

EVLIYA ÇELEBİ

1961



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## Evliya Çelebi



**EVLIYA ÇELEBI** was born on the 25th of February 1611 in Istanbul. He says he slipped out of every difficulty in his adventurous life with ease because of the goodwill of the seventy friends of his father who had been at their home on the night of his birth.

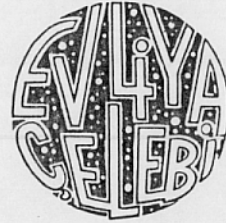
His father, Mehmet Agha (Derviş Muhammed Zilli), had taken part in the conquest of Cyprus during the reign of Sultan Selim II, had presented the keys of Famagusta to the Sultan and had risen to the post of chief jeweller in the palace. He was over seventy five and in Evliya Çelebi's words "a grand old man".

Mehmet Agha was an artist and a man of agreeable temperament. He undertook the decoration of the famous Mosque of Sultan Ahmet in Istanbul and was sent to Mecca to make Mizap during the reign of Sultan Ahmet I.

His mother was related to one of the famous pashas of the age, Melek Ahmet Pasha.

His full name is that of his father, Evliya b. Derviş Mehmet Zilli. This world famous traveller was called Evliya after Imam-ı Sultani Evliya Mehmet Effendi, a famous personage of that age, a close friend of Derviş Mehmet Agha and later a tutor to our traveller.

Çelebi likes to describe himself as "Seyyah-ı âlem ve Nedim-i beni adem Evliya-yi bi-riya".



### His Passion for Adventure



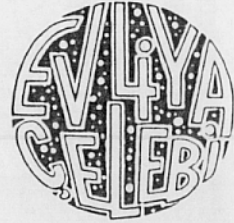
ON COMPLETION of his elementary education Evliya entered a Medrese (religious school) and, while trying to master the art of jewellery from his father, he learned Greek from his father's apprentice to whom in turn he taught the Şahîdî vocabulary.

He listened to many an adventurous story from his father, a man of long years and experience who had served many sultans from Suleiman the Magnificent to Ibrahim, and these, coupled with the things he heard from their numerous guests, lit in him the passion for foreign lands. "Through heredity many an adventure and experience was passed to your humble servant from his grandfather and father", he writes in explanation of his curiosity.

One night he dreamt of the Prophet and instead of saying "Şe-faat ya Resulullah" (intercede on my behalf, Oh envoy of God), he said "Seyyahat ya Resulullah" (grant me travel, Oh envoy of God).

Evliya Çelebi sought the interpretation of his dream from many a learned man of the age and gave himself up to ruminating on "how can I free myself from the burden of father, mother, master, brother and see the world?".

First he wandered through Istanbul as, in his own words, a "vagabond pedestrian" and started recording his first impressions. He made these very picturesque by adding his own thoughts for his imagination was as strong as his passion. Step by step, he saw the whole of Istanbul until there remained nothing he had not seen nor anyone he had not talked with. He found his way to the court of eminent men; he sat and listened in the coffee-shops and wine shops to story tellers and convents.



### His Travels



IN THE YEAR 1640 he travelled to Bursa for the first time. In that year too he made a sea voyage to İzmit. Though son of a father who had lived in court and had close relations with the Sultan and eminent statesmen and a mother who was related to the pashas of the period, Evliya Çelebi was never to succumb to the wish for mundane wealth and position.

Instead of an office, which he could easily attain through his influential relatives and friends, he devoted his life to travel to distant lands, to the desire to see the whole world, acquaint himself with everybody and learn everything. This enlightened citizen of Istanbul accepted only assignments which involved travel and not for their importance. He went to Trabzon with Ketenci Ömer Pasha when the latter was appointed governor to that province. From there he went to Georgia in Russia, Merhistan and the land of the Abaza.

In 1641 he took part in the famous Battle of Azak and thence went to Crimea with the Khan of Crimea. On his voyage back to Istanbul his ship encountered a fierce storm and was wrecked. For eight months he lay ill in the convent of Kelgra. Later he took part in the Battle of Crete.

He spent the two years between 1646 and 1648 as a customs clerk in Erzurum, to which he had travelled in the company of Defterzade Mehmet Pasha. From there he embarked on his travels to parts of Russia and Persia - Tebriz, Revan, Bakû and Tiflis. The news of his father's death brought him back to Istanbul and the fortune he inherited supplied him with enough funds to enable

him to travel comfortably for the rest of his life, sometimes accompanied by his friends, more often with his slaves. Also the expensive presents he received from those he served and the sale of the booty he won from the various battles in which he participated provided for himself and his relations in Istanbul.

