

## The History of "The Story of Carazan, the Merchant of Bagdad"

A CURIOUS manuscript, accompanied by a cutting from a newspaper, has recently been acquired by the Reference Library; it bears the above as an endorsement.

The "History" is contained in five quarto pages and the printed cutting containing the "Story" has been pasted on to two sheets of similar size. The writer of the manuscript is not known; the print has probably been cut from a copy of an American paper, it being preceded by the following, in writing: "The Story of Carazan now appears in the *Sunday Despatch*, a Newspaper of Philad<sup>a</sup>, dated 2<sup>d</sup> mo. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1854."

This statement has been verified by our F.H.S. President, Charles F. Jenkins, who consulted the paper in the rooms of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The "Story" occupies about one full column of space equal to a column of *The Times* of London.

Here follows the "History"—all the persons named have been identified:

The admirable story of Carazan probably owes its origin to Friends, and that its author was a young member of Society seventy years ago.

On the suppression of the Jesuits and their destruction on the Continent of Europe, but last of all in France, John Revoult,<sup>1</sup> a French Gentleman of exceedingly courtly manners and address and possessed of great mental powers and a vast fund of acquired learning, fled for his life, which was endangered by his position as a Priest of "The Order of Jesus," and like the Hugonots

<sup>1</sup> Of John Revoult (c. 1729-1811) we read, in his liberation for marriage: "John Revoult of Lime Street, London, teacher of Languages, Son of John Revoult of La Ferte Bernard in the District of Maine in the Diocess of Mans in France & Catherine Vaches his wife, both deceased." He married Hannah Mayleigh, daughter of Samuel, late of Aldermanbury, London, Apothecary, at Devonshire House, 1761, iii. 31. Hannah Revoult died in 1773, aged forty-five. At his death John Revoult is given as N.M. (non-member) in the Friends' Registers.

had done on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he took refuge in Spitalfields, then a suburb of London, but now far imbedded with the building of that great Metropolis of the World. There John Revoult found shelter and protection under the Wings of one Barnes,<sup>2</sup> an eminent Silk dyer, who held high standing among Friends as a member of Society and frequented Gracechurch Street Meeting where John Revoult accompanied him and thus became a convinced Friend, and ultimately a member of the family by marriage with Barnes' Niece.

Influential Friends who then occupied the most prominent positions in England as Merchants, Bankers, and Manufacturers, saw in the application of the superior talents of John Revoult a means whereby the very highest degree of Scholastic learning could be introduced to the minds of the rising generation among Friends in Society, and they determined to make him available to this object by setting up the young couple in a Boarding School for Twenty Boys at Wandsworth, six miles from London, which succeeded to admiration though a costly establishment, and Boys of the highest families were in a few days found to fill the list and supply candidates for the future vacancies to occur in the lapse of time. Among the families so favoured were the Gurney's, Oxley's, Bevan's, Willis, Rogers, Fox, Mildred, Harman, Hanbury, Newberry, Hoare,<sup>3</sup> and similar houses—and thus Friends became a learned body filled with young men of rare intellect and polished manners—who by their school associations and religious meetings were much drawn together, and their families being rich and themselves in lucrative positions had both leisure and taste to cultivate the sciences and learning which they had been favoured with above the general body of Society, and they were the occasion of much jealousy on the part of those who were not so favoured.

Among other pursuits of those Young Friends [they] sent forth a periodical Book or Miscellany for which the

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Barnes ( -1784), citizen and dyer, of Booth Street, Spitalfields, married Sarah Mayleigh at Devonshire House, 7 x. 1749.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Hoare (1751-1825) and his brother, Jonathan, were at the seminary of "John Riveaux," at Highbury, and afterwards at Kennington. Some amusing anecdotes of their school life are given in *Samuel Hoare*, London, 1911, p. 5.

contributions were chiefly written by some or other of those Friends—whereunto was attached as Editor or Publisher Dr. Hooper<sup>4</sup> of Tooley Street, husband of Mrs. Hooper (who compounded a celebrated medicine called Hooper's Female Pills), and who was a Public Friend frequenting the Park Meeting in Southwark.

That Miscellany was rather circulated than sold, among Friends' families chiefly, and contained several valuable Oriental and other moral Tales, including—

The story of Carazan the Merchant of Bagdad was written by one of those young men and a Manuscript copy of it, beautifully written by the author, whose name was concealed, was presented to one of his Schoolfellows before the printing of it, and which manuscript exists in his Library. The writers generally concealed their names on their contributions to that miscellany, as they greatly feared to offend, by their choice of language used in their literary works, which might bring on them unpleasant visitations from persons less catholic and less learned than themselves. That feeling ultimately stopped the progress of the miscellany and the publication ceased.

