

OUR LITTLE
MACEDONIAN
COUSIN OF LONG AGO



JULIA DARROW COWLES

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by

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PREFACE

THE author of “Our Little Macedonian Cousin of Long Ago,” has not attempted to write history in her story. She has sought, rather, to sketch a background of Macedonian lights and shadows, trusting that, when the readers of the story begin their study of the lives of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, the details of literal history may—against this background—stand out with greater reality.

The typical life of a Macedonian boy attached to the court of Philip is portrayed, however, in true accord with the spirit and trend of Macedonian history.

PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

A-chil'les (a-kil'lēz)

A-da

Ae-ge'an

Aes'chi-nes

Al-ex-an'der

A-myn'tas

An-tip'a-ter

A-pel'lēs

A-re'tis

Ar-is-tot'le (tot'l)

A-the'ni-ans

At'ta-lus

Bu-ceph'a-lus

Cha'ri-tas

Co-rin'thi-ans

Di'a-des

Greeks

Har-pa'lus

Her-mes'

Il'i-ad

Lao'di-ce

Le-on'i-das

Lu'di-as

Ly-sim'a-chus

Ly-sip'pus

Mac'e-don

Mac'e-do'ni-a

Med'i-ter-ra'ne-an

Mez'za

Ne-ar'chus

O'drys

O-dys-sey

O-lyn'thi-a

O-lyn'thus

O-lym'pi-a

O-lym'pic

O-lym'pus

Par-me'ni-on

Pe'leus or pee'lūs

Pel'la

Phil'ip

Phi-lol'tas

Phoe'nix (fee'niks)

Pin'dar

Ptol-e-my (tol'eme)

Spar'tan

Sta-gei'ra

Thes'sa-ly

CHAPTER I
LEAVING HOME

“**A**RT ready, lad?”

“Yes, father.”

“’Tis time we were on our way.”

The young boy addressed turned to his mother and kissed her once more. Then, saying a last farewell to his younger brother and sister, he mounted the horse which stood beside that of his father. Together they rode down the path that led from their home, close to the foothills which surrounded the plain of Macedonia.

If the mother found it hard to see her older son leaving home she showed no sign, but waved a last good-by as he turned at the bend of the path that shut him away from her sight.

Every Macedonian mother of the higher classes looked forward to the time when her son should go to the court of King Philip, at Pella, and there serve as a Page, while being educated for a life of devotion to his country. So the natural sorrow of parting was softened by the honor and advancement awaiting the boy.

“And will I go, too, in a few years?” asked Diades, the younger boy, as they turned back into the house.

“Yes,” replied his mother, “you will go, too, when you are as old as Nearchus. Your father is a Companion of the King, you know, and the sons of all the Companions are educated at court.”

“When I am as old as Nearchus,” repeated Diades. “That will be in three years. Oh, what a long time!”

“Does it seem long?” smiled his mother. “It does not seem long to me,” and she drew the little fellow to her in a quick embrace.

“I will stay,” cried Ada, running to share the embrace.

“Yes, you will stay and be my companion,” said her mother, kissing the rosy, upturned face.

In the meantime Nearchus and his father rode rapidly on. Parmenion looked forward with pride and joy to the moment when he should present his son to the King, Philip of Macedon, and say, “My lord, this is Nearchus, my son. May he serve you well.”

Parmenion was proud of his boy, as he had a right to be, for Nearchus was well built, rugged, yet lithe of limb, and with regular features and a clear skin. His life had been free and wild. He had played, as all boys play, at games and sports of various sorts which had developed his muscles and tested his endurance. He had hunted

the small animals of the foothills near his home and had bathed in the cold waters of the river.

Of lessons he had had none. Schools were unknown in Macedonia, and except in rare instances the boys who came to the court of the King had had little or nothing of what could be termed an education.

Nearchus' speech was the Macedonian dialect spoken by the common people. His father, Parmenion, spoke Greek, which he had learned at the court of Philip, and Nearchus had picked up a few Greek words. But Parmenion was seldom at home, so he had learned but little from him.

