A Young Macedonian in the Army of Alexander the Great

Alfred John Church

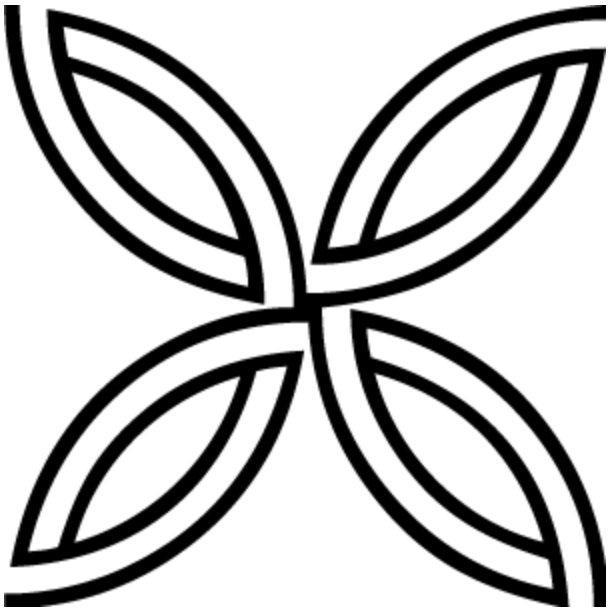
A Young Macedonian in the Army of Alexander the Great

A Young Macedonian in the Army of Alexander the Great
CHAPTER I A WRONG
CHAPTER II A REVENGE
CHAPTER III PREPARATION
CHAPTER IV AT TROY
CHAPTER V AT THE GRANĪCUS
CHAPTER VI HALICARNASSUS
CHAPTER VII MEMNON
CHAPTER VIII AT SEA
CHAPTER IX IN GREECE AGAIN
CHAPTER X AT ATHENS
CHAPTER XI A PERILOUS VOYAGE
CHAPTER XII ON THE WRONG SIDE
CHAPTER XIII DAMASCUS
CHAPTER XIV MANASSEH THE JEW
CHAPTER XV ANDROMACHÉ
CHAPTER XVI TO JERUSALEM
CHAPTER XVII TYRE
CHAPTER XVIII THE ESCAPE
CHAPTER XIX THE HIGH PRIEST
CHAPTER XX FROM TYRE TO THE TIGRIS
CHAPTER XXI ARBELA
CHAPTER XXII AT BABYLON
CHAPTER XXIII A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE
CHAPTER XXIV VENGEANCE
CHAPTER XXV DARIUS
CHAPTER XXVI INVALIDED
CHAPTER XXVII NEWS FROM THE EAST
CHAPTER XXVIII THE END
FOOTNOTES

Copyright

A Young Macedonian in the Army of Alexander the Great

Alfred John Church



CHAPTER I A WRONG

The “Boys’ Foot-race” at the great games of Olympia, celebrated now for the one hundred and eleventh time since the epoch of Corœbus, has just been run, and the victor is about to receive his crown of wild olive. The herald proclaims with a loud voice, “Charidemus, son of Callicles of Argos, come forward, and receive your prize!” A lad, who might have been thought to number seventeen or eighteen summers, so tall and well grown was he, but who had really only just completed his fifteenth year, stepped forward. His face was less regularly handsome than those of the very finest Greek type, for the nose was more arched, the chin more strongly marked, and the forehead more square, than a sculptor would have made them in moulding a boy Apollo; still the young Charidemus had a singularly winning appearance, especially now that a smile shone out of his frank blue eyes and parted lips, lips that were neither so full as to be sensual, nor so thin as to be cruel. The dark chestnut curls fell clustering about his neck, for the Greek boy was not cropped in the terrier fashion of his English successor, and the ruddy brown of his clear complexion showed a health nurtured by clean living and exercise. A hum of applause greeted the young athlete, for he had many friends among the young and old of Argos, and he was remarkable for the worth that—

“ appears with brighter shine
When lodged within a worthy shrine” [1]

— a charm which commends itself greatly to the multitude. As Charidemus approached the judges a lad stepped forward from the throng that surrounded the tribunal, and exclaimed, “I object.”

All eyes were turned upon the speaker. He was immediately recognized as the competitor who had won the second

place, a good runner, who might have hoped for victory in ordinary years, but who had had no chance against the extraordinary fleetness of the young Argive. He was of a well-set, sturdy figure; his face, without being at all handsome, was sufficiently pleasing, though just at the moment it had a look which might have meant either sullenness or shame.