After settling his family affairs he went to Damascus as the Chief Müezzín of Murtaza Pasha who had been appointed Governor there. On his way back to Istanbul as a courier he met the revolutionaries in Üsküdar and took part in the fighting.

As he was searching for means of travel from Istanbul he became the Chief Müezzín and Accountant of Melek Ahmet Pasha who was Governor in the western regions of the Ottoman Empire and during the next years he travelled to Sofia, Silistre and all the cities in mid-Europe with him. He participated in the Polish Campaign. In his book he describes at length these cities and the interesting happenings.

In 1661 after the demise of this Pasha, to whom he was related, he took part in the Austrian campaign of Sultan Mehmet IV. He also participated in the Demirkazık campaign. He was one of the envoys to Vienna. From Vienna he embarked on a long journey into Europe.

In 1667 he returned to Istanbul which he had not seen for eight years. He made contact with the members of his family from whom he had long been separated and settled his family affairs. But he could live only one year in Istanbul. He went to Edirne and searched for means of joining the army for the Crete campaign. He went to Anatolia by land, then passed on to Kandiye and finally to Morea. He was sixty and, wanting to perform his religious duty of pilgrimage, he traversed with a number of friends the eastern sections of Anatolia and reached Cairo.

Evliya Çelebi travelled from early childhood until the time when there was nothing to see and no one to meet; he learned and recorded everything. He derived his real source of knowledge and culture not from education but from life. The desire in him to learn burned until his last days. Likewise during his long stay in Egypt during his old age, he explored the whole country while also attending lectures by the scholars of the period.

The last volume of his book is on Egypt and thereafter he did not write about the rest of his life.

As well as devoting his life to travel, Evliya Çelebi was also a calligrapher, decorator, musician and a poet in his own way. He was very fond of all works of art and books whether miniaturized or illuminated. For example, he was not greatly excited over the Jewels of Abdal Khan of Bitlis but deeply impressed with the chest containing them.

A man with a beautiful voice and a deep knowledge of musical instruments Evliya Çelebi could spare no time for marriage in his fifty years of travel and consequently had no offspring.

It is understood that Evliya Çelebi did not live long after his return from Egypt and according to the latest investigations and appraisals is buried in the family burial ground near the Meyyüzade cemetery.



His work covers the historic events of the XVIIth century Ottoman Empire with vivid flashes into the life of the period, and is an invaluable source of historic and geographic knowledge. A few pages is enough to accustom one to his unusual and flowing style.

Those who enjoy witch stories, history and geography will find in Çelebi a rich source of historic accounts in a lucid style and will find it hard to stop reading the "Book of Travels".

### His Book



IS "BOOK OF TRAVELS" is nearly 6000 pages long. It is written in "spoken language". That is to say, he has on the one hand avoided using words and expressions not used in spoken language —thus refraining from exhibiting his art and knowledge— and on the other hand spontaneously made the grammatical mistakes one usually indulges in careless colloquial speech. He spent his entire life amongst people who could never spare the time for reading and writing and he made the language of these people his style.

Evliya Çelebi showed an undying interest in the characteristics of the countries in which he journeyed and in the people he met. This unflagging curiosity and extraordinary ability for observation is obvious in his work. One can read there a long and detailed account of every city, town, mosque, medrese, inn, bath, castle, rampart and other installations he deemed important. He also gives a vivid account of the wars he experienced and the characteristics of the pashas and vezirs he served.

Evliya Çelebi was knowledgeable of humans and objects. His volumes covering all his travels. He always refers to himself ascriptions are vivid and distinct. In this way Evliya Çelebi cannot be said to be a "theoretician"; this is not in the parts where manifested he gives facts and figures about cities and roads but where he describes events he witnessed.

Evliya's "Book of Travels" has three versions and nearly ten vocabulary is not large and consequently repetitive but his des-"your humble servant".