As Nearchus rode on by his father's side, his mind was in a tumult. At last the day had come: the day he had looked forward to ever since he could remember, when he should be taken to court! It seemed strange — yes, and a little hard, too — that he was never to return to his old life of the hills and the plain, for he loved the freedom of it; but a look ahead made him forget all that. He would be a Page of the King. He would wait upon the King, serve him, and be taught the ways of the King's court.

He looked up at his father, and in mind he contrasted him with the rude men of the hill country beyond his home. He was proud of his father; of his manly bearing,

his erect carriage, his softly flowing speech, but most of all, of his courage and loyalty to the King.

Then a sudden shyness came over the boy, as he thought of the new companions he was to meet. "I wonder if they will laugh at my rough dialect," he questioned. Then he remembered that they, too, must have spoken the same before they served the King. "And perhaps there will be others just learning," he added to himself, by way of encouragement.

Presently his father turned to him. "You will have many companions at Pella," he said, "and you will not be the elder brother there. You must learn to give and take with the others; be quick and ready in your service to the King; and study your lessons faithfully. Be generous, be true, and be brave, just as you have been at home. Then you will have friends among the boys, and I shall have cause to be proud of you."

"Do you know any of the boys at the court?" asked Nearchus after a pause.

"Not well," replied Parmenion. "But Alexander, the son of Philip, must be close to your age. I trust that you and he may be friends."

Nearchus' cheeks flushed. His father had spoken to him of Alexander before; of the boy's singular beauty, his soldierly bearing, and of his frank and generous nature.

Nearchus had thought much about him, for as son of the King he was already a hero in his eyes. In truth, he had dreamed of him more than once, as the time drew near for his own entrance to the court. But never had he dared to think of Alexander as his friend!

When Parmenion looked at Nearchus again there was a deeper flush on the boy's cheeks and a new sparkle in his eyes.

"See," said Parmenion, pointing ahead, as they made a turn in the road, and Nearchus, glancing quickly up, saw at a distance the stone walls which surrounded the city of Pella.

A few moments more and they had entered the gates, and Nearchus looked eagerly about him.

The city was built upon the shore of a sparkling lake, Lake Ludias; and the houses were dotted here and there with little order or regularity, for the streets were little more than winding paths.

Ahead of them rose the great walls of the King's palace, and Nearchus' breath came quickly as he looked at those formidable walls and wondered what the life within them would be.

CHAPTER II

NEARCHUS BECOMES A PAGE

As they drew near to the outer gates of the palace, they met a group of boys accompanied by an older man.

“They are doubtless going to the school or the gymnasium,” said Parmenion, and he exchanged a word of greeting with the man. “That is Leonidas,” he added. “He is a relative of Queen Olympia, and has charge of Alexander’s education.”

“Is Alexander among them?” asked Nearchus eagerly.

“No,” replied Parmenion, “I do not see him.”

Nearchus scanned eagerly the faces of the boys who passed him, and they in turn looked curiously at him.

“A new Page,” he heard one of them say. “I wonder what he will be like.”

As they were about to enter the gates, they were halted by a soldier. At the same moment, they heard the music of a flute, and a company of the Companions rode forth on prancing horses, followed by a band of foot soldiers.

“Is there a war?” questioned Nearchus of his father.

“No,” replied Parmenion with a smile. “They are only

drilling. You will grow accustomed to such sights in Pella. Philip drills his men like a Spartan,—but fortunately he does not feed them upon the Spartan black broth.”

When the company had passed, Parmenion and Nearchus entered the gate. The size of the castle and the strength of its walls struck Nearchus with amazement. The courtyard seemed filled with boys, horses, men—all darting, prancing, hallooing. Nearchus' blood went tingling through his veins. “There will be plenty of excitement in life at court,” was his thought.

A moment later, he was following his father through the great doors of the palace. For a few moments, he was left alone, and he spent the time in looking about him, and noting the splendor by which he was surrounded.

His own home, near the foothills, was comfortable, but simple in all its appointments. It had seemed to him quite luxurious, however, in contrast to the homes of the people of the hill tribes beyond them. But of such magnificence as he now beheld, he had never dreamed.