“ Who is it that speaks?” said the presiding judge.

“ Charondas, son of Megasthenes, of Thebes,” was the answer.

“ And what is your objection?” asked the judge.

“ I object to Charidemus, alleged to be of Argos, because he is a barbarian.”

The sensation produced by these words was great, even startling. There could scarcely be a greater insult than to say to any one who claimed to be a Greek that he was a barbarian. Greeks, according to a creed that no one thought of questioning, were the born rulers and masters of the world, for whom everything had been made, and to whom everything belonged; barbarians were inferior creatures, without human rights, who might be permitted to exist if they were content to minister to the well-being of their masters, but otherwise were to be dealt with as so many noxious beasts.

An angry flush mounted to the young runner’s face. A fierce light flashed from his eyes, lately so smiling, and the red lips were set firmly together. He had now the look of one who could make himself feared as well as loved. His friends were loud in their expressions of wrath. With an emphatic gesture of his hand the judge commanded silence. “Justify your words,” he said to the Theban lad.

For a few moments Charondas stood silent. Then he turned to the crowd, as if looking for inspiration or help. A man of middle age stepped forward and addressed the judge.

“ Permit me, sir, on behalf of my son, whose youth and modesty hinder him from speaking freely in your august

presence, to make a statement of facts.”
“ Speak on,” said the judge, “but say nothing that you cannot prove. Such charges as that which we have just heard may not be lightly brought.”
“ I allege that Charidemus, said to be of Argos, is not in truth the son of Callicles, but is by birth a Macedonian.”
The word “Macedonian” produced almost as much sensation as had been made by the word “barbarian.” The Macedonians were more than suspected of compassing the overthrow of Greek liberties.
“ Where is your proof?” asked the judge.
“ There will be proof sufficient if your august tribunal will summon Callicles himself to appear before it and make confession of what he knows.”
The judge accordingly commanded that Callicles should be called. The summons was immediately obeyed. A man who was approaching old age, and whose stooping form and shrunken limbs certainly showed a striking contrast to the blooming vigour of Charidemus, stood before the judges. The president spoke.
“ I adjure you, by the name of Zeus of Olympia, that you tell the truth. Is Charidemus indeed your son?”
The man hesitated a moment. “I adopted Charidemus in his infancy.”
“ That proves your affection, but not his race,” said the judge in a stern voice. “Tell us the truth, and prevaricate no more.”
“ He was the son of my sister.”
“ And his father?”
“ His father was Caranus of Pella.”
“ A Macedonian, therefore.”
“ Yes, a Macedonian.”
“ Why then did you enter him as your son for the foot-race?”
“ Because I had adopted him with all due formalities, and in the eye of the law he is my son.”

“ But that did not make him a Greek of pure descent, such as by the immemorial custom of these games he is bound to be.”
A hum of approval went round the circle of spectators, whilst angry glances were cast at the Argive and his adopted son. Only the sanctity of the spot prevented a show of open violence, so hateful had the name of Macedonian become.
Callicles began to gather courage now that the secret was out. He addressed the judges again.
“ You forget, gentlemen, that in the time of the war with the Persians Alexander of Macedon was permitted to compete in the chariot-race.”
“ True,” replied the judge, “but then he showed an unbroken descent from the hero Achilles.”
“ Just so,” rejoined Callicles, “and Caranus was of the royal kindred.”
“ The blood may easily have become mixed during the hundred and forty years which have passed since the days of Alexander. Besides, that which may be accepted as a matter of notoriety in the case of a king must be duly proved when a private person is concerned. Have you such proof at hand in regard to this youth?”
Callicles was obliged to confess that he had not. The presiding judge then intimated that he would consider the matter with his colleagues, and give the decision of the court probably in less than an hour. As a matter of fact, the consultation was a mere formality. After a few minutes the judges reappeared, and the president announced their decision.
“ We pronounce Charidemus to be disqualified as having failed to prove that he is of Hellenic descent, and adjudge the prize to Charondas the Theban. We fine Callicles of Argos five minas [2] for having made a false representation.”

