

Appendix Six

"CHILDREN OF THE VALLEYS"

The following is a transcript of the sound track of an 8mm documentary motion picture made and narrated by myself and my son Stephan for presentation at the Louis Paul Cardon family reunion, November 25, 1977. This was, for the most part, written before my first trip to Italy, based on the older sources then available to me. As I indicated in the main article, these sources were somewhat romanticized and out of date. Therefore there are some inaccuracies in various portions of this document, particularly those dealing with Vaudois history prior to and at the time of Waldo, and in respect to other matters [see, e.g., Appendix One relative to the death of Elisee Jahier, the son of Bernardin Jahier, which is incorrect on the sound track]. My original sources were strongly partisan in perspective, and were I to rewrite the sound track today, I would take a more even handed approach.

... Marriner Cardon, August, 2003

North of the warm Mediterranean Riviera the Maritime Alps rise abruptly, part of a vast semi-circular mountain chain. Beyond them lie the Cottian Alps, named for an ancient kingdom with which Julius Caesar established alliances. Our interest lies in an area stretching from Monte Viso, where Hannibal struggled with his elephants in 218 B.C. northward to Montgenevre pass, the ancient route from Rome to Gaul.

Within an area smaller than present-day Mesa, Arizona, are several noteworthy valleys: The Valley of Luserna or Val Pellice as it is now called, with Rora Valley branching into it from the south; Angrogna, sometimes called the "Valley of Groans"--and at its head, accessible only through a narrow gorge, a high mountain rimmed meadow--Pra del Tor; eastward, toward the broad Piedmont plains the Valley of Roccapiatta with the remains of Cardon homes still overlooking it; the Valley of the Germanasca River and Promollo, an ancestral home, and finally the wide Valley of the Chisone--once occupied by French Waldensians, but after centuries of struggle given over to Catholic invaders. The principal city of this area is Torre Pellice, also called "La Tour."

The present boundaries of France and Italy follow the highest crests of the Cottian Alps, but in the times of our interest, sovereignty over these valleys shifted many times--from Roman and Holy Roman Emperors to Italian Princes to French Kings to Italian Dukes to French Emperor and then to Sardinian King.

The inhabitants of these valleys speak their own dialect of mixed French and Italian. They are called by themselves the "Vaudois," an old French term meaning those who dwell in the valleys. By the English-speaking world they are called Waldensians, some say after a French religious reformer who fled to them for refuge in the 12th century. But Peter Waldo may have taken his name from his protectors, as writings from before Waldo's time call them the "Valdese" or Waldensians.

The unique history of these valleys is almost as ancient as the Christian religion itself. Through Montgenevre Pass at the head of Chisone Valley, Christian missionaries crossed the Alps on their way to Gaul in the 1st century. If the Apostle Paul ever journeyed to Gaul and Spain as some traditions suggest, he may well have come this way. These earliest missionaries left the beginnings of a church organization. Roman Christians, fleeing from Nero's and later

persecutions added to this nucleus--and started a tradition of seeking refuge here which lasted for over a thousand years.

In 312 A.D., a pagan Roman ruler named Constantine, on the eve of a great battle for control of the Empire, saw in his dream a cross eclipsing the sun. After marking his soldiers' shields and banners with this sign he was victorious and attributed his success to the God of the Christians. Though he remained a pagan to his deathbed, within a dozen years he made Christianity the favored religion of the Roman Empire. In 325 he sat in a purple robe on a golden throne amid the assembled Bishops of Christianity at Nicea. There, he dictated the creed he felt was necessary to unite the church into a political force responsive to his bidding. The cross became the official emblem of the Roman Legions. Christians, who had previously suffered martyrdom rather than serve in the Roman army were denied the sacraments of the church if they refused to bear arms.

The church, which had lost its apostolic organization through persecution and dispersion, was restructured along the lines of the civil state and became an adjunct to it. Rome and Constantinople vied with each other for honors as the capital of Christianity. To reinforce their claims, the Roman clergy sought, and even created, evidence to support a developing tradition that Peter, the chief apostle, had served in dual capacity as presiding general authority for the church, and as the local presiding authority or Bishop of Rome. After Peter's death, they argued, his powers in both positions must have passed to the subsequent Bishops of Rome.

With official sponsorship of the church by the Empire, proselytes applied for baptism in wholesale numbers. These people brought with them many deep-rooted pagan traditions. The Roman Church first tolerated, then accepted these into its ritual forms. From the North African cult of Isis and Osiris came the madonna concept and the 40 day lenten period of mourning before Easter. From the Cult of Mithris, the Light God, the use of candles in worship. From the Cult of Bacchus came the basis for the doctrine of transubstantiation -- that the sacramental emblems become the literal body and blood of the Savior. The mystical ceremony by which this change takes place became the Mass.

