

SELECT ESSAYS

OF

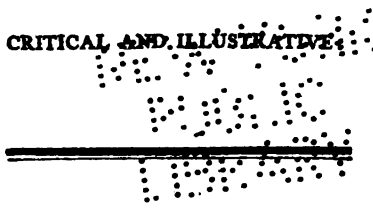
DIO CHRYSOSTOM,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM THE GREEK,

WITH

NOTES,

CRITICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.



BY

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. PHILLIPS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

BY S. HAMILTON, FALCON-COURT; FLEET-STREET.

1800.

CONCERNING

WAR AND PEACE (a).

A MULTIPLICITY of other topics, and in reality every subject of disquisition in connection with the activities of political and common life, may be considered as equally interesting and pertinent both to philosophers and rhetoricians: such rhetoricians, I mean, as are not mere declaimers of a vulgar and mercenary character, with views directed solely to dishonourable lucre and with a propensity to despicable wranglings. Such are the topics of pecuniary contracts in a community, public counsels, and the principles of legislation: and in the class of truly accomplished rhetoricians we may rank Pericles and Thucydides, I presume, at Athens; and, before their times, Themistocles, and Clisthenes, and Pisistratus, whilst he was contented with the title of a rhetorician and a public speaker. For, with respect to Aristides, and Lycurgus, and Solon, and Epaminondas, and whoever else resembles them, Propriety demands, that we should regard these distin-

guished characters rather as philosophic statesmen, or political rhetoricians, in the generous and genuine acceptance of the oratoric art. Under the same head of general disquisition we may place deliberations on the equipment of naval expeditions and the enactment of laws, as Lycurgus was a legislator to Lacedæmon; on the intercourse of the sexes, the acquisition of property, to what extent it should be carried and by what means conducted; deliberations concerning marriage, the management of the coin, honours and disgrace, and the construction of public edifices; whether it be advisable to fence a city with walls and battlements, or, as the divine oracle advised the Lacedæmonians, to leave it unfortified; concerning the apparatus of war and military tactics, not that discipline only, which relates to their ordinary exercises and evolutions, but such institutions, for example, as Epaminondas is said to have introduced; the association, I mean, of devoted friends in the same battalion (*b*), for their mutual defence, and for the provision of an ocular testimony to the bravery, or cowardice, of each other. That battalion, which was dignified by the denomination of the Sacred Band, proved the primary cause of the victory at Leuctra over the Lacedæmonians, when the collective force of all Greece was ranged around the standards of this people. But, what is the

main point of all, and becomes a frequent topic of deliberation and debate, is the question concerning War and Peace: which has now been proposed as the subject of our discussion.

Now every enquiry of this complexion is called in the treatises of philosophers, an enquiry concerning the *Fitness* or *Expediency* of a measure: as, for instance, whether it be expedient to marry, to engage in public life, to establish a kingly government or a democracy; and among these questions, according to my conception of the subject, this too deserves a station; Whether we ought to engage in WAR? Philosophers indeed not only investigate these points abstractedly and universally, but in connection with the relative considerations of *When*, and *By whom*, and *Against whom*; and under what coincidences of events, or failure of such coincidences, this measure should be adopted: so that superficial declaimers differ from philosophers in confining their enquiries to the specific expediency of a war, suppose, on the part of the Athenians against the Lacedæmonians, or of sending assistance to the Corcyræans against the Corinthians; whether, again, it be adviseable for Philip to form an alliance with the Thebans against the Phocians; or for Alexander to cross over into Asia. But with these partial deliberations no question is

found to intermingle itself like this: "Whether a war be justifiable against those, who have been guilty of no previous injustice?" or, "If a previous injustice were committed by the people, on whom the war is meditated, what is the actual amount of that injustice?"

Philosophers take a remote and comprehensive view of a proposition; and investigate, from a minute inspection of the naked circumstance itself, it's essential properties and character. But an anticipated decision upon every topic, and a settled persuasion by previous enquiry, so as to engage ourselves with efficiency and conviction in the transaction, and to give suitable advice to others, when the proper season has arrived, is abundantly preferable to the hesitation and precipitancy, which execute inadequately, from a seizure by surprise, an object not ascertained by prior knowledge. For common orators, when a subject of discussion is imposed, with no more insight, than other men, into the point before them, and with no prospective deliberation on it's specific properties, form their own judgements, and regulate the judgements of their auditors, by a coarser and superficial consideration of it's merit: but philosophers come furnished to the debate with a foresight of events and a decision on their

nature from settled principles; so that, if any city, or any nation, or any king, invite their consultations, they find themselves enabled to produce, not a purfunctory and temerarious opinion, but a determination at once luminous and solid: nor will their judgements on the same question prove different on different occasions, from the mutable operations of resentment, rivalries, and animosities, or the impressions of sordid lucre; like a scale, if I may borrow a similitude from one of those very orators, which uniformly wavers with the varying weight of the bribe, which is thrown into it.

Now in these reflections I mean no censure on rhetoric and it's legitimate and honourable professors; but a pointed disapprobation only of UNPRINCIPLED DECLAIMERS, and hypocritical pretenders to this art.