont, and abandon it to Philip? But suppose (for this too merits our attention) that at his return from Thrace he should neither bend his force against the Chersonesus nor Byzantium, but fall on Chalcis or Megara, as he lately did on Oreum; ⁽⁵⁾ which would be the wiser course, to oppose him here, and make Attica the seat of war, or to find him employment abroad? I think the latter.

Let these things sink deep into our minds; and let us not raise invidious clamors against those forces which Diopithes is endeavoring to keep up for the service of his country, or attempt to break them: let us rather prepare to reinforce them; grant their general the necessary supplies of money, and in every other instance favor his designs with a hearty zeal. Imagine this question proposed to Philip: "What would be most agreeable to you, that the forces commanded by Diopithes" of whatever kind they be, for I shall not dispute on that head- "should continue in full strength and good esteem at Athens, and be reinforced by detachments from the city; or, that the clamors and invectives of certain persons should prevail to have them broken and disbanded?" I think he would choose this latter. And are there men among us laboring for that which Philip would entreat the gods to grant him? and if so, is it still a question whence our distresses have arisen?

Let me entreat you to examine the present state of Athens with an unbiassed freedom; to consider how we are acting, and how our affairs are conducted. We are neither willing to raise contributions, nor do we dare to take the field, nor do we spare the public funds, nor do we grant supplies to Diopithes, nor do we approve of those subsidies he hath procured himself; but we malign him, we pry into his designs, and watch his motions. Thus we proceed, quite regardless of our interests; and while in words we extol those speakers who assert the dignity of their country, our actions favor their opposers. It is usual, when a speaker rises, to ask him, "What are we to do?" Give me leave to propose the like question to you: "What am I to say?" For, if you neither raise contributions, nor take the field, nor spare the public funds, nor grant subsidies to Diopithes, nor approve of those provisions he hath made himself, nor take the due care of our interests, I have nothing to say. If you grant such unbounded license to informers as even to listen to their accusations of a man for what they pretend he will do, before it be yet done, what can one say? But it is necessary to explain to some of you the effect of this behavior. *(6) (I shall speak with an undaunted freedom, for in no other manner can I speak.) It has been the constant custom of all the commanders who have sailed from this city (if I advance a falsehood let me feel the severest punishment) to take money from the Chians, and from the Erythrians, and from any people that would give it; I mean of the inhabitants of Asia. They who have but one or two ships take a talent; they who command a greater force raise a larger contribution: and the people who give this money, whether more or less, do not give it for nothing (they are not so mad): no; it is the price they pay to secure their trading vessels from rapine and piracy, to provide them with the necessary convoys, and the like; however they may pretend friendship and affection, and dignify those payments with the name of free gifts. It is therefore evident, that as Diopithes is at the head of a considerable power, the same contributions will be granted to him. Else, how shall he pay his soldiers? how shall he maintain them, who receives nothing from you, and has nothing of his own? From the skies? No; but from what he can collect, and beg, and borrow. So that the whole scheme of his accusers is to warn all people to grant him nothing; as he is to suffer punishment for crimes yet to be committed, not for any he hath already committed, or in which he hath already assisted. This is the meaning of their clamors. "He is going to form sieges! he leaves the Greeks exposed." Have these men all this tenderness for the Grecian colonies of Asia? They then prefer the interests of foreigners to that of their own country. This must be the case, if they prevail to have another general sent to the Hellespont. If Diopithes commits outrages- if he be guilty of piracy, one single edict, *(7) Athenians- a single edict will put a stop to such proceedings. This is the voice of our laws; that such offenders should be impeached; *(8) and not opposed *(9) with such vast preparations of ships and money (this would be the height of madness): it is against our enemies, whom the laws cannot touch, that we ought, we must maintain our forces, send out our navies, and raise our contributions. But when citizens have offended, we can decree, we can impeach, we can recall. *(10) These are arms sufficient; these are the measures befitting men of prudence: they who would raise disorder and confusion in the state may have recourse to such as these men propose.