Bishop Sylvester of Rome enthusiastically welcomed the new prominence that followed his consecration by Constantine, but in the north of Italy, there were many who staunchly resisted the secular changes in the church. A 13th century Catholic inquisitor wrote about the "heresies" he was fighting. Calling the Vaudois "Leonists" he wrote: "Among all these sects there is not one more pernicious to the church than . . . the Leonists. . . it is of longer duration, for some say it has existed from the time of Sylvester, others from the time of the Apostles. . . It is more general . . . (and) the Leonists have a great appearance of piety.

In 370, Vigilantius, a dissident Spanish elder, found refuge here. He criticized the Roman worship of images, saints and relics, prayers for the dead, and other innovations in the church. In 820, Bishop Claude of Torino, the chief city of the Piedmont region, removed images from the churches and banned the worship of relics. He denied the mystic doctrine of the Mass and denounced the claim of the Bishop of Rome to authority over other Christian leaders.

Although they were the refuge place of many who were opposed to changes in the church, for many centuries the valleys knew relative peace. They were off the main line of travel and both Popes and secular rulers had more pressing problems than to meddle with the quiet and peace loving people tucked away in an out-of-the-way corner of the Alps. But when the Roman Popes finally achieved supremacy over the temporal rulers of Europe, they turned their attention to rooting out those they felt to be unorthodox in faith. In 1030, twenty-eight

Piedmont dissenters were burned at the stake here in the cathedral square in Milan. By then, holding fast to the simple faith of their fathers had become an offense worthy of death. One of the earliest Vaudois writings states: "If any man love those who are good he must needs love God and Jesus Christ. Now such an one is called a Waldensian and is worthy to be punished."

To this wide valley, at the end of the 12th century, came the reformer, Peter of Lyons, France, and his band of refugees, fleeing from the inquisition. Since the family name "Cardon" existed in Lyons, perhaps our ancestors were among them. For 500 years this was an almost exclusively protestant area. But this was the most exposed and most difficult to defend of the Vaudois valleys. Centuries of Catholic inquisitions and crusades drove the Vaudois that dwelt here into exile and converted their churches into Catholic places of worship. Those that did not leave had to conform to Catholicism or face imprisonment, servitude as galley slaves or death.

Here in the village of Traverse lived a Vaudois family named Lantaret. As they were fleeing from the inquisition, one of the sons gazed fondly back at their home and fields. Turning his back on the others he said "I give up" and returned to accept Catholicism as the price of retaining his home. To this day his descendants are known by the surname "Lantaret-Relanqui" or "Give up Lantaret".

After the arrival of Peter of Lyons, or Peter Waldo as he came to be known, the Vaudois began to actively proselyte outside their own areas. Unlike their orthodox neighbors who were generally illiterate, the Vaudois youth were taught to read the Bible. In this mountain stronghold they held what they called the "School of the Prophets." Here the young men often memorized the entire new testament. Then they were sent forth, two by two, as itinerant missionaries, usually disguised as peddlers. Waldensian branches sprang up in many parts of Europe. They translated the Bible from Latin into the common Romance tongue--the first Bible translation available for popular use. Knowledge of the Bible was supremely important to these people and one who knew the Scriptures was presumed to be a Vaudois. Destruction of confiscated Bibles became a common Catholic weapon for combating the Vaudois Heresy.

In the 14th century there were sporadic events of violence directed against the Vaudois. One aggressive inquisitor named Borelli had 150 captured Vaudois men with many of their wives and children burned at the stake in Grenoble, France. On Christmas Day in the year 1400 this same Borelli swept into the village of Pragelas at the head of a troop of soldiers. The villagers who escaped the first onslaught and had time to flee found themselves at nightfall in the grip of an enemy as merciless as Borelli himself. Huddled on the snowy mountainside with no protection but the clothes they wore, scores of young, the aged, the sickly and infirm did not survive 'til morning.

In 1487 Pope Innocent the 8th issued a mandate that the Vaudois should be "crushed like venomous snakes." He promised the French and Savoie troops who would join his legate Cataneo in killing the heretics remission of their sins and good title to any property they might seize.

As Cataneo's troops approached the valleys the women and children fled for safety to Pra del Tor. The men took their stand near the entry to Angrogna Valley; farmers with rocks, slings and a few bows against armor-clad knights and foot soldiers. As one of the Catholic captains, the Black Knight of Mondovi, shouted his battle orders he raised his helmet visor and was instantly struck through the eye by an arrow launched by a youthful Vaudois Bowman. This precipitous death of their leader unnerved the Pope's soldiers and they fled down the valley.