Loud applause greeted this judgment. Such was the feeling in force at that time that any affront that could be offered to a Macedonian was eagerly welcomed by a Greek audience. Very likely there were some in the crowd who had felt the touch of Philip's "silver spears." [3] If so, they were even louder than their fellows in their expressions of delight.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of dismay and rage which filled the heart of the young Charidemus as he walked away from the tribunal. As soon as he found himself alone he broke out into a violent expression of them. "A curse on these cowardly Greeks," he cried; "I am heartily glad that I am not one of them. By Zeus, if I could let out the half of my blood that comes from them I would. They dare not meet us in the field, and they revenge themselves for their defeats by insults such as these. By Ares, they shall pay me for it some day; especially that clumsy lout, who filches by craft what he could not win by speed."

If he had seen the way in which the young Theban received the prize that had been adjudged to him in this unsatisfactory way, he would have thought less hardly of him. Charondas had been driven into claiming the crown; but he hated himself for doing it. Gladly would he have refused to receive it; gladly, even—but such an act would have been regarded as an unpardonable impiety—would he have thrown the chaplet upon the ground. As it was, he was compelled to take and wear it, and, shortly afterwards, to sit out the banquet given by his father in his honour. But he was gloomy and dissatisfied, as little like as possible to a successful competitor for one of the most coveted distinctions in Greek life. As soon as he found himself at liberty he hastened to the quarters of Charidemus and his father, but found that they were gone. Perhaps it was as well that the two should not meet just then. It was not long before an occasion arose which brought them together.

CHAPTER II A REVENGE

Four years later Charidemus found the opportunity of revenge for which he had longed in the bitterness of his disappointment. It was the evening of the day which had seen the fall of Thebes. He had joined the army, and, though still full young to be an officer, had received the command of a company from Alexander, who had heard the story of his young kinsman, and had been greatly impressed by his extraordinary strength and agility. He had fought with conspicuous courage in the battle before the walls, and in the assault by which the town had been carried. When the savage sentence [4] which Alexander permitted his Greek allies to pass on the captured city, had been pronounced, the king called the young man to him. “Thebes,” he said, “is to be destroyed; but there is one house which I should be a barbarian indeed if I did not respect, that is the house of Pindar the poet. Take this order to Perdiccas. It directs him to supply you with a guard of ten men. I charge you with the duty of keeping the house of Pindar and all its inmates from harm.”

Charidemus saluted, and withdrew. He found no great difficulty in performing his duty. The exception made by the Macedonian king to the general order of destruction was commonly known throughout the army, and the most lawless plunderer in it knew that it would be as much as his life was worth not to respect the king’s command. Accordingly the flag, which, with the word “Sacred” upon it, floated on the roof of the house, was sufficient protection, and the guard had nothing to do.

The young officer’s first care had been to ascertain who were the inmates of the house that were to have the benefit of the conqueror’s exemption. He found that they were an old man, two women of middle age who were his

daughters, and a bright little boy of some six years, the child of another daughter now deceased. He assured them of their safety, and was a little surprised to find that even after two or three days had passed in absolute security, no one attempting to enter the house, the women continued to show lively signs of apprehension. Every sound seemed to make them start and tremble; and their terror seemed to come from some nearer cause than the thought of the dreadful fate which had overtaken their country.

On the fifth day the secret came out. For some reason or other Charidemus was unusually wakeful during the night. The weather was hot, more than commonly so for the time of year, for it was now about the middle of September, and, being unable to sleep, he felt that a stroll in the garden would be a pleasant way of beguiling the time. It wanted still two hours of sunrise, and the moon, which was some days past the full, had only just risen. He sat down on a bench which had been conveniently placed under a drooping plane, and began to meditate on the future, a prospect full of interest, since it was well known that the young king was preparing for war against Persia. His thoughts had begun to grow indistinct and unconnected, for the sleep which had seemed impossible in the heated bed-chamber began to steal over him in the cool of the garden, when he was suddenly roused by the sound of a footstep. Himself unseen, for he was entirely sheltered from view by the boughs of the plane-tree, he commanded a full view of the garden. It was not a little to his surprise that in a figure which moved silently and swiftly down one of the side paths he recognized the elder of the two daughters of the house. She had with her, he could perceive, an elderly woman, belonging to the small establishment of slaves, who carried a basket on her arm. The lower end of the garden was bounded by a wall; beyond this wall the ground rose abruptly, forming indeed part of one of the lower slopes of the Acropolis. It puzzled

