

**THE I.II.III. PHILIPPICS OF
DEMOSTHENES WITH HISTORICAL
INTRODUCTIONS AND CRITICAL
AND EXPLANATORY NOTES**

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The I.II.III. Philippics of Demosthenes with Historical Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes by M. J. Smead

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BY
M. J. SMEAD, PH. D.

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P R E F A C E .

Few of the ancient authors present such strong claims to the attention of the American student as Demosthenes. Whether we regard the matter or the form of his discourses, or whether we contemplate his character as a patriotic citizen and statesman, we find throughout an excellence and an elevation, which the better we understand the more we are compelled to admire. The period of his political career embraces one of the most interesting portions of ancient history, the last twenty years of the independence of the Greek republics and their subjugation by Philip of Macedon; and his writings contain such a full and at the same time such a faithful delineation of the manners, institutions, laws, and political events of the time, as almost to make him the historian of his age. He would merit this title, however, not so much by the narration of facts in chronological order, as by his masterly manner of appreciating and grouping them together, so as rarely to admit a doubt of the truth and justness of his conclusions. His orations abound in valuable notices of the character and policy of all the members of that celebrated confederacy, their antagonisms and affinities, their feuds, jealousies, and coalitions; but they offer a rich mine of information concerning Athens, that venerated mother of the liberal arts, whose *hegemony* in all that relates to high intellectual culture still remains undisputed. By the aid of his magic words we are enabled

to observe the inward workings of her complicated civil organization, her military and naval systems, her legislative assemblies, her courts of justice, her revenues, and her grand religious festivals at which were produced those masterpieces of genius which have been the admiration of all succeeding ages.

The style of Demosthenes, which belongs to what is denominated the mixed genus, is elaborate and studied. By this, however, is not meant a laborious striving for pointed antitheses, nicely balanced periods, and stately, harmonious cadences, that are frequently so monotonous in the orations of Isocrates; he did not, with the mass of Athenian orators, study to gratify the ear of a refined and fastidious audience by beautiful sentiments clothed in magnificent language, — λέγειν πρὸς ἡδονήν; but to convince and persuade was his great object, to which all other things were subservient. He enters the lists with bared weapons, prepared for earnest fight, “his front bristling with the deadliest points of logic,” and, like the spears of that invincible phalanx founded by his Macedonian adversary, wherever he moves he bears down everything before him. Possessing the fullest confidence in the goodness of his cause, he appears rather to contemn the feeble supports of artificial ornament. Relying upon the correctness of his own judgment, and powerful in the might of truth, he enforces our conviction. They who listen to him have no choice; they are ashamed to hesitate, they must believe. His language, it is true, is polished, but it is the polish of steel, and, like the famous sword Balisarda in the hands of Ariosto's hero, it possesses a celestial temper that no earthly armor can withstand.

PREFACE.

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And it is difficult to separate the style of Demosthenes from the nervous vigor of his thoughts, so it is difficult to separate the orator from the statesman and the man. He was a republican, not only by birth and education, but from inward conviction. He had carefully studied the history of his country and of the neighboring nations, and had seen Greece, and particularly Athens, under the vivifying influences of free government, attain such an eminence in civilization, and in every thing which was then thought to constitute a people's greatness, that all other lands became contemptible in comparison. He clung to civil liberty as the supreme good and the parent of all the blessings that made life desirable. Hence his unremitting watchfulness for its preservation, and his hatred of all that could undermine it at home or assail it from abroad. His patriotism was his ruling principle; from this, as from a fountain, flowed his whole administrative policy. From the moment that he perceived by Philip's enterprises in the Phocian war, that this monarch entertained designs upon the liberties of Greece, he made it the aim of his life to defeat him. Thenceforward every thing else became subordinate to the task of defending his country's independence against the policy of Macedonia. But alas! Athens had then greatly degenerated from the Athens of former days: corruption had advanced too far to be arrested, and although Demosthenes, by his stirring eloquence, by the energy and wisdom of his counsels, sometimes succeeded in kindling into a flame the remains of patriotic emotion among his countrymen, and impelling them to strenuous exertion, it was only for a brief space; the fitful flashes of light were followed by a deeper gloom, until all hope was extinguished on the fatal field of

Chæroneæ. But admit all the vicissitudes of the long struggle, the most disheartening difficulties, the most imminent dangers, he remained true to his convictions and unshaken in his purposes. From his first participation in public affairs to the moment in which he swallowed poison in the temple of Neptune, we perceive no deviation from his principles, no vacillation, no trace of weakness. Yet his strenuous defence of the cause of liberty, and his fearless attacks upon the partizans of Macedonia, made him many and bitter enemies, whose malice finally succeeded in causing him to be misunderstood by his fellow-citizens, as the wise Socrates and the just Aristides had been before him. And though the Athenians soon recognized their injustice, and sought to efface it by the highest public testimonials of respect, both before and after his death, yet writers have not been wanting, who, inimical to popular freedom, have striven to perpetuate those charges against him, of the truth of which not the slightest proof ever existed. Pausanias has shown that the allegations were wholly groundless, and, even in the absence of his testimony, it were incredible that a man who had devoted his talents and his fortune for so many years to the preservation of his sinking country should, at the age of sixty, belie his whole life and pollute his hand with a bribe! A recent English writer upon Greece (St. John) pays the following well merited tribute to the character of Demosthenes:—

“If genius could regenerate, could pour the blood of youth into the veins of age, could substitute loftiness of sentiment, heroic daring, disinterested love of country, religious faith, spirituality, for sensual self-indulgence, for sordid avarice, for a base distrust in Providence, Demos-

thenes had renewed the youth of Athens. The spirit of the old democratic constitution breathes through all his periods. He stands upon the last defence of the republican world, when all else had been carried, the representative of a noble but perished race, fighting gallantly, though in vain, to preserve that fragment sacred from the foot of the spoiler. The passion and the power of democracy seem concentrated in him. He unites in his character all the richest gifts of nature under the guidance of the most consummate art, and doubtless Hume was right when he said, that, of all human productions, his works approach the nearest to perfection."*

The orations contained in the present volume were prepared for publication by the editor during a residence of several years in Germany, where he enjoyed the instructions of the learned Professors Bekker, Boeckh, and Franz at the University of Berlin, and C. F. Hermann at Goettingen. Under their able guidance he applied himself to the study of the prince of Attic orators, and it was with a mind animated by their zeal, and a judgment sharpened by their profound criticisms, that he ventured to entertain the hope of being able to contribute something to the proper understanding of this author among his own countrymen. Beside the valuable aid thus derived, he availed himself of the labors of the most distinguished French, Italian, and German scholars; many of which, consisting of monographs published in the form of tracts or in scientific journals, have never obtained a general circulation, and for that reason are almost inaccessible to students in this country. In this form has appeared much of what has been done during the last twenty years for the critical study of the text, such as

**Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece*, Vol. III. p. 347.