But dreadful as it is to have such men among us, yet the most dreadful circumstance of all is this. You assemble here, with minds so disposed, that if anyone accuses Diopithes, or Chares, *(11) or Aristophon, *(12) or any citizen whatever, as the cause of our misfortunes, you instantly break forth into acclamations and applause. But if a man stands forth, and thus declares the truth: "This is all trifling, Athenians! It is to Philip we owe our calamities: he hath plunged us in these difficulties: for had he observed his treaty, our state would be in perfect tranquillity." This you cannot deny; but you hear it with the utmost grief, as if it were the account of some dreadful misfortune. The cause is this- (for when I am to urge the interest of my country, let me speak boldly)- certain

persons who have been entrusted with public affairs have for a long time past rendered you daring and terrible in council; but in all affairs of war wretched and contemptible. Hence it is, that if a citizen, subject to your own power and jurisdiction, be pointed out as the author of your misfortunes, you hear the accusation with applause; but if they are charged on a man who must first be conquered before he can be punished, then you are utterly disconcerted: that truth is too severe to be borne. Your ministers, Athenians, should take a quite contrary course. They should render you gentle and humane in council, where the rights of citizens and allies come before you: in military affairs they should inspire you with fierceness and intrepidity; for here you are engaged with enemies, with armed troops. But now, by leading you gently on to their purposes, by the most abject compliance with your humours, they have so formed and moulded you, that in your assemblies you are delicate, and attend but to flattery and entertainment; in your affairs you find yourselves threatened with extremity of danger.

And now, in the name of Heaven! suppose that the states of Greece should thus demand *(13) an account of those opportunities which your indolence hath lost. "Men of Athens! you are ever sending embassies to us; you assure us that Philip is projecting our ruin, and that, of all the Greeks, you warn us to guard against this man's designs." (And it is too true we have done thus.) "But, O most wretched of mankind! when this man had been ten months detained abroad; when sickness, and the severity of winter, and the armies of his enemies rendered it impossible for him to return home, you neither restored the liberty of Euboea, nor recovered any of your own dominions. But while you sit at home in perfect ease and health (if such a state may be called health), Euboea is commanded by his two tyrants; *(14) the one, just opposite to Attica, to keep you perpetually in awe; the other to Scyathus. Yet you have not attempted to oppose even this. No; you have submitted; you have been insensible to your wrongs; you have fully declared, that if Philip were ten times to die, it would not inspire you with the least degree of vigor. Why then these embassies, these accusations, all this unnecessary trouble to us?" If they should say this, what could we allege? what answer could we give? I know not.

We have those among us who think a speaker fully confuted by asking, "What then is to be done?" To whom I answer, with the utmost truth and justness, "Not what we are now doing." But I shall be more explicit, if they will be as ready to follow as to ask advice.

First, then, Athenians, be firmly convinced of these truths: that Philip does commit hostilities against us, and has violated the peace (and let us no longer accuse each other of his crimes); that he is the implacable enemy of this whole city, of the ground on which this city stands, of every inhabitant within these walls, even of those who imagine themselves highest in his favor. If they doubt this, let them think of Euthycrates and Lasthenes, the Olynthians. They who seemed the nearest to his heart, the moment they betrayed their country, were distinguished only by the superior cruelty of their death. But it is against our constitution that his arms are principally directed; nor, in all his schemes, in all his actions, hath he anything so immediately in view as to subvert it. And there is in some sort a necessity for this. He knows full well that his conquests, however great and extensive, can never be secure while you continue free; but that, if once he meets with any accident (and every man is subject to many), all those whom he hath forced into his service will instantly revolt, and fly to you for protection: for you are not naturally disposed to grasp at empire yourselves, but to frustrate the ambitious attempts of others; to be ever ready to oppose usurpation, and assert the liberty of mankind; this is your peculiar character. And therefore it is not without regret that he sees in your freedom a spy on the incidents of his fortune. Nor is this his reasoning weak or trivial.

In the first place, therefore, we are to consider him as the enemy of our state, the implacable enemy of our free constitution. Nothing but the deepest sense of this can give you a true, vigorous, and active spirit. In the next place, be assured that everything he is now laboring, everything he is concerting, he is concerting against our city; and that, wherever any man opposes him, he opposes an attempt against these walls: for none of you can be weak enough to imagine that Philip's desires are centred in those paltry villages of Thrace; (for what name else can one give to Drongilus, and Cabyle, and Mastira, *(15) and all those places he is now reducing to his obedience?) that he endures the severity of toils and seasons, and braves the utmost dangers for these, and has no designs on the ports, and the arsenals, and the navies, and the silver mines, and all the other revenues of Athens; but that he will leave them for you to enjoy; while, for some wretched hoards of grain in the cells of Thrace, he takes up his winter quarters in the horrors of a dungeon. *(16) Impossible! No; these and all his expeditions are really intended to facilitate the conquest of Athens.