him entirely when he tried to conjecture whither the women were going. That they should have left the house at such an hour was a little strange, and there was, he knew, no outlet at that end of the garden; for, having, as may be supposed, plenty of time on his hands, he had thoroughly explored the whole place. Watching the two women as far as the dim light permitted, he lost sight of them when they reached the laurel hedge which served as an ornamental shelter for the wall. His instincts as a gentleman forbade him to follow them; nor did he consider it part of his military duty to do so. Nevertheless, he could not help feeling a strong curiosity when about an hour afterwards the two women returned. With the quick eye of a born soldier, he observed that the basket which the attendant carried swung lightly on her arm. It was evident that it had been brought there full, and was being carried back empty. He watched the two women into the house, and then proceeded to investigate the mystery. At first sight it seemed insoluble. Everything looked absolutely undisturbed. That the women could have clambered over the wall was manifestly impossible. Yet where could they have been? If, as he supposed, the basket had been emptied between their going and their returning, what had been done with its contents? They were certainly not above ground, and they had not been buried—in itself an unlikely idea—for the soil was undisturbed. He had walked up and down the length of the wall some half-dozen times, when he happened to stumble over the stump of an old laurel tree which was hidden in the long grass. In the effort to save himself from falling he struck his hand against the brick wall with some smartness, and fancied that a somewhat hollow sound was returned. An idea struck him, and he wondered that it had not occurred to him before. Might there not be some hidden exit in the wall? There was too little light for him to see anything of the kind, but touch might reveal what the sight could not discover. He felt the

surface carefully, and after about half-an-hour's diligent search, his patience was rewarded by finding a slight indentation which ran perpendicularly from about a foot off the top to the same distance from the bottom. Two similar horizontal indentations were more easily discovered. There was, it was evident, a door in the wall, but it had been skilfully concealed by a thin layer of brickwork, so that to the eye, and even to the touch, unless very carefully used, it suggested no difference from the rest of the surface. This discovery made, another soon followed, though it was due more to accident than to any other cause. The door opened with a spring, the place of which was marked by a slight hollow in the surface. Charidemus stumbled, so to speak, upon it, and the door opened to his touch. It led into an underground passage about five or six yards long, and this passage ended in a chamber which was closed by a door of the ordinary kind. Opening this, the young soldier found himself in a room that was about ten feet square. In the dim light of a lamp that hung from the vaulted ceiling, he could see a couch occupied by the figure of a sleeper, a table on which stood a pitcher and some provisions, a chair, and some apparatus for washing. So deep were the slumbers of the occupant of the room that the entrance of the stranger did not rouse him from them, and it was only when Charidemus laid his hand upon his shoulder that he woke. His first impulse was to stretch out his hand for the sword which lay under his pillow; but the young Macedonian had been beforehand with him. Unarmed himself, for he had not dreamt of any adventure when his sleeplessness drove him into the garden, he had promptly possessed himself of the weapon, and was consequently master of the situation.

The next moment the two men recognized each other. The occupant of this mysterious chamber was Charondas, the Theban, and Charidemus saw the lad who had, as he

thought, filched away his prize, lying unarmed and helpless before him.

The young Theban struggled into a sitting posture. Charidemus saw at once that his left arm was disabled. His face, too, was pale and bloodless, his eyes dim and sunken, and his whole appearance suggestive of weakness and depression.

“ What are you doing here?” he asked, though the question was needless; it was clear that the young man had taken part in the recent fighting, and was now in hiding.

“ I scarcely know; but I suppose life is sweet even to one who has lost everything; and I am too young,” he added with a faint smile, “to relish the idea of Charon and his ferry-boat.”

“ Are you of the lineage of Pindar?”

“ I cannot claim that honour. The husband of old Eurytion’s sister, and father of the little Creon, whom you have seen doubtless, was my kinsman; but I am not related to the house of Pindar by blood. No; I have no more claim to the clemency of Alexander than the rest of my countrymen.”

The young Macedonian stood lost in thought. He had often imagined the meeting that would take place some day, he was sure, between Charondas and himself. But he had never dreamt of it under such circumstances as these. He was to encounter him on the battle-field and vanquish him, perhaps overtake him in the pursuit, and then, perhaps, spare his life, perhaps kill him—he had never been quite able to make up his mind which it should be. But now killing him was out of the question; the man could not defend himself. And yet to give him up to death or slavery—how inexpressibly mean it seemed to him!

