

know that these Armenian ruins stood as the edifice of the glories of the days of yore?

The inhabitants of *Gâvour Mahallesi* had learned how to cherish their ancestral land, symbolized by their village, without much ado, without raising suspicions among the authorities. Migirdic Margosyan's father followed that path too; in this case, the symbol was a modest village by the Tigris River called Hretan. Young Migirdic learned to sing the praise of Hretan and lament the scattering of the sons and daughters of Hretan. He learned to yearn for the Hretan he had never seen, and that now only Kurds inhabited.<sup>28</sup> The attachment of these people to their birthplace is a strong indication of their devotion to their ethnic identity, and this is paralleled in the Diasporan Armenians' feelings about their birthplaces in Western Armenia. Even the second- or third-generation Armenians born in the Diaspora identify with the birthplace of their forefathers as a token of the sense of belonging they have toward those places rather than their actual birthplace. Indeed, they are Vanetsis, Tigranakertsis, Mshetsis, and Kharbertsis even though they have not seen those places, but curiously, sometimes the Armenian dialect of those places is the only Armenian language they have inherited and speak.

Margosyan and all the inhabitants of *Gâvour Mahallesi* knew well that they were the continuation of the "rejects of the sword," a humiliating, demeaning term that the Turks invented to call those Armenians who somehow managed to stay alive. "Rejects of the sword" is a term used to this day, a loaded phrase that carries the history of a nation, the state of

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<sup>28</sup> Margosyan, *Tigrisi aperen*, p. 21.