### Advice of his Father

*(On his first trip Evliya Çelebi goes to Bursa without informing his family of his departure. On his return his father greets him with "Come, oh traveller of Bursa" and gives him some advice. The following may not be the actual advice, but it is of significance in as much as it is the result of his impressions of years of travels and experience).*

**W**

HEN YOUR HUMBLE servant returned to his grief-stricken home that day, kissed the hands of his father and mother and stood in their noble presence, his beloved father said, "Welcome traveller of Bursa. Welcome". However nobody had known which direction I had taken. "Sire", said your humble servant, "how did you know your humble servant was in Bursa?" "When you disappeared on the night of the 'Aşure' of 'Muharrem' one thousand and fifty" (May 1640) he condescended to say "many an ancient prayer did I say. One thousand times did I repeat the 'Inne a' tayna' chapter of the Koran. That night I dreamt that you were at the tomb of Emir Sultan at Bursa, seeking succour from spiritual influence and begging for world travel with tears flowing from your eyes. That night many a dervish asked and begged for my consent that you go on your travels. And I, that night, gave you my consent, with the acquiescence of them all. We then spoke the 'Fâtiha' chapter of the Koran. Come then, son. Henceforth you are destined to travel. Blessed may it be. But I have some advice", he said and clasped my hand; and as I stood in front of him he began to wring my left ear with his left hand and deliver these counsels:

"Son, man may be poor, do not start eating without mentioning the name of God.

"If you have a secret beware of telling it to your wife. Do not eat if you are polluted.

"If a thing is good do not say it is bad.

"Do not be a comrade to the malicious, you will be harmed. If your clothing be torn do not repair it while you are wearing it.

Advance, do not let your eye linger behind.

Do not lead the procession astray.

Do not tread on fields. Do not encroach on the share of a friend.

Do not pick up things you do not own.

Do not listen when two people converse.

Abide with the right of bread and salt.

Do not look at another's wife and commit a treachery.

Do not go to places you are not invited. If you do, go to honest people, to places of which you are sure.

Keep secrets. At every gathering retain in your mind the things you may hear.

Do not carry word from house to house.

Refrain from backbite, from denunciation, from talking behind the backs of others, from gossip.

Be decent. Maintain good relations with everyone.

Do not be stubborn and poisonous of tongue.

Do not go in front of those who are more eminent than you.

Abide with the wise old man.

Be clean always and abstain from the illicit and the forbidden.

Perform your religious duties five times a day, be well-known for your tranquility of conduct and preoccupy yourself with munificent science.

Son, My advice in mundane affairs is that you be sweet of tongue. Do not ask for worldly things from the vizirs and nobles you have close ties with so that they do not hate you and accord you a cold reception.

Content yourself with a mouthful. And do not dissipate property you may come to own.

Live modestly. 'Modesty is an inexhaustible treasure' they say.

You may require it in sickness and in health. Do not save the worldly coin for food and clothing and then be in need

of the despicable. Because: "Enemy does not matter only be not in need of a friend", they say.

In the places you walk and visit tie the belt of endeavour securely around your waist and conserve yourself.

Water sleeps but the alien and cruel enemies do not sleep.

Visit the saints and all the places of pilgrimage and in all the lands you visit, write in volumes all about their plains, tall mountains, lonely trees and stones, their towns and their monuments and castles, their conquerors and their founders and compose a book which will be called "book of travels", so that your end be good and you be preserved from the malice of your enemies.

May God be your excellent defender and helper. May you in the world be given quarter and at your last breath faith, and may you in the day of resurrection awake beside the flag of the Prophet.

Let these counsels dwell on your ear like pendant ear-rings", he said, and clapped me mightily on the nape and twisted my ear and said "Go, in the name of God, may your fate be good".

When your humble servant opened his eyes with the shock of the slap, lo and behold our house was full of light. Without delay I kissed the blessed hand of my father and stood in silence. I beheld him give me, in a saddle-bag, twelve excellent books and about two hundred gold coins for my journey.



### A Jinnee Story and Famous Wrestles - Edirne



HE MEDRESE of Kemal Paşazade. For years one cell of this medrese is infested with jinn and nobody is able to set foot in it. The cell is empty and the door barred. Then, in the century of Bayezidi Veli, Kemal Paşazade Ahmet Çelebi, a fellow in quest of scientific studies, travels up to Edirne. As luck would have it he arrives at this medrese while seeking quarters. When he asks for a cell from the chief lecturer he is given the answer, "Mullah, there are no empty cells in our medrese; however, we have only one cell which is empty but that being infested with the jinn nobody is able to enter it. Those who do enter sleep for a mere night and in the morning their dead bodies are found". Kemal Paşazade replies, "My Sultan, grant me that cell. Let me receive a lesson from your answer". He begs and insists and at last the chief lecturer gives in, saying, "My son, you know best. Here is the key to the cell. Acquit me of your claims". Kemal Paşazade and the chief lecturer mutually forgive one another and, whispering the name of God, he opens the door of the cell. He sits on a sheepskin.