“ I have no right,” said the young Theban, “to ask a favour of you. I wronged you once——”

“ Stop,” interrupted Charidemus, “how came you to think of doing such a thing? It was shameful to win the prize in such a way.”

“ It is true,” said the other; “but it was not of my own will that I came forward to object. Another urged me to it, and he is dead. You know that our cities give a handsome reward in money to those who win these prizes at the games; and we were very poor. But I could have trampled the crown in the dust, so hateful was it to win by craft what you had won by speed.”

“ Well, well,” said Charidemus, who now had greater prizes than Olympia could give before his eyes, “it was no such great matter after all;” and he held out his hand to the wounded lad.

“ Ah!” said the other, “I have no right to ask you favours. Yet one thing I may venture on. Kill me here. I could not bear to be a slave. Those poor women, who have risked their lives to save me, will be sorry when they hear of it, and little Creon will cry; but a child’s tears are soon dried. But a slave—that would be too dreadful. I remember a poor Phocian my father had—sold to him after the taking of Crissa, of which, I suppose, you have heard—as well bred a man as any of us, and better educated, for we Thebans, in spite of our Pindar, are not very clever. What a life he led! I would die a hundred times over sooner than bear it for a day! No, kill me, I beseech you. So may the gods above and below be good to you when your need comes! Have you ever killed a man?” he went on. “Hardly, I suppose, in cold blood. Well, then, I will show you where to strike.” And he pointed to a place on his breast, from which, at the same time, he withdrew his tunic. “My old trainer,” he went on, “taught me that. Or, if you would sooner have it so, give me the sword, and I dare say that I can make shift to deal as straight a blow as will suffice.”

The young Macedonian’s heart was fairly touched. “Nay,” he said, after a brief time given to thought, “I know something that will be better than that. If it fail, I will do what you will. Meanwhile here is your sword; but swear by Zeus and Dionysus, who is, I think, your special god at

Thebes, that you will not lift it against yourself, till I give you leave. And now, for three or four hours, farewell.”
That morning, as Alexander was sitting with his intimate friend Hephaestion, at a frugal meal of barley cakes and fruit, washed down with wine that had been diluted, sweetened, and warmed, the guard who kept the door of the chamber, a huge Illyrian, who must have measured nearly seven feet in height, announced that a young man, who gave the name of Charidemus, craved a few minutes’ speech with the king.
A more splendid specimen of humanity than the Macedonian monarch has seldom, perhaps never, been seen. In stature he did not much surpass the middle height, but his limbs were admirably proportioned, the very ideal of manly strength and beauty. His face, with well-cut features and brilliantly clear complexion, showed such a model as a sculptor would choose for hero or demigod. In fact, he seemed a very Achilles, born again in the later days, the handsomest of men, [5] the strongest, the swiftest of foot.
“ Ah!” said the king, “that is our young friend to whom I gave the charge of Pindar’s house. I hope no harm has happened to it or him. To tell you the truth, this Theban affair has been a bad business. I would give a thousand talents that it had not happened. Show him in,” he cried out, turning to the Illyrian.
“ Hail, sire,” said Charidemus, saluting.
“ Is all well?”
“ All is well, sire. No one has offered to harm the house or its inmates. But, if you will please to hear me, I have a favour to ask.”
“ What is it? Speak on.”
“ I beg the life of a friend.”
“ The life of a friend! What friend of yours can be in danger of his life?”

Alexander the Great.

Charidemus told his story. Alexander listened with attention, and certainly without displeasure. He had already, as has been seen, begun to feel some repentance and even shame for the fate of Thebes, and he was not sorry to show clemency in a particular case.

“ What,” he cried, when he heard the name of the lad for whom Charidemus was making intercession. “What? was it not Charondas of Thebes who filched from you the crown at Olympia? And you have forgiven him? What did the wise Aristotle,” he went on, turning to Hephaestion, “say about forgiveness?”

“ Sire,” said Hephaestion, “you doubtless know better than I. You profited by his teaching far more than I—so the philosopher has told me a thousand times.”

“ Well,” rejoined the king, “as far as I remember, he always seemed a little doubtful. To forgive showed, he thought, a certain weakness of will; yet it might be profitable, for it was an exercise of self-restraint. Was it not so, my friend?”