Let us then approve ourselves men of wisdom; and, fully persuaded of these truths, let us shake off our extravagant and dangerous supineness; let us supply the necessary expenses; let us call on our allies; let us take all possible measures for keeping up a regular army; so that, as he hath his force constantly prepared to injure and enslave the Greeks, yours too may be ever ready to protect and assist them. If you depend on occasional detachments, you cannot ever expect the least degree of success: you must keep an army constantly on foot, provide for its maintenance, appoint public treasurers, and by all possible means secure your military funds; and while these officers account for all disbursements, let your generals be bound to answer for the conduct of the war. Let these be your measures, these your resolutions, and you will compel Philip to live in the real observance of an equitable peace, and to confine himself to his own kingdom (which is most for our interest), or we shall fight him on equal terms.

If any man thinks that the measures I propose will require great expense, and be attended with much toil and trouble, he thinks justly. Yet let him consider what consequences must attend the state if these measures be neglected, and it will appear that we shall really be gainers by engaging heartily in this cause. Suppose some god should be our surety (for no mortal ought to be relied on in an affair of such moment) that, if we continue quiet, and give up all our interests, he will not at last turn his arms against us; it would yet be shameful; it would (I call all the powers of heaven to witness!) be unworthy of you, unworthy the dignity of your country, and the glory of your ancestors, to abandon the rest of Greece to slavery for the sake of private ease. I, for my part, would die rather than propose so mean a conduct: however, if there be any other person who will recommend it, be it so; neglect your defence; give up your interests! But if there be no such counsellor; if, on the contrary, we all foresee that the farther this man is suffered to extend his conquests, the more formidable and powerful enemy we must find in him, why this reluctance? why do we delay? or when, my countrymen, will we perform our duty? Must some necessity compel us? What one may call the necessity of freemen not only presses us now, but hath long since been felt: that of slaves, it is to be wished, may never approach us. And how do these differ? To a freeman, the disgrace of past misconduct is the most urgent necessity; to a slave stripes and bodily pains. Far be this from us! I ought not to be mentioned.

I would now gladly lay before you the whole conduct of certain politicians: but I spare them. One thing only I shall observe: the moment that Philip is mentioned there is still one ready to start up, and cry, "What a happiness to live in peace! how grievous the maintenance of a great army! certain persons have designs on our treasury!" Thus they delay their resolutions, and give him full liberty to act as he pleases; hence you gain ease and indulgence for the present (which I fear may at some time prove too dear a

purchase); and these men recommend themselves to your favor, and are well paid for their service. But in my opinion there is no need to persuade you to peace, who sit down already thoroughly persuaded. Let it be recommended to him who is committing hostilities: if he can be prevailed on, you are ready to concur. Nor should we think those expenses grievous which our security requires, but the consequences which must arise if such expenses be denied. Then as to plundering our treasury; this must be prevented by entrusting it to proper guardians, not by neglecting our affairs. For my own part, Athenians, I am filled with indignation when I find some persons expressing their impatience, as if our treasures were exposed to plunderers, and yet utterly unaffected at the progress of Philip, who is successively plundering every state of Greece; and this, that he may at last fall with all his fury on you.

What then can be the reason, Athenians, that, notwithstanding all his manifest hostilities, all his acts of violence, all the places he hath taken from us, these men will not acknowledge that he hath acted unjustly, and that he is at war with us; but accuse those of embroiling you in a war who call on you to oppose him, and to check his progress? I shall tell you. That popular resentment which may arise from any disagreeable circumstances with which a war may be attended (and it is necessary, absolutely necessary, that a war should be attended with many such disagreeable circumstances) they would cast on your faithful counsellors, that you may pass sentence on them, instead of opposing Philip; and they turn accusers, instead of meeting the punishment due to their present practices. This is the meaning of their clamors that certain persons would involve you in a war: hence have they raised all these cavils and debates. I know full well, that before any Athenian had ever moved you to declare war against him, Philip had seized many of our dominions, and hath now sent assistance to the Cardians. If you are resolved to dissemble your sense of his hostilities, he would be the weakest of mankind if he attempted to contradict you. But suppose he marches directly against us, what shall we say in that case? He will still assure us that he is not at war: such were his professions to the people of Oreum when his forces were in the heart of their country; and to those of Pherae, until the moment that he attacked their walls; and thus he at first amused the Olynthians, until he had marched his army into their territory. And will you still insist, even in such a case, that they who call on us to defend our country are embroiling us in a war? Then slavery is inevitable. There is no other medium between an obstinate refusal to take arms on your part, and a determined resolution to attack us on the part of our enemy.