After the late night prayer, the porters and the chief lecturer place outside Kemal Paşazade's cell a bench on which the corpse is washed, a coffin and other funeral equipment as custom demanded.

At midnight, when Kemal Paşazade was busy with study, the part of the wall facing Mecca divided in two and an old, saintly angel appears holding a beautiful child in his arms. "God be with you" he says, and Kemal Paşazade says "God be with you". "Son I will trust you with my child in the name of Allah. You will



teach him science and the regulations of prayers of the five appointed times of day", he says and leaves.

Kemal Paşazade whispers the name of God and teaches this innocent child the Koran and then passes on to his own work. Before daybreak the old man emerges from the same wall and says "Son, may the approval of God be with you. May you be happy in this world and the next. I am Sultan Asfail, a ruler of the jinn. Every time I come to this cell and entrust my son to its inmates and go. But they betray the trust of God and mishandle my son and I kill them. From now on let all sciences be open to you", he concludes and, praying, takes his child and leaves.

When early in the morning Kemal Paşazade opens his door to go out he sees before him an imam, müezzın and congregation and a coffin and boiling water in readiness. When they see Kemal Paşazade they are amazed and offer thanks to God.

Kemal Paşazade did not reveal his secret to a living soul and mastered all the sciences and he was so learned and wise that he was the only man of that century.



## Dismissal of Melek (Angel) Ahmed Pasha



HENCE, İBRAHİM AGHA, Sultan's Kethüda, followed by seventy or eighty soldiers, approached the Pasha saying "Please do come with us, his Majesty the Sultan summons you". Pasha said, "Agha, how do you expect me to go amidst these rioting villains? Pray, I kiss the Sultan's feet. Do tell his Majesty in a nice way of my predicament", and took out the seal. Ibrahim Agha said in awe "Mercy, I have not come to get the seal". Pasha sent him away saying "Now take this thousand bullions and tell his Majesty about my state". The wails and screams of the uprising people were now reaching the heavens. Nevertheless, three times the Sultan sent his Kapıcılar Kethüdası and Has Odabaşısı for the Pasha. Pasha said "I cannot go past these soldiers and risk my life in order to appear before the Sultan". The men who were sent the fourth time said "Do come with us to the Palace. No harm will come to you. Or you must give us the seal". Pasha, giving back the seal said "Let his Majesty make a small donation then. Let me go to a provincial state". The men then left. Outside, they announced that they had retrieved the Seal and asked the crowd to disperse. The screams and shouting of the crowd, however, crescendoed "We want the seventy men killed".

The Sultan gave the Seal to Siyavuş Pasha. As he left the Palace with a great procession the people cheered him with "God bless you, now go and kill the seventy men in your book and become the Prime Minister (Grand Visier). The crowd then dispersed.



### Kâğıthane Plaisance



WHILE MY HUMBLE SELF was lodging with Melek Ahmed Pasha at Topçular (Artillery) Palace, every evening we used to watch thousands of firecrackers reach the sky and hear the report of thousands of guns and rifles. Later, when I enquired of a fellow man-of-pleasure about this fiest, he said "Woe to the hopeless fool who has dissipated his wits, wisdom and yielded to sorrow and despair... Why is it that you are so aggrieved as not to know about Kâğıthane? Ever since this Great Ottoman Empire has existed, never has there been a gayer and more joyful feast than Kâğıthane. Anyone who has not seen this place has seen nothing".

He so much praised Kâğıthane that my soul swiftly flowed there and I recalled this poem :

**Hapiness is relshing each pleasure  
So let your heart enjoy this treasure.  
Life Is short my friend, world so unkind,  
With sorrow and heartaches to remind;  
But only in pleasures you will find  
Solace, Joy and your peace of mind.**

I then immediately went and got the Pasha's permission to go to Kâğıthane. I spent 40 gold bullions to buy two kayım, food and drinks and, together with five or six Agas, pitched our tents in the shadow of the great oak trees along the Kâğıthane river, thus settling, we started our feast of reason and the flow of soul to continue day and night.