“ Just so,” said Hephaestion. “And did not the wise man say that if one were ever in doubt which to choose of two things, one should take the less pleasant. I don’t know that I have ever had any experiences of forgiveness, but I certainly know the pleasure of revenge.”
“ Admirably said,” cried the king. “Your request is granted,” he went on, speaking to Charidemus. “But what will you do with your friend?”
“ He shall follow you, sire, when you go to conquer the great enemy of Hellas.”
“ So be it. Mind that I never repent this day’s clemency. And now farewell!”
The young man again saluted, and withdrew.
But when he unfolded his plan to the Theban, he found an obstacle which he might indeed have foreseen, but on which, nevertheless, he had not reckoned. Charondas was profoundly grateful to his deliverer, and deeply touched by his generosity. But to follow the man who had laid his country in the dust—that seemed impossible.
“ What!” he cried, “take service with the son of Philip, the hereditary enemy of Hellas!”
“ Listen!” said Charidemus; “there is but one hereditary perpetual enemy of Hellas, and that is the Persian. Since the days of Darius, the Great King has never ceased to scheme against her liberty. Do you know the story of the wrongs that these Persians, the most insolent and cruel of barbarians, have done to the children of Hellas?”
“ Something of it,” replied Charondas; “but in Thebes we are not great readers; and besides, that is a part of history which we commonly pass over.”
“ Well, it is a story of nearly two hundred years of wrong. Since Salamis and Platæa, indeed, the claws of the Persian have been clipped; but before that—it makes my blood boil to think of the things that they did to free-born men. You know they passed through Macedonia, and left it a wilderness. There are traditions in my family of their

misdeeds and cruelties which make me fairly grind my teeth with rage. And then the way in which they treated the islands! Swept them as men sweep fish out of a pond! Their soldiers would join hand to hand, and drag the place, as if they were dragging with a net."

" They suffered for it afterwards," said Charondas.

" Yes, they suffered for it, but not in their own country. Twice they have invaded Hellas itself; and they hold in slavery some of the sons of Hellas to this day. But they have never had any proper punishment."

" But what do you think would be proper punishment?" asked the Theban.

" That Hellas should conquer Persia, as Persia dreamt of conquering Hellas."

" But the work is too vast."

" Not so. Did you never hear how ten thousand men marched from the Ægean to the Euxine without meeting an enemy who could stand against them? And these were mere mercenaries, who thought of nothing but their pay. Yes, Persia ought to have been conquered long ago, if your cities had only been united; but you were too busy quarrelling—first Sparta against Athens, and then Thebes against Sparta, and Corinth and Argos and the rest of them backing first one side, and then the other."

" It is too true."

" And then, when there seemed to be a chance of something being done, luck came in and helped the Persians. Alexander of Pheræ had laid his plans for a great expedition against the King, and just at the moment when they were complete, the dagger of an assassin—hired, some said, with Persian gold—struck him down. Then Philip took up the scheme, and worked it out with infinite patience and skill; and lo! the knife again! Well, 'all these things lie upon the knees of the gods.' Alexander of Pheræ was certainly not strong enough for the work, nor, perhaps, Philip himself. And besides, Philip had spent the best years of life

in preparing for it, and was scarcely young enough. But now the time has come and the man. You must see our glorious Alexander, best of soldiers, best of generals. Before a year is over, he will be well on his way to the Persians' capital. Come with me, and help him to do the work for which Hellas has been waiting so long. Your true country is not here, among these petty states worn out with incessant strifes, but in the new empire which this darling of the gods will establish in the East."

" Well," said the Theban, with a melancholy smile, "anyhow my country is not any longer here. And what you tell me seems true enough. To you, my friend, I can refuse nothing. The life which you have saved is yours. I will follow you wherever you go, and, perhaps, some day you will teach me to love even this Alexander. At present, you must allow, I have scarcely cause."

Thus began a friendship which was only to be dissolved by death.

CHAPTER III PREPARATION

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. [6] 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 Pæonia, 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 treasuries 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 vigour 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. His drill was easily learnt; he had served in the Theban infantry, the best in the world till it was dispossessed of its pride of place by the admirable force created by the military genius of Philip. But after this there was no lack of employment. Being a clever young fellow, who quite belied the common character of his countrymen for stupidity, and as modest as he was clever, he soon became a great favourite, and found himself set to any employment that required a little more tact and management than usual. When business permitted, there was always amusement in plenty. The lakes and marshes round Pella swarmed with wild geese and swans; and there were woods which might always be reckoned upon as holding a wild boar, and in which a bear might sometimes be found.