It was believed that the first part of the Story of Carazan was written to pourtray the character of J. G. Bevan who was a mercenary and mean man, exceedingly punctilious in fulfilling every visible worldly obligation, but who never did anything that did not tend to his own aggrandisement. . . .<sup>5</sup>

The second part of the Story it was supposed would operate to bring his mind into a state of Christian comity

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Joseph Hooper (1732-1815), of Tooley Street, married Rachel Crosby in 1758. In recording the death of Rachel Hooper ( -1819), at Walworth, James Jenkins writes:

"I first knew and witnessed her partial attention in 1763, when I was frequently sent to their shop. I lately mentioned this circumstance to her, when in her company at Amwell, but she seemed to have retained but little recollection of Jno<sup>o</sup> Fry's slovenly little errand-boy" (*Records*, p. 984).

Dr. Hooper "had great practice and died rich." J. Jenkins visited him "at his charming seat, Amwell (formerly Jn<sup>o</sup> Scott's)" a few months prior to his death, and he also attended his funeral.

There is a portrait in **D** of "J. Hooper, M.D., F.M.S."

<sup>5</sup> We refrain from quoting further from this diatribe respecting a well-known and much respected Friend, the more because it is anonymous. Contemporary records describe Joseph Gurney Bevan (1753-1814) as "our chief disciplinarian."

with all the members of society and mankind in general. The work proved insufficient for the object contemplated ! Some years afterwards (in or about 1795) William Allen, one of the most learned men in society, since known as Dr. Allen, [?] borrowed of one of the scholars for Joseph Gurney Bevan (who at about twenty three years old had been made one of the Elders in Gracechurch Street Meeting, and was William Allen's partner in trade), a printed copy of the miscellany, the only one then supposed to exist, and which was never returned to the owner by whom it was believed that J. G. Bevan felt a pleasure in destroying those Books and had made them scarce.

John Revoult was an enthusiastic admirer of Eastern literature, and taught that no persons not versed in the habits, manners and history of the Asiatic and other nations surrounding Syria could properly comprehend the Holy Scriptures or become an useful instrument in the propagation of the principles of Friends, and in the exercise of the Noble attributes of Humanity and true Christianity as depicted in the Story of Carazan and such works which were much multiplied during his time. He carried on successfully for more than fifty [years] a celebrated Academy, and at a Jubilee given to him at that time by persons who had been brought up under him, more than three hundred Gentlemen of consideration, his scholars, set down to dinner with him their venerable master then over eighty years old.

The Story of Carazan now appears in the *Sunday Despatch*, a Newspaper of Philad<sup>a</sup>, dated 2<sup>d</sup> mo. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1854, with the following preface :

“THE MERCHANT OF BAGDAD.”

AN APOLOGUE.

(That man lives not for himself alone, but for the good and happiness of others, is the lesson inculcated in the following beautiful Eastern story, which Fraser's Magazine has pronounced “one of the finest Eastern Apologues ever written, and a better Christmas story than Mr. Dickens's.” The author's name is unknown.)

Carazan, a merchant of Bagdad, was eminent throughout all the east for his avarice and wealth. It was remarked that when he was diligent, he was thought to be generous ; and he was still acknowledged to be inexorably Just. But whether in his dealings with men, he

discovered a perfidy which tempted him to put his trust in gold, or whether in proportion as he accumulated wealth, he discovered his own importance to increase, Carazan prized it more as he hoarded it up; he gradually lost the inclination to do good, as he acquired the power; and as the hand of Time scattered the snow upon his head, the freezing influence extended to his bosom.

But, though the door of Carazan was never opened by hospitality, nor his hand by compassion, yet fear led him constantly to the Mosque at the stated hours of prayer; he performed all the rites of devotion with the most scrupulous punctuality, and has twice paid his vows at the temple of the Prophet. That devotion which arises from the love of God, and necessarily includes the love of man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exalts that which was moral to divine, confers new dignity before goodness, and is the object not only of affection, but reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which everyone wishes to be inflicted, or to insure it by the complicity of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence. Carazan therefore, when he had locked his door, and, turning round with a look of suspicion, proceeded to the Mosque, was followed by every eye with silent malignity. The poor suspended their supplication when he passed by; and though he was known by every man, yet no man saluted him.

Such had long been the life of Carazan, and such was the character which he had acquired, when notice was given by proclamation that he had removed to a magnificent building in the midst of the city, and that his table should be spread for the public, and that the stranger should be welcome to his bed. The multitude soon rushed like a torrent to his door, where they beheld him distributing bread to the hungry, and apparel to the naked—his eye softened with compassion, and his cheek glowing with delight. Everyone gazed with astonishment at the prodigy, and the murmur of innumerable voices increasing like the sound of approaching thunder, Carazan beckoned with his hand; attention suspended the tumult in a moment, and he thus gratified the curiosity which had procured him audience.