During the two months from the beginning of the month of Recep until the holy crescent of Ramazan appears in the sky

there has been such amusements and pleasures on these green fields that no words can fully describe. All gentry, noblemen and prodigal sons of the plutocrats of Istanbul adorned the valley with more than three thousand tents. Every night these tents were illuminated with thousands of candles, oil lamps and lanterns. In the evening, the leading groups were entertained by musicians, singers, minstrels and performers like the Ahmed group, Cevahir group, Nazlı group, Garibanu group, Ahide group, Zümrüt group, Postalıcı group, Batakoğlu group, Hasena group, Samurka group, who played many tunes on their "Ceng-ür Rebab" "Santur", tambour and "Ud-u Kanun" until sunrise while hundred thousand fireworks adorned the sky with lightnings, stars, butterflies, etc., and the entire Kâğıthane was bathed in this radiant splendour. Guns were fired from dawn to dusk. Besides these tents, scattered along the two banks of the Kâğıthane river, were more than two thousand shops vending not only foods and drinks but also myriad valuables. Every day the clowns, jesters, magicians, weight lifters, ropedancers, acrobats, jugglers, jongleurs, bear, monkey, donkey and dog trainers, puppet shows, birdmen, and swordeaters, about three hundred and sixty entertainers performed and made great profit. Four Janissary platoons were assigned by the palace to maintain order in this area. Most of these Janissaries used to swim in the Kâğıthane river.

Never in history there has been such such union of gentlemen and scholars.



### Death of Kaya Sultana

*(Kaya Sultana is Melek Ahmed Pasha's wife. She is very wealthy and has given myriad gifts and grants to Evliya Çelebi. She is very kind hearted and belongs to the Royal family.*

*One night Melek Ahmed Pasha dreams that Kaya Sultana wants to divorce him. Pasha tells Evliya about this dream. Twenty-six days after this incident, the following takes place).*



WENTY SIX DAYS AFTER Melek Ahmed Pasha related his dream, Kaya Sultana's pregnancy period was complete. All Sultanas, their sisters, those who have received her grants, those who have served her, doctors, midwives all gathered at her quarters, thanked God, prayed and read 40 Hatmi Şerif, forty thousand Selâvatı Şerif each night while Kaya Sultana gave birth to a beautiful girl child.

That night at the Eyüp Sultan Kiosk and in the city there were amusements and joyful gatherings until the next morning and ten sacks of gold was given out from the Pasha's treasury.

Kaya Sultana also gave out forty sacks of gold and five hundred men were given clothes.

However, the thing called "placenta" in the mother's womb did not come out. Since Kaya Sultana was considerably fat, the "placenta" remained in the uterus. That night and the following morning the joy and happiness which filled the city of Eyüp turned into sorrow, the Pasha, his relations and his men were in distress. They placed Kaya Sultana in rugs and shook and bounced her. Twice they hung her upside down then placed her in a honey barrel filled with the juice of flowers. During the

three days the Sultana was so tortured and suffered such agonies that she would welcome death. Finally the midwives came, they spread oils on their hands and arms, and inserted their hands into her vagina up to their elbows and took out a piece of skin saying "Here, Thang God, the placenta is out". Another midwife said "There must be some more", inserted her hand and took out a piece of skin and things resembling liver.

Alas, Kaya Sultana died on the fourth day after bearing her child. Just then, all men waiting behind the great curtain separating the Harem from the men's quarters, came in, locked and sealed the doors of all rooms containing the treasures and the Sultana's body. Then they ordered us to the other rooms and sent messengers to the Sultan and Köprülü.

At once the negro eunuch, the treasurer, the treasurer of the Palace and all viziers came and seized the property and confiscated the poor slave-girls' clothes and started with preparations for the funeral.

The poor Pasha was bewildered, he was wandering around with unseeing eyes. Just then a sapper coming from Istanbul told Pasha that all the property he had acquired in all the years that he had served as a vizier had been seized as the property of Kaya.

Pasha stormed "What would a woman do with armour, swords, weapons, guns and tiger skin? They are mine. Kaya died here that is why they were found in her palace". But nobody listened to him. They took his one thousand seven hundred sack fulls of gold. Pasha was over his rage now and was silently praying. "Be patient, God's will prevails". Soon Grand Vizier Köprülü, saying "the entire property of Kaya Sultana is at the middle tower of Valide Hanım Palace", went there. He found nothing but an Egyptian straboard and a large plate. Upon such disappointment he took a rowboat to Eyüp Sultan. He then went to attend Kaya Sultana's funeral. They then put all the goods into the boat of the commander of the Sultan's body-guard, saying, "They will be placed in lockers at Harem". Melek Pasha cried "Oh men, I'm still alive, my daughter is alive. I have surrendered to you all her property. Among these you take, there are my own clothes". But Köprülü was not impressed and replied "The lockers of Harem are safe, we will save all these

for her daughter". He then told the men to proceed with the funeral. Hundred thousand men at the Eyüp Sultan Mosk cried and prayed. The Sultana's remains were then placed in the row-boat of the Commander of the Sultan's body-guard. A thousand boats took the scholars, ministers and gentlefolk.