Nor is the danger which threatens us the same with that of other people. It is not the conquest of Athens which Philip aims at: no; it is our utter extirpation. He knows full well that slavery is a state you would not, or, if you were inclined, you could not submit to; for sovereignty is become habitual to you. Nor is he ignorant, that, at any unfavorable juncture, you have more power to obstruct his enterprises than the whole world besides.

Let us then be assured that we are contending for the very being of our state; let this inspire us with abhorrence of those who have sold themselves to this man, and let them feel the severity of public justice; for it is not possible to conquer our foreign enemy until we have punished those traitors who are serving him within our walls. Else, while we strike on these as so many obstacles, our enemies must necessarily prove superior to us. And whence is it that he dares treat you with insolence (I cannot give his present conduct any other name), that he utters menaces against you, while on others he confers acts of kindness (to deceive them at least, if for no other purpose)? Thus, by heaping favors on the Thessalians, he hath reduced them to their present slavery. It is not possible to recount the various artifices by which he abused the wretched Olynthians, from his first insidious gift of Potidaea. But how he seduced the Thebans to his party, by

making them masters of Boeotia, and easing them of a great and grievous war. And thus, by being gratified in some favorite point, these people are either involved in calamities known to the whole world, or wait with submission for the moment when such calamities are to fall on them. I do not recount all that you yourselves have lost, Athenians; but in the very conclusion of the peace, how have you been deceived? how have you been despoiled? Was not Phocis, was not Thermopylae, were not our Thracian dominions, Doriscum, Serrium, and even our ally Cersobleptes, *(17) all wrested from us? Is he not at this time in possession of Cardia? and does he not avow it? Whence is it, I say, that he treats you in so singular a manner? Because ours is the only state where there is allowed full liberty to plead the cause of an enemy; and the man who sells his country may harangue securely, at the very time that you are despoiled of your dominions. It was not safe to speak for Philip at Olynthus until the people of Olynthus had been gained by the surrender of Potidaea. In Thessaly it was not safe to speak for Philip until the Thessalians had been gained by the expulsion of the tyrants and the recovery to their rank of Amphictyons; nor could it have been safely attempted at Thebes before he had restored Boeotia and extirpated the Phocians. But at Athens, although he hath robbed us of Amphipolis and the territory of Cardia; though he awes us with his fortifications in Euboea; though he be now on his march to Byzantium; yet his partisans may speak for Philip without any danger. Hence, some of them, from the meanest poverty, have on a sudden risen to affluence; some, from obscurity and disgrace, to eminence and honor: while you, on the contrary, from glory, have sunk into meanness; from riches, to poverty; for the riches of a state I take to be its allies, its credit, its connections; in all which you are poor. And by your neglect of these, by your utter insensibility to your wrongs, he is become fortunate and great, the terror of Greeks and barbarians; and you abandoned and despised; splendid indeed in the abundance *(18) of your markets; but as to any real provision for your security, ridiculously deficient.