“To Him who touches the mountains and the smoke, the Almighty and the most Merciful, be everlasting honor. He has ordained sleep to be the minister of instruction, and his visions have reproved me in the night. As I was sitting alone in my harem, with my lamp burning before me, computing the product of my merchandise, and exulting in the increase of my wealth, I fell into a deep sleep, and the hand of him who dwells in the third heaven was upon me. I beheld the Angel of Death coming forward like a whirlwind, and he smote me before I could deprecate the blow. At the same moment I felt myself lifted from the ground, and transported with astonishing rapidity through the regions of the air. The earth was contracted to an atom beneath; and the stars glowed round me with a lustre that obscured the sun. The gate of Paradise was now in sight, and I was intercepted by a sudden brightness which no human eye could behold: the irrevocable sentence was now pronounced; my day of probation was passed; and from the evil of my life nothing

could be taken away, nor could anything be added to the good. When I reflected that my lot for eternity was cast, which not all the powers of nature could reverse, my confidence totally forsook me; and while I stood trembling and silent, covered with confusion and chilled with horror, I was thus addressed by the Radiance that flamed before me: 'Carazan, thy worship has not been accepted, because it was not promoted by *love of God*; neither can righteousness be rewarded because it was not produced by *love of man*; for thy own sake only hast thou rendered to every man his due; and thou hast approached the Almighty only for thyself. Thou hast not looked up with gratitude, nor round thee with kindness. Around thee thou hast, indeed, beheld vice and folly; but if vice and folly could justify thy parsimony, would they not condemn the bounty of heaven? Remember, Carazan, that thou hast shut compassion from thy heart, and grasped thy treasure with a hand of iron; thou hast lived for thyself; and, therefore, henceforth and for ever, thou shalt subsist alone! From the light of heaven and from the society of all beings thou shalt be driven; solitude shall protract the lingering hour of eternity, and darkness aggravate the hour of despair!' At this moment I was driven by some secret and irresistible power through the glowing system of Creation, and passed innumerable worlds in an instant. As I approached the verge of Nature, I perceived the shadows of total and boundless vacuity deepen before me—a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude and darkness. Unutterable horror seized me at the prospect, and this exclamation burst from me with the vehemence of desire—'Oh, that I had been doomed for ever to the common receptacle of impenitence and guilt! There society would have alleviated the torment of despair, and the rage of fire would not have excluded the comfort of light. Oh, if I had been condemned to reside on a comet that would return but once in a thousand years to the regions of light and life, the hope of these periods, however distant, would cheer me in the dreary interval of cold and darkness, and the vicissitude would divide eternity into time!'

"While this thought passed over my mind I lost sight of the remotest star, and the last glimmering of light was quenched in utter darkness. The agonies of despair every moment increased, as every moment augmented my distance from the habitable world. I reflected, with intolerable anguish, that when ten thousand years had carried me beyond the reach of all but that Power who fills infinitude, I should look forward into an immense abyss of darkness, through which I should still live without succor and without society, further and further still, for ever and for ever. I then stretched out my hands towards the regions of existence, with an emotion that awakened me. Thus have I been taught to estimate society, like every other blessing, by its loss. My heart is warmed to liberality; and I am zealous to communicate the happiness I feel to those from whom it is derived; for the society of one wretch, whom in the pride of prosperity I would have spurned from my door, would, in the dreadful solitude to which I was condemned, have been more highly prized than the gold of Afric or the gems of Golconda."

At this reflection upon his dream Carazan became suddenly silent, and looked upward in an ecstasy of gratitude and devotion. The multitude were struck at once with the precept and example; and the Caliph, to whom the event was related that he might be liberal beyond the power of gold, commanded it to be recorded for the benefit of posterity.

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## Anecdotes of William Penn

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JOSEPH NAISH, of Congresbury, who died in 1822, aged seventy-two, father-in-law of Samuel Capper, was acquainted with a person whose father remembered William Penn when he resided near Reading. He could relate many anecdotes of him, but the two following only are now remembered by S. Capper:

On one occasion, coming to Reading to attend Meeting, several Friends spoke to him after Meeting saying they should be glad of his company to dine, but feared they had not suitable accommodation or provision, etc., for him. At last, a plain, honest woman asked him to her house, saying she could furnish all he could require. W. P. accepted her invitation and accompanied her to her very humble dwelling, in which was a small shop where she sold provisions, etc. She took thence some bread, butter and cheese, and W. Penn made a very sufficient dinner, much enjoyed his visit, and, at parting, heartily thanked her for her hospitality and especially for her cordial kindness and hearty welcome.

On another occasion coming to Reading and being about to proceed thence to London in order to attend at the Court of James II., as was his frequent practice, several Friends manifested their uneasiness at his being so much at Court, expressing their fears that in such a place, and in such company, he would be in great danger of departing from that simplicity of demeanour which Friends believed it their duty to maintain.

W. Penn, after listening to their observations, expressed his wish to take one of their number with him to the Court of James, and one of them accordingly accompanied him thither. Being duly introduced, he remained with him during the whole time, thus having a full opportunity of observing the tenour of W.P.'s carriage, as well towards the king as towards others with whom he came in contact. Finding that his conduct, mode of address and general demeanour were quite in harmony with his profession and practice as a Friend, he was entirely satisfied and was thus put in a position to allay the uneasiness of such of his friends as had entertained doubts on this head.

From a letter of Thomas Mounsey, of Sunderland, to his uncle, Thomas Robson, of Liverpool, dated 19 3 mo. 1850. In the J. J. Green Collection in D.