This reminded me of an incident which had taken place two years before. Melek Ahmed Pasha married Kaya. On the wedding night Kaya would not admit Melek to her room. And once, when he insisted, she pulled and tore his beard. He could not go to the "Kubbe Altı" to attend cabinet meetings until his beard grew. The situation was grave.

The truth was, that some midwives and fortunetellers supposedly had found the Sultana's star and told her "Beware Sultana, do not conceive a child from Melek, otherwise you will be harmed, you will die in childbirth". This prophecy so frightened the Sultana that she would not admit the Pasha to her room ~~for seven years. One day the Mother Sultana reproached her~~ saying "My dear Kaya, why is it that you do not have a child. My pasha is not attending to his duties at the cabinet. Why are you not with a child?" She then summoned Melek Ahmet Pasha. The Mother Sultana then gave him full permission and that night Kaya Sultana became pregnant.

After nine months and ten days, Kaya Sultana gave birth to a girl child, but did not die nor her beauty suffered. She then sent out all midwives and attendants and talked to Pasha in privacy. But, in the end Kaya Sultana died while giving birth to Melek's child as the fortunetellers had said. I remembered this prophecy while we were on the boat and repeated them to the Pasha, who said "Yes, that is exactly what happened. This is God's secret which no scholar man of wisdom have succeeded in solving. The truth is, after seventeen years, she is free now. Death has taken her away. Oh my dear Kaya, my Sultana, my treasure". Until Bahçekapısı the poor Pasha wept. There, thousands of people carried her coffin on their hands as far as Saint Sophia Mosk, she was buried beneath the window facing Sultan İbrahim Khan and Sultan Mustafa Khan Tomb. Poot Pasha was dissolved in tears. When he fell upon his wife's grave, Köprülü said "Man, are you not ashamed to shed tears for a woman? Do not grieve, I promise, I will give you another Sultana". Melek replied "I hope to God you won't live to keep your promise".

Köprülü left in anger. The other viziers took the Pasha to his Palace. My humble self stayed at Kaya Sultana's tomb for 7 days 7 nights and read 25 Hatm-i Şerif. In seven days, the Sultanas visiting Kaya's tomb gave me seven hundred gold bullions, twenty thousand gold coils, seven musk-melons filled with amber for which I prayed God to grant these Sultanas good health and prosperity. Yet, each day at the five praying hours Ahmed Pasha used to come and have Hatm-i Şerif read and shed bitter tears and cried "Oh my Kaya, your dream came true, you have divorced me time and again".

The fact is, at that time there were seventeen Sultanas but none of them could get along with their husbands as well as Kaya and Melek. The late Sultana was a very intelligent and prudent woman with foresight and intuition. The luckless Sultana was yet very young when she died and had not married anyone before Melek.



### Ropedancers

*(While Evliya Çelebi is wandering in the vicinity of Ankara, he meets a large crowd of people at the Village of Istanoz. Ropedancers coming from all regions of the country are showing their skills. Our wanderer, like the people there, watches these ropedancers and describes in detail their performance).*



ALL ROPEDANCERS agreed to hold a congregation at Istanoz river and at Gedüz fortress in Anatolia, and set up grounds to show and to test their skills. And we, the idle men, went to the river to watch. Steep rocks reaching to the blue clouds and tied to one highest peak to another were strong ropes. Each end of the rope reinforced by animal skins so that the rock would not cut the rope, and posted there were trusted men fully armed to see that an enemy does not cut the ropes while the masters are performing.

Over and under the rocks walking to and fro were thousands of men. Down yonder, along the river which flowed through the heart of the city, were put up a week before, sofas, places to sleep, and racks. Tents were pitched in open spaces. Those thousands of God's men were standing to watch.

The Mehter Band of the Pasha of Ankara played at each side and after prayers and praises the masters called each other to the ground of brotherly competition.