There are some orators, I find, who view your interests and their own in a quite different light. They would persuade you to continue quiet, whatever injuries are offered to you: they themselves cannot be quiet, though no one offers them the least injury. When one of these men rises, I am sure to hear, "What! will you not propose your decree? will you not venture? No; you are timid: you want true spirit." I own, indeed, I am not, nor would I choose to be, a bold, an importunate, an audacious speaker. And yet, if I mistake not, I have more real courage than they who manage your affairs with this rash hardness. For he who, neglecting the public interests, is engaged only in trials, in confiscations, in rewarding, in accusing, doth not act from any principle of courage; but as he never speaks but to gain your favor, never proposes measures that are attended with the least hazard: in this he has a pledge of his security; and therefore is he daring. But he who for his country's good oftentimes opposes your inclinations; who gives the most salutary, though not always the most agreeable, counsel; who pursues those measures whose success depends more on fortune than on prudence, and is yet willing to be accountable for the event; this is the man of courage; this is the true patriot: not they who, by flattering your passions, have lost the most important interests of the state; men whom I am so far from imitating, or deeming citizens of worth, that should this question be proposed to me, "What services have you done your country?" though I might recount the galleys I have fitted out, and the public entertainments I have exhibited, *(19) and the contributions I have paid, and the captives I have ransomed, *(20) and many like acts of benevolence, I would yet pass them all by, and only say that my public conduct hath been directly opposite to theirs. I might, like them, have turned accuser, have distributed rewards and punishments: but this is a part I never assumed: my inclinations were averse; nor could wealth or honors prompt me to it. No; I confine myself to such

counsels as have sunk my reputation: but, if pursued, must raise the reputation of my country.

Thus much I may be allowed to say without exposing myself to envy. I should not have thought myself a good citizen had I proposed such measures as would have made me the first among my countrymen, but reduced you to the last of states: on the contrary, the faithful minister should raise the glory of his country; and, on all occasions, advise the most salutary, not the easiest, measures. To these nature itself inclines; those are not to be promoted but by the utmost efforts of a wise and faithful counsellor.

I have heard it objected, "That indeed I ever speak with reason; yet still this is no more than words: that the state requires something more effectual, some vigorous actions." On which I shall give my sentiments without the least reserve. The sole business of a speaker is, in my opinion, to propose the course you are to pursue. This were easy to be proved. You know, that when the great Timotheus moved you to defend the Euboeans against the tyranny of Thebes, he addressed you thus: "What, my countrymen! when the Thebans are actually in the island, are you deliberating what is to be done? what part to be taken? Will you not cover the seas with your navies? Why are you not at the Piraeus? why are you not embarked?" Thus Timotheus advised; thus you acted, and success ensued. But had he spoken with the same spirit, and had your indolence prevailed, and his advice been rejected, would the state have had the same success? By no means. And so in the present case; vigor and execution is your part; from your speakers you are only to expect wisdom and integrity.

I shall just give the summary of my opinion, and then descend. You should raise supplies; you should keep up your present forces, and reform whatever abuses may be found in them (not break them entirely on the first complaint). You should send ambassadors into all parts, to reform, to remonstrate, to exert all their efforts in the service of the state. But, above all things, let those corrupt ministers feel the severest punishment; let them, at all times, and in all places, be the objects of your abhorrence: that wise and faithful counsellors may appear to have consulted their own interests as well as that of others. If you will act thus, if you will shake off this indolence, perhaps, even yet, perhaps, we may promise ourselves some good fortune. But if you only just exert yourselves in acclamations and applauses, and when anything is to be done sink again into your supineness, I do not see how all the wisdom of the world can save the state from ruin, when you deny your assistance.

NOTES

To the Oration on the State of the Chersonesus

*(1) By the Hellespont we are to understand not the strait itself that separates Europe from Asia, but the cities and countries all along the coast.

*(2) Into which Demosthenes had been admitted in the archonship of Themistocles, a little after the taking of Olynthus; and (if we may believe Aeschines) not in the regular manner, but by intrigue and bribery.

*(3) This is the first time the orator mentions this celebrated port of Athens. It was at first detached from the city, but afterward joined to it by two long walls, which the Greeks called the Legs of the Piraeus; and from that time, by the advice of Themistocles, the Athenians made this their principal harbor. It could contain four hundred ships of war; was well fortified, and furnished with a market, to which all the trading part of Greece resorted. Historians call it the triple port, for it really contained three: the first called Kantharos, from a hero of that name; the second Aphrodision, from two temples of Venus that were erected near it; the third Zea, because it was the mart for corn.

*(4) In the third year of the one hundred and fifth Olympiad the Byzantines entered into a league with Chios, Cos, and Rhodes, against the Athenians, and withdrew themselves from their dominion. This is what Demosthenes calls their folly and extravagance. They had reason to think the Athenians would regard them as rebellious subjects, and treat them with the resentment of offended sovereigns. "However," says the orator, "if they were reduced to the alternative of either submitting to Philip, or having recourse to you for protection, they would without hesitation choose the latter." The event confirmed his prediction. Philip besieged Byzantium, the Byzantines had recourse to the Athenians, and Phocion at the head of their army obliged Philip to raise the siege.