The walls about were hung with tapestries of rich, even gorgeous colorings, and they were heavy with the glittering threads of their embroideries. On the floors were soft rugs into which his feet sank as he stepped, and he half drew back, wondering that such beauty should be placed beneath men's feet.



“FOR A FEW MOMENTS HE WAS LEFT ALONE.”

On the walls about him hung armor of wonderful workmanship. There were helmets with waving plumes, shields of brass, curiously and richly embossed, and bows so large and heavy it seemed to Nearchus that only a giant could draw them.

Every object upon which he looked was in striking contrast to the simplicity of the Macedonian homes that he had seen. Then he remembered to have heard his father say that Philip had spent many years of his life in Thebes, a city of Greece, and that he had adopted many of the Greek customs, as well as the Greek manner of living.

“I am to learn to speak Greek,” thought Nearchus, “and to live like a Greek, it seems. But, all the same...” and he drew himself up to his full height, “I am a Macedonian!”

“Of what are you thinking?” asked a frank, half-amused voice at his side. Nearchus turned. A young boy of about his own age stood before him, and as Nearchus looked upon him, he thought him the most beautiful, the most attractive youth he ever had seen.

With a frankness quite equal to that of his questioner, Nearchus replied, “I was thinking of the new life I am to begin at court. It seems to me that it must be more Greek than Macedonian; and I am a Macedonian!”

The soft eyes of his companion sparkled, and he thrust out his hand. “I, too, am a Macedonian,” said he, as he

grasped Nearchus' hand in a cordial clasp, "but you know we Macedonians are also Greeks."

"We are Greeks?" questioned Nearchus, looking puzzled.

"Yes, indeed we are, of the same race, the same stock. I will prove it to you some day, but now I must hurry on. I am late at the gymnasium already, and Leonidas is very strict." He made a wry face; then, with a laugh and a friendly nod, he was gone.

"Well," exclaimed Parmenion,—and Nearchus turned at sound of his father's voice,—"you have made the acquaintance of Alexander early!"

"Alexander!" exclaimed Nearchus. "Was that Alexander? I did not know!" Then he added, "But I might have known no other boy could have such beautiful features and so noble a bearing."

As he followed his father through what seemed endless halls and chambers, he kept repeating under his breath, "Alexander! Alexander! And he was the first person in Pella to greet me!"

Nearchus had been so amazed by his meeting with the young prince that he had given no thought to the ordeal of being presented to the King. But in spite of the luxury and grandeur of the castle and its furnishings, Philip cared comparatively little, when among his own

intimates, about ceremonials and forms. He was on good terms with his Companions, and the presentation of their sons as Pages was not a very trying ordeal after all.

On the afternoon of the same day, Nearchus found himself, with other boys, ushered into the King's presence. The room was even more magnificent than those which Nearchus had previously seen, and Philip sat upon his throne in his kingly robes.

The father of each boy made a speech, and introduced his son by name to the King. Some of the speeches were rather long and filled with praises of the King. But Parmenion, who chanced to be last, contented himself by saying, "This, oh, King, is my elder son, Nearchus. May he be a loyal subject, and serve you well."

Then the King addressed the boys briefly, ending by charging them to remember that in serving him they served all Macedonia.

Soon after this, they were dismissed, going to the quarters assigned the youths, where they were instructed in their duties by the master of the Pages.

And so, with little ceremony, but with great earnestness of purpose, Nearchus became a Page of King Philip of Macedon.

CHAPTER III

NEW FRIENDS

THE quarters assigned the Pages had none of the luxury of the palace, but to the boys recently come from a simpler home life, they seemed more familiar than the gorgeous furnishings of the court. But they were soon to grow accustomed to the sight of luxury through their daily attendance upon the King.

Antipater, the master of the Pages, gave the boys a brief outline of their new duties. They were, in their turn, to guard at night the door of the King's apartment; they were to take his horse from the groom and to bring it to the King; when the King hunted, some of them would be chosen to accompany him; and when he went into battle, a chosen number would go with him to form his body-guard.