The "Fountainhead" Negro Mehmet Çelebi took his balance with a "Bismillâh" and came to the start. His voice thundered and echoed in the mountains and reached the sky. The Great Mehmet Çelebi sped like the wind on that thin rope called the testing rope and when he reached the middle, he made such a

turn that his balance also turned back in his hand like a rabbit turning in front of a hound. The spectators were amazed and exclaimed in marvel. We then learned that no other master of ropewalking could suddenly turn back while speeding on the rope like lightning. He repeated this three times, prayed and went back to his place. His men then dispersed among the crowd to gather money. Then ropewalking master Civelek Ali of Isparta came. He was said to be old master. He put his forehead to the ground in front of the Chief of ropewalkers, then prayed and proceeded to the theatre. All ropewalkers' skill is dependent upon the balance they carry close to their bodies. But this Civelek Ali took one end of the balance in his right hand with the other end pointing downwards and sped on the rope. All spectators as well as other ropewalkers said this was beyond human skill. When he reached the other end of the rope in his particular style, he changed the balance to his left hand with the end still pointing downwards, and started walking backwards. The entire crowd cried "My God help you!" He, however, without any extra effort or precaution, continued walking backwards until he reached the end of the rope, then kissed the ground in front of the Fountainhead. The Fountainhead hugged him saying "May God bless you".

Then Master Süca of Harput walked on the rope without a balance but with a water jug full of water in each hand. Then, while still holding the water jugs he dived headlong from the rope. Everyone pitied him for his fall. However, he incurred no injury and moreover, the waterjugs were not broken, he flew so artfully that everybody marvelled at his skill. When he landed in front of the Fountainhead with his hands behind him, the Fountainhead kissed his hand in praise of such skill.

Hasan Zarif of Tokat was a master seventy years of age. It was said that he had performed before the Sultan of India. He, too, kissed the Fountainhead's hand, then still wearing his rough shoes, a bowl of water full to the brim over his head, wearing a red, full length coat and without a balance only holding the lapels of his coat, serenely walked to the other end of the rope and returned. Master Sehrab, wearing high healed woman's slippers, carrying on his back a calf, with his balance on his arm, walked on the rope. It certainly takes a master's skill to walk on that thin rope with woman's slippers. Afterwards, the Master rope-

walker of Mağrip walked blindfolded with a man sitting on his shoulders playing the drum while in his hands he held his balance.

Master Selim of Arapkir came wearing nothing but tights and shooting rifles. When he reached the opposite side he reloaded his rifles and shot while he came back.

Master Nasreddin of Cibre was hung to the rope from his hair. He had a round object like a water melon in his hands. As he spun this object with a piece of string he was sliding towards the other end while hanging on the rope from his hair. He neither had a balance nor his feet were touching the rope. Thus, he reached the end of the rope and returned. This was absolutely amazing. Later, Fountainhead, Tozkoparan Master Süleyman of Sakire Galata came forth wearing tights, he walked to the stand and showed the spectators a rectangular box. It was a wooden box lined with paper inside, and there was nothing in it. He hung the box to an iron rod, then hid himself in the box. It was now suspended to the rope. Suddenly, we saw the box shoot like lightning to the end of the rope and come back. Süleyman came out and bowed to the Fountainhead. Nobody could understand how this could happen. In short, all through the three days and three nights seventy-six masters of ropewalking showed their skills. If we wrote down every one of them we would be nothing but a foreunner for ropewalkers. But we wish to suffice with the minimum. Besides these ropewalkers, we saw myriad shows of all arts. During the three days, six hundred lengths of woollen material was given out to people and each person received one pouch full of kuruş from the Pasha. That is all.



### The Ironpile Battle



IN THE YEAR OF 1664, on 29th of January which was one of the coldest days of the coldest month of the year, the Grand Vizier received messengers from Yenter Ali Pasha, the Governor of Kanije, and the Aghas of Zigetvar, Bobotsa, Bezence, Sakkofca, Alpova fortresses who were crying for help. Despite the freezing weather, the brave Vizier gathered his banners and ensigns in front of his palace and set out for Belgrade for an urgent meeting with the Viziers, Pashas and Begs whom he had previously summoned.

Despite the biting cold the Grand Vizier gathered 10,000 soldiers under his flag and departed Belgrade passing the bridge on the Sava. The ground was covered with two feet of snow. All efforts of the soldiers to pitch tents and set up camp were in vain. The earth had frozen. It was so cold that the thousands of men were unable to do anything but hold the reins of their horses and stand looking at their unmade tents with their rations and supplies lying on the ground. But veteran warriors soon found a way to have a shelter. They lined the supplies and their ration sacks in a circle and set up their tents around this circle with ropes to keep them up. They could not drive piles into the frozen earth so there was nowhere to tie the horses which were now aimlessly wandering on the snow. The Grand Vizier had iron piles brought from the magazine and still ordered some more piles to blacksmiths at Belgrade. Several tents were pitched to iron piles for the Grand Vizier, the Viziers and members of the cabinet. But thank God, the slaves I had had seen many a battle. They soon put up a fire and melted snow in pots until the water boiled. Then they poured boiling water on the ground and as