*(5) In the third Philippic we shall find a particular account of the manner in which he reduced this city to his obedience.

*(6) To the same purpose has the sentence been translated by Wolfius and Turreil. But this interpretation, which is acknowledged consonant to grammatical rules of construction, has yet been stigmatized as a total perversion of the author's reasoning and the sense of the context. Clamors had been raised against an Athenian general, who had exacted contributions from the islanders and Grecian settlements along the coast of Asia. Demosthenes appears as his advocate.

He proceeds, as it is observed, to show that it had ever been the custom of other commanders to raise the like contributions. Hence it is inferred, that the meaning of the phrase here quoted must be, that the general is warranted by justice and custom to act as he had done. The orator, indeed, doth proceed to give instances of this custom. But this conclusion I cannot admit; for whatever deference and respect the writers who have adopted it may justly claim, a greater deference and respect is due to the original, where we find a conclusion of a different nature, deduced in express terms. "It has been the constant custom," says Demosthenes, "of all the commanders who have sailed from this city (if I advance a falsehood let me feel the severest punishment) to take money from the Chians, and from the Erythrians, and from any people that would give it; I mean, of the inhabitants of Asia. They who have but one or two ships take a talent; they who command a greater force raise a larger contribution: and the people who give this money, whether more or less, do not give it for nothing (they are not so mad): no; it is the price they pay to secure their trading vessels from rapine and piracy, to provide them

with the necessary convoys, and the like; however they may pretend friendship and affection, and dignify those payments with the name of free gifts. It is therefore evident, that as Diopithes is at the head of a considerable power, the same contributions will be granted to him. Else, how shall he pay his soldiers? how shall he maintain them, who receives nothing from you, and has nothing of his own? From the skies? No; but from what he can collect, and beg, and borrow.” Then follows the conclusion from the whole: Oude OUN allo poiouisin oi kategorountes en umin, eprolegousin apasi, etc. So that the whole scheme of his accusers (or the whole effect of their accusations) is to warn all people to grant him nothing, etc. This is the meaning (or this is the tendency) of their clamors.

*(7) In the Greek pinakion, which in this place may either signify the tablet which was fixed up in public, containing a citation of the accused party, and an account of the crimes with which he was accused; or that which was given to the judges who sat on his trial to write their sentences on. I have chosen the first of these senses.

*(8) The Greek words eisaggelein and eisaggelia, which is translated to impeach, and impeachment, are terms in the Athenian judicature, and relate to those particular kind of actions which were not referred to any court of justice, but immediately brought before the senate of five hundred, or assembly of the people, and sometimes before the archon; and in which both the accusation and defence were made by word of mouth, without any written articles.

*(9) The accusers of Diopithes raised loud clamors against his conduct. They insisted that he had committed depredations on the Grecian colonies, and was meditating further hostilities against them, contrary to his commission and instructions. They declared that a force should be despatched to defend them; which Demosthenes calls raising an army against Diopithes. “It is against our enemies,” says he, “whom our laws cannot reach, that we are to raise our forces; when citizens have offended, we can impeach them,” etc. But this interpretation has been loaded with the heavy charge of absurdity. If the translator had a right to pronounce so peremptorily and so severely, he would declare that, by the same rule, every ardent expression, every bold figure, every lively image- in short, everything in eloquence not literally and strictly consonant to metaphysical truth might be pronounced equally absurd. The meaning of the passage here quoted is said to be, “We are not to protect the islanders by our armies, but to employ them against our enemies.” But why were they to raise their armies against their enemies? Because their enemies were not punishable by the laws. Those, therefore, against whom they were not to raise their armies must have been such as were punishable by the laws. This conclusion might perhaps be deemed natural and necessary, even if the orator had not expressly pointed out both those against whom they were, and were not, to raise their armies. Epi tous echthrous- against enemies: and ep d emas autous- but against ourselves, i.e. our own citizens.

