



A YOUNG MACEDONIAN in the Army of Alexander the Great: NEW Edition

Alfred J. Church, Ulysses McMillan

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ABOUT six months have passed since the events recorded in my last chapter. Charidemus had reported to Alexander so much of the young Theban's answer as it seemed to him expedient to communicate; and the king had been pleased to receive it very graciously. "I am glad," he said, "that you will have a friend in your campaigns. I should like to have such friendships all through my army. Two men watching over each other, helping each other, are worth more than double two who fight each for his own hand. You shall be a captain in the Guards. I can't give your friend the same rank. It would give great offence. My Macedonians would be terribly annoyed to see a young untried Greek put over them. He must make his way. I promise you that as soon as my men see that he is fit to lead, they will be perfectly willing to be led by him. Meanwhile let him join your company as a volunteer. He can thus be with you. And I will give orders that he shall draw the same pay and rations as you do. And now that is settled," the king went on, "I shall want you with me for a little time. Your friend shall go to Pella, and learn his drill, and make himself useful." This accordingly had been done. Charondas had spent the winter in Pella. In this place (which Alexander's father had made the capital of his kingdom) the army was gathering for the great expedition. A gayer or more bustling scene could not well be imagined, or, except the vast array which Xerxes had swept all Asia to bring against Greece a century and a half before, a stranger collection of specimens of humanity. Savage mountaineers from the Thracian Highlands, and fishermen from the primitive lake-villages of Paeonia, jostled in the streets with representatives of almost every city of Greece, the Lesser Greece which was the home of the race, and the Greater Greece which had spread its borders over the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, which had almost touched with its outposts the Caspian on the east and the Pillars of Hercules on the west. The prospect of a booty such as passed all the dreams of avarice, the hope of ransacking the treasures into which all Asia had poured its wealth for generations, had drawn adventurers from all points of the compass. The only difficulty that the recruiting officers had was in choosing. The king was determined that the strength of his army should be his own Macedonians. A sturdy race, untouched by the luxury which had corrupted the vigor of more civilized Greece, they supplied a material of the most solid value. Nor was it now the rough, untempered metal that it had been a generation before. Philip had wrought it by years of patient care into a most serviceable weapon, and it only remained for his son to give its final polish and to wield it. So complete was the organization left behind him by the great king, that such recruits as were needed to make up the necessary numbers of the army of Asia—and none but tried soldiers were recruited—easily fell into their proper places. The preparation of siege trains, of such machines as battering-rams and the like, of the artillery of the time, catapults, small and great, some used for throwing darts and some for hurling stones, was a more laborious business. The equipment of the army was far from complete. Every anvil in Macedonia was hard at work. Of provisions no great store was prepared. The king counted for supplying his needs in this direction in the country which he was about to overrun. The military chest was empty, or worse than empty; for Philip, who always preferred the spear of silver to the spear of steel, had left little but debt behind him. The personal baggage of the army was on the most moderate scale. Never was there a force which gave a better promise of being able to "march anywhere," and more amply fulfilled it. Charondas, as it may easily be imagined, did not find the time hang heavily on his hands.



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