“For these and similar services you will be trained and drilled,” said Antipater. “In time we shall look to you for the generals and officers of the Macedonian army, for that is the final object of your training. In the meantime

you will have studies to master, military tactics to learn, gymnasium exercises to practice.”

After giving the boys some sound advice as to their conduct and general deportment, Antipater dismissed them.

As the boys left the classroom, Nearchus and another of the group, named Aretis, felt their arms grasped in friendly fashion by Lysippus, an attractive youth but little older than themselves. “Come,” said he, “let us take a walk together and I will show you about. Antipater says the same things to every new group of Pages,” he continued laughingly, “and scares us—at least he does most of us. But it really is not as hard as it all sounds. We manage to have a great deal of fun, and life at court is full of change and excitement.

“There are some things, though, that Antipater fails to tell, but which are good things to know,” Lysippus continued, his eyes sparkling with mischief. “For instance, Lysimachus, who is one of Alexander’s teachers—and ours as well—can be managed very nicely if one just calls him Phoenix now and then.”

“Why is that?” asked Nearchus, entering heartily into Lysippus’ mood, and feeling truly thankful to be chosen for his confidences.

“Oh, Phoenix is one of the characters of the Iliad, as

you will find when you begin the study of Greek, and Lysimachus imagines that he resembles him, because he is Alexander's tutor. Lysimachus calls Alexander, Achilles, and Philip, Peleus. The Iliad is his hobby, so, if you like Greek, you can get on with him very well.

"Leonidas, however, is different. He is strict as a Spartan, and not easily fooled. Why, he even goes through Alexander's chests to make sure that Queen Olympia—Alexander's mother, you know—has not given him luxuries of any sort. Leonidas is a relative of Queen Olympia, and so he thinks himself a privileged character. He has general charge of Alexander and the rest of us. One has to be pretty sharp to steal a march on him.

"There are other teachers, but you will learn to know them in class. They are not so important."

"What studies do you have besides Greek?" asked Aretis.

"History, music, and drawing," replied Lysippus.

"Drawing!" exclaimed Aretis, with shining eyes. "Oh, but I am glad! I would rather learn to draw and to paint than to do anything else I know of."

Lysippus' eyes were shining too, as he held out his hand to Aretis. "Here is my hand on that!" he exclaimed. "Only I want to be a sculptor, rather than a painter."

The two boys clasped hands warmly. "I hardly dare

to say among the boys that I would rather chisel than fight," Lysippus continued, "for they all are eager to lead soldiers into battle, and I would not want them to think me a coward. But I was named for the great sculptor, Lysippus, and I trust that I may not prove altogether unworthy of the name."

"I can understand," said Aretis earnestly, "for I, too, love art. Yet probably most of the boys would not."