Such had been the employment of the last six months.

When I take up again the thread of my story the two friends had met at Sestos, [7] from which place the army was preparing to cross into the Troad. They had much to tell each other. Charidemus, who had joined the army only the night before, was anxious to learn many military details which Charondas had had the opportunity of acquainting himself with. His own story was interesting, for he had been with Alexander and had also had a mission of his own, and had some notable experiences to relate. This is an outline of his narrative:

“ After we parted, I went with the king to Megara. Hephaestion was urgent with him to go to Athens; but he refused. He would give no reasons; in fact, I never saw him so abrupt and positive; but I think that I know the cause. It is certain that there would have been trouble, if he had gone. The Athenians are the freest-spoken people in the world, and the king felt, I am sure, that it would be more than he could do to command himself, if he should hear himself, and still more hear his father, insulted. And

besides, he had something very unpleasant to say, the sort of thing which any one would sooner say by another man's mouth than by his own. He was going to demand that the ten men who had been his worst enemies among the statesmen and soldiers of Athens should be given up to him. I was at table with him when the envoys from the city came back with their answer. He had them brought into the room where we were. No one could have been more polite than was the king. 'Be seated, gentlemen,' he said; and he ordered the pages to carry round cups of wine. Then he poured a libation from his own goblet. 'To Athené,' he cried, 'Athené the Counsellor, Athené the Champion,' and took a deep draught at each title. The envoys stood up, and followed his example. 'And now, gentlemen, to business,' he went on. 'You have brought the prisoners, of course. I mean no harm to them; but I don't care to have them plotting against me while I am away.' 'My lord,' said the chief of the embassy—and I could see him tremble as he spoke, though his bearing was brave enough—'my lord, the Athenian people, having met in a lawful assembly, and duly deliberated on this matter, has resolved that it cannot consent to your demand. The ten citizens whom you named in your letter have not been convicted of any crime; and it would not be lawful to arrest them.' I saw the king's face flush when he heard this answer; and he half started up from his seat. But he mastered himself by a great effort. 'Is that so?' he said in a low voice; 'then I shall have to come and take them. You hear that, gentlemen? Tell those who sent you what they must look for.' And he took up the talk with us just at the point at which it had been broken off when the envoys were announced. But he was not as calm as he looked. One of his pages told me that he did not lie down to sleep till it wanted only two hours of dawn. All night the lad heard the king pacing up and down in his chamber. The wall of partition was very thin, and he could not help hearing much that he said. 'A set of scribblers and

word-splitters, to dare to set themselves up against me! I'll fetch the villains, if I have to go for them myself; and if I go, it will be the worse for all of them!' Then his mood changed. 'I can't have another business like the last! Thebes was bad enough, but Athens—no it is impossible. Even the Spartans would not put out the "eye of Greece"; [8] and I must not be more brutal than a Spartan. And then to make another enemy among the Immortals! It is not to be thought of. The wrath of Bacchus is bad enough; and I have sinned against him beyond all pardon. But the wrath of Athené!—that would be a curse indeed; for it would be the ruin both of valour and counsel.' So he went on talking to himself till the best part of the night was spent. Well, two days afterwards there came another embassy from Athens. This time they had a man of sense with them, one who knew how to make the best of things, and who, besides, was a special favourite of the king. This was Phocion, who, as I daresay you know, had the sense to accept the inevitable, and counselled peace with us, when the so-called patriots were raving for war. The king was as gracious as possible to him. 'Ah! my dear friend,' he cried, as soon as he saw him, 'I am indeed glad to see you. Now I know that I have an intelligent person to deal with, and I am quite sure that we shall have no difficulty in settling matters on a satisfactory footing. Well, what have you got to tell me? What proposition do you make? You may be sure that I will accept anything in reason.' 'Sir,' said Phocion—a singularly venerable-looking man, by the way—'the Athenians beg you not to take it ill if they are unwilling to break their laws even to win your favour; at the same time they are ready to do anything to satisfy you!' 'Ah! I see,' said the king; 'anything but what I want. But hearken: I have thought the matter over, and have come to this conclusion: I won't ask your people to give anybody up. It is a thing that has an evil look; and, upon my word, I think the better of them for refusing. At the same time, I can't have