soon as the earth softened they thrust in the wooden piles and tied the horses. They then tied straw to each horse's head. Afterwards they entered the tents. Seeing this done, the others also poured boiling water on the ground and pitched their tents. Only God knows how those servants suffered in this battle. The next morning we left the camp. The piles were not removed. Those who tried to recover their piles only succeeded in breaking them. Furthermore, it was not possible to fold the frozen tents, so they were carried open and stiff as they were by porters. The members of the Mehter Band were unable to play their instruments and many supplies and rations were left behind. Some on horseback, some on foot, the men proceeded further under the snowstorm and reached a camping ground near a well. There, too, it was impossible to put up the tents. The Ottoman historians, therefore, have called this battle the "Iron pile battle". Never in history men have suffered from cold and frost as those in this battle.

*(Under this severe snowstorm, the men continue their pace for two or three days. Men freeze, animals disperse and supplies are stolen from tents. Then the army reaches Metrofca. Soldiers are given shelter and fire to warm. But many men are blinded by the flames of the fire and others who had endured the severe cold before freeze near the fire. On the fourth day the blizzard stops and all Pashas rush to help the fortresses. Men are continuously augmented from the rear and one by one the castles are saved from the enemy. When they were saving Peçevi Castle, Kefeli Bekir Pasha cuts off his own head and hands it to the Grand Vizier saying "Why have you been so late to help". In the end each fortress is saved from enemies and troops return to Belgrade. After a three months feast the men recover.)*

*(Evlıya Çelebi tells about the kitchen in the Palace of Defterdarzade Mehmet Pasha where he spent some years.)*

have not seen anywhere else the tasty and delicious dishes at any other Vizier's palace. Only the late Bayram Pasha's cuisine could compete with the artfully prepared delicacies. However, Mehmet Pasha's cuisine was superior in all its utensils, silverware, silver saucers, silver trays and platters. There were a hundred piece ceramic set and a hundred piece Chinese porcelain set. The napkins with gold monograms as well as gold and silver plated saucers and jugs rosewater containers, and incense burners were matchless in beauty and taste. While Canbolatzade Mustafa Pasha was the Admiral, during receptions and social gatherings and dinner parties where I was also present, I saw that he was a brilliant host as well as a brilliant statesman possessing the wis-

dom of Aristo. May his soul rest in peace. Tabaniyassı Mehmet Pasha was killed in the battle at Erzurum and was buried outside the Ezirgân Gate by the Deve Çeşmesi (Camel fountain). May his soul rest in peace.

However, this Mehmet Pasha's cuisine was far more richer than the others whether in peace or in battle. Never have daily purchases of honey and sugar entered his kitchen. Sugar was brought in boxes from Damascus. All pastries, cakes, desserts, helva, baklava, jellies, puddings and all fruits, herbs and spices were brought in from Damascus.

Even during battles his kitchen served day and night twenty trays of pastries cooked with pure butter, cakes and delicious smelling meals. The priceless tableware and kitchen utensils were unequalled.

He had efficient and deft help to serve at tables. They wore clothes with gold trimmings. Each person was trained for a particular service. Another point of interest in his kitchen was that he employed forty cooks. While en route, twenty would proceed behind the group while the other twenty with the Chef stayed behind to cook the fish caught in the rivers and the game and poultry from the near-by forest. These cooks never had to saddle their horses. There were twenty men to saddle and look after the horses of the kitchen staff, and men to pitch their tents and put up their fire. The cooks usually wore gloves. They were extremely clean and neat in appearance. Uncleanliness and untidiness was punished by belting. But twice each year, in summertime, the cooks dressed in white garmets. Their holiday clothes were made of felt and satin. Whatever clothes the Chefs were given, all the 40 cooks received also, because most of them were his slaves. Payday was every three months and the Chef was paid 1 kuruş per day, his assistant a half kuruş per day. The pastry master, the kebab master and all the seven masters received a quarter per day. The rest were paid 10 akçe per day each. The hall master had separate tents for his one camel load of tableware and pots and pans. The storemaster's tent, the purchaser's tent, the bakery master's tent and the tents of all kitchen staff were set up near the back gate of the camp. Excepting the Chef, each of these masters received a quarter per day. Every three months they were given towels, soap, shoes, light shoes and black boots. The cooks were further rewarded for any new dish they created. Dolma, ground