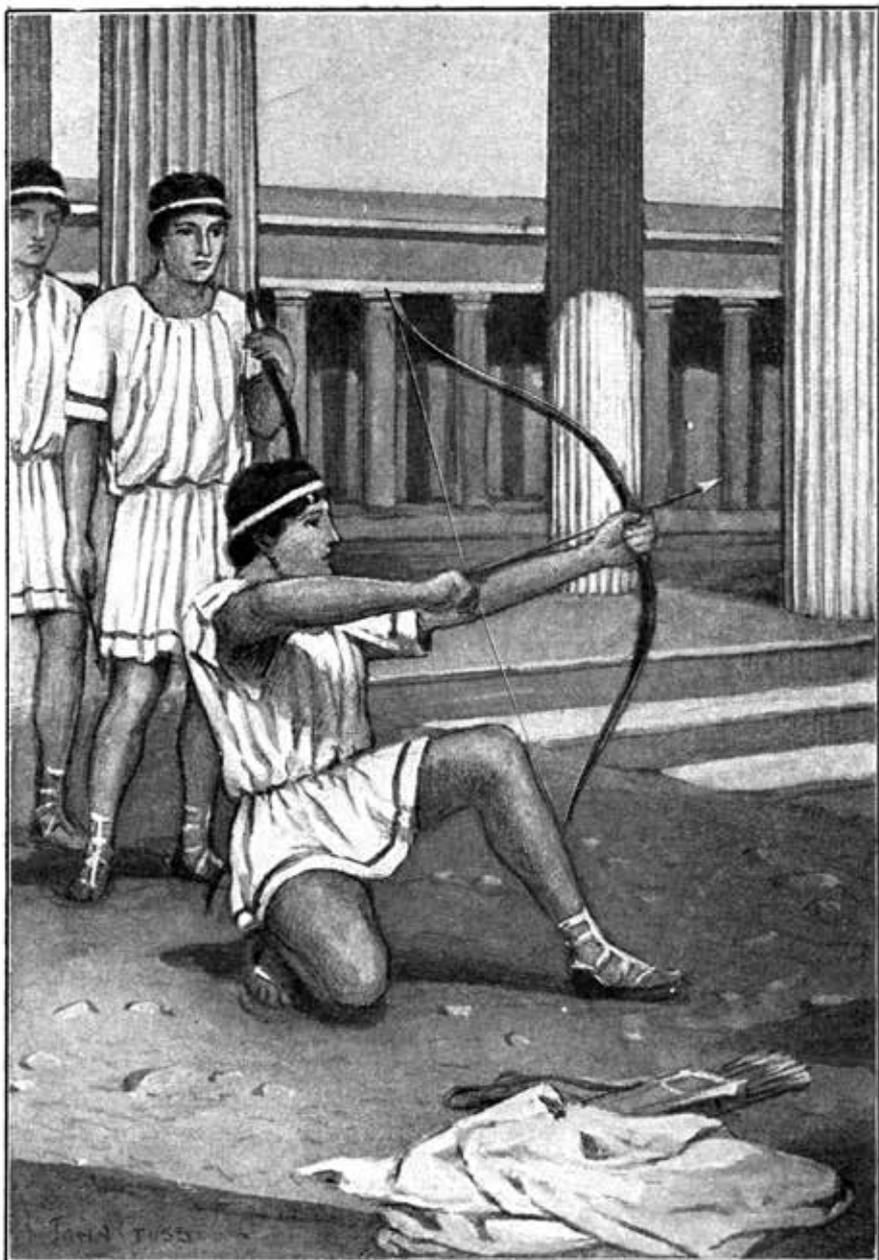
Nearchus had listened to this conversation with interest. He knew little about art. His father was his ideal, and the life of the soldier and the officer was the only life of which he had been taught.

"But I think that Alexander understands," Lysippus continued, "for though he is every inch a soldier himself, he admires both poets and artists."

The boys soon after separated, but between Lysippus and Aretis a lasting bond had been formed.

The days that followed were busy days for the new Pages of Philip's court. It seemed to Nearchus that he had entered a new world, so entirely was his life changed.

For a part of each day he was to be seen darting here and there about the court, carrying messages for one or another of the Companions and officers. Certain hours of the day were devoted to lessons, others to gymnastic



“CERTAIN HOURS OF THE DAY WERE DEVOTED
TO... GYMNASTIC AND MILITARY DRILL.”

and military drill, and between these busy hours there were times when he was left to his own devices.

He had learned quickly the plans of the palace and its outer courts, as well as the names of the prominent men who came and went, and he was soon known as one of the most alert and willing messengers of the court.

He readily became acquainted with those who, like himself, had just entered the King's service, and among these Aretis was one of his favorites. The older boys were as a rule inclined to hold aloof, and some of them thought it fun to tease the new arrivals. Lysippus, however, was always friendly.

"Come," said Aretis to Nearchus, one day, "we have finished our lessons. Let us go and watch the games. I have heard that the King, himself, is to wrestle in the arena."

Away the boys sped, fleet of foot as two young deer. As they turned a corner they came into sudden collision with an older boy named Philotas, whom they had seen about the palace.

Nearchus was knocked, half-breathless, into the street. In a moment, however, he scrambled to his feet and looked, half laughingly, into Philotas' face. But the scowl which he met was anything but friendly.

"Oh," exclaimed Nearchus frankly, "I did not intend