

“Quakers” in Carlyle’s “French Revolution.”

MARQUIS VALADI AND ROBERT PIGOTT (JOURNAL, iii. 7, v. 62).— Both persons are referred to by Carlyle; the former “hastily quitted his Quaker broadbrim,” the latter is described as “an English Quaker.”

The following notes have been sent to us by C. Fell Smith. They are based on the authority given by Carlyle—*Biographical Anecdotes of the Founders of the French Republic*, London, 1797, 2 vols.

Godefroi Izarn, son of Marquis Valadi, of La Rouergue, France, grew up with a passion for liberty and philosophy, resenting the tyranny of his tutors and the arbitrary way he had been matched with a girl of thirteen. In 1786 he escaped (aged nineteen) to England in search of simpler habits of life in a country reputed to be free. Here he studied the English language and laws. English Parliaments did not, however, satisfy his ideas of liberty and freedom from despotism, so he decided to go to America to study its institutions. Having no money, remittances from his father being stopped, he found a captain willing to take him, and was waiting for a wind at *Wapping* when his wife and mother-in-law arrived in search of him. He consented to return with them, and he joined the French Guards. Dissatisfied with this life, he resigned his commission in 1787, cut his hair close, laid aside his elegant clothes and “assumed a habit *quaker-like* in form and colour.”

He went to Geneva, and there met an English Pythagorean, *Robert Pigott*, a vegetarian. Valadi adopted this dietetic system, and pursued it for several years. At midsummer, 1788, he returned to England, and proposed to found here a Pythagorean sect. He went to Glasgow to study Greek, and spent six months there.

Returning to London he heard of Thomas Taylor, of Walworth, the Platonist, and studied all his works, wrote him a letter 12th December, 1788 (printed in *Anecdotes*), using the plain language, which, being a Frenchman, would come naturally to him.

In the spring following, 1789, he changed his quaker-like clothes for military uniform, went back to France and rejoined the Guards. Incited them in their fury with their insolent Commander du Châtelet to join with the malcontents of the Palais Royal, was arrested, and fled to Nantes. When the Bastille was taken, he reappeared, went to save his father and the château, but won no favour from the old man, returned in poverty to Paris. The sale of the reversion of a small piece of land restored his fortunes; he was returned to the National Convention, joined the Girondists, was against the execution of the king and became suspect, wandered in Brittany, and at last was arrested in Périgueux and guillotined 11th December, 1793. Vol. I., pp. 150-163.

From the above it will be evident what little reason there was for Carlyle to connect Valadi with Friends. And as for Robert Pigott, Carlyle may have been misled by a cursory glance at the title page of one of Pigott’s tracts, which runs, *Discours Prononcé dans la Société des Amis de la Constitution de Dijon, par R. Pigott, Anglois, Citoyen Français, contre le grand usage du pain.*