*(10) In the original, we have the Paralos, that is, the galley (so called, from the hero Paralus, who with Theseus signalized himself against the Thebans). The Athenians had two galleys, the Salaminian and Paralian, appointed for the most pressing occasions of the state. In allusion to this usage, Pericles was called the Salaminian galley, because he affected to appear in public only on extraordinary emergencies. When Lysander had beaten the Athenian fleet at the Hellespont, the Paralian galley was despatched with the melancholy news to the people; and when Alcibiades was recalled from Sicily to defend himself against the charge of impiety, the Salaminian galley was ordered to bring him home. Both the one and the other were employed to recall such generals as were superseded.

*(11) This apology, says M. Tourreil, savors a little of faction and cabal: their ill-success might with great justice have been charged on Chares. Indeed, what could have been expected from a general no less incapable than luxurious, who in all his military expeditions drew after him a train of musicians, whom he kept in pay at the expense of his troops? Accordingly, his enterprises were unsuccessful; and, to crown all his miscarriages, he lost the battle of Chaeronea. And yet this Chares was able to support himself to the last by the credit of those orators who protected him.

*(12) Another Athenian general. Aristotle mentions a smart answer made to him by Iphicrates. Aristophon accused him of having betrayed the fleet which he commanded. Iphicrates, with that confidence which an established reputation inspires, asked him, "Would you be guilty of such a piece of treachery?" "By no means," answered he. "What!" returned the other, "can Iphicrates have committed what Aristophon would refuse to do?" *(13) After the taking of Olynthus, when the Athenians were at last prevailed on to declare war in form against Philip, they sent embassies to all the states of Greece to represent the danger of his growing power, and to engage them to join against him. From hence the orator takes occasion to introduce this beautiful prosopopoeia, by which he throws out the bitterest reproaches against his countrymen, so artfully as not to give them offence, and yet at the same time sets the shamefulness of their misconduct in the strongest light.

*(14) Philistides and Clitarchus: the one fixed at Eretria, opposite to Attica; the other at Oreum, over against Scyathus, an island subject to Athens.

*(15) Drongilus and Cabyle, however the orator affects to treat them with contempt, are yet mentioned in history. As to Mastira, it is entirely unknown: hence Harpocration suggested, that instead of Mastira we should read Bastira; a town of Thrace of that name having been mentioned in a history of Philip written by Anaximenes, a work a long time lost.

*(16) In the original it is, in a Barathrum. There was a ditch or cavern in Athens of that name, into which criminals were precipitated. So that by this figure he not only represents the dreadful and deadly nature of the country, but at the same time sets Philip in the light of a wicked wretch, who merited the vilest and most ignominious fate.

*(17) The late treaty of peace between Philip and the Athenians was concluded without giving Cersobleptes (then in alliance with Athens) an opportunity of acceding to it: nor was any provision made by it for his security and protection.

By this means Philip found himself at liberty to turn his arms against him, and a few years after drove him from his kingdom, and obliged him to become his tributary.

*(18) They who opposed Philip's interest in the Athenian assembly were ever urging the fallen condition of their country, and the dishonor of suffering another power to wrest that pre-eminence from her which had been enjoyed for ages. The speakers on the other side at first affected to despise the power of Philip, or insisted on the sincerity and uprightness of his intentions. But now, when the danger became too apparent, and his designs too flagrant to be dissembled, it appears that they had recourse to other arguments. They endeavored to confine the views of the Athenians to what passed within their own walls; displayed the advantages of their trade, the flourishing state of their commerce; and perhaps recommended it as their true policy to attend only to these, without making themselves a party in the quarrels of others, or loading the state with the expense of maintaining wars to support the power and interest of foreigners.

*(19) In the original it is, "the offices of choregus that I have discharged." Each of the ten tribes of Athens had their bands of musicians to perform in the feasts of Bacchus, together with a poet, to compose the hymns and other pieces; and these bands contended

for a prize. The feasts were exhibited with great magnificence; and in order to defray the charges, they appointed the richest citizen out of each tribe (or sometimes he offered himself) to exhibit them at his own cost.

He was called the choregus; and if his band gained the prize, his name was inscribed, together with those of the tribe and the poet, on the vase which was the reward of the conquerors.

*(20) See the introduction to the Oration on the Peace.

THE END OF THE ORATION ON THE STATE OF THE CHERSONESUS