Incensed at this defeat, Cataneo regrouped his forces and a few days later sent them again up to the course of Angrogna Valley. They passed the site of their first rout and continued on with growing confidence. Finally, at the head of the valley, they halted briefly and then plunged forward into this narrow gorge--then in places only wide enough for two to walk abreast. This chasm separating Angrogna from Pra del Tor is more than a mile in length, and into it Cataneo's troops surged, apparently unhindered. But as the advance guard neared the entry to the Pra, a thick mist settled over and into the gorge, halting and bewildering the Pope's soldiers. The Vaudois interpreted this as a divine intervention on their behalf. Shortly, Cataneo's troops heard, crashing down from the fogbound heights above them, great boulders torn loose by the Vaudois defenders. Their confusion turned into terror and then to abject panic. Some were crushed by the boulders, some were trampled by their comrades in arms, some slipped to their deaths in the torrents below. A few made their way back to report to Cataneo. Similar successful defenses against overwhelming odds occurred in other Vaudois communities, and it is estimated that a large portion of the Catholic troops enlisted for this crusade met their ends in these valleys.

In the 1500's, the Protestant Reformation burst forth in an of the countries of northern Europe. Contacts between the leaders of these movements and the Vaudois resulted in a conference or synod of Protestant leaders here at Chamforans in Angrogna Valley in 1532. The knowledge that others were now adopting the religious principles that they had so long taught gave new enthusiasm to the Vaudois, and in the years that followed new churches were constructed in many of their communities. For at least a half century prior to this almost all Vaudois services were held in caverns, on hillsides, or in the humble homes of the members.

One of their oldest churches, which the Vaudois call temples, is this one in the town of Angrogna San Lorenzo where certainly many of our ancestors worshipped.

As their gift to the Reformation Movement, the Vaudois commissioned a translation of the Bible into French which was completed in 1535 and was the popular version for French speaking people until modern times.

From 1536 to 1559 sovereignty over this area passed to the King of France, and these were peaceful years. In 1560 an inquisition was appointed by the Catholic authorities and persecutions commenced anew. In November of that year, an army appeared on the banks of the Pellice, prepared to enforce conversion to Catholicism. Against this army, the Vaudois could array only 1200 men of a total population of 18,000. These men, after fasting and partaking of communion, prepared to defend their homes.

Their first skirmish took place where the Black Knight of Mondovi had fallen 70 years before. Again uncanny chance -- or providence -- favored the Vaudois. As night encampments were being made, the sound of a child beating a drum in a hamlet on the hillside -- perhaps one of our ancestors in nearby Les Malan -- led the Pope's troops to believe they were under attack. Their movements to meet this imagined threat were misinterpreted by the Vaudois as the beginnings of a sneak attack on their own positions. The Vaudois rushed forth in counterattack and the confused Catholics retreated.

The Papal troops occupied all of Val Pellice. Pra del Tor had again become the refuge for all the Vaudois people and, ironically, for the wives and daughters of the Catholics who lived among them in times of peace. These had greater faith for the safety of their loved ones in the hands of their Vaudois neighbors than in those of the Catholic troops sent to rescue them from heresy.

When the Catholic leader, Count La Trinita, offered to negotiate, a policy of conciliation was adopted until the Vaudois realized they were in virtual captivity. In January, 1561, they were ordered to attend mass within 24 hours or suffer death. That night the men gathered on a low hill and each accepted this oath: "We promise to maintain the Bible, whole and without admixture, according to the usage of the true Apostolic Church, persevering in this holy religion, though it be at the peril of our life, in order that we may transmit it to our children, intact and pure, as we received it from our fathers." The next day, pretending to comply with the Count's order, the men attended their churches which had been taken over by the Catholics. At a signal, the crucifix, images, candles and other paraphernalia of Roman worship were ripped down and trampled and the Priests driven out. Then, issuing forth from their churches the Vaudois began the long, hard task of expelling the invaders.

La Trinita knew he would have to capture the Pra del Tor to be successful in his conquest. After two unsuccessful attempts and while peace negotiations were in progress, he marched his army up the Angrogna Valley and sent separate detachments up the mountains to cross over the ridges into the Pra. Those attempting to pass through the chasm met with the musket fire of the Vaudois defenders. As fallen troops piled up in the narrow defile those pressing forward from behind were soon deadlocked. Again they faced the deadly avalanche of boulders rolled down the mountainside. Within this gorge that day so many Catholic troops fell victim to rocks and musket fire that the waters of the Angrogna River flowed red. La Trinita, waiting below, first rejoiced at the bloody waters, taking them for a signal that the Pra had been conquered. When he learned they signaled the complete defeat of his army, he left the valleys, never to return.

During this war one of our ancestral families, the Malans, lived in this hamlet on the hillside overlooking Angrogna Valley. The Stalle's probably lived nearby.

While no organized crusade struck at the valleys for many years, sporadic persecutions continued and in 1599, the 14 year old son of our ancestor, Bernadin Jahier, was captured and put to death for refusing to attend mass.

In 1630 a French army moved into the valleys and brought with it the plague. Before the snows brought relief all but three of the Vaudois pastors had fallen its victims. In the family records of our ancestors the year 1630 appears with unusual frequency as the date of death. The Vaudois sought additional pastors from Switzerland -- and those that responded spoke French. From that time forward their church services were in French rather than in a mixture of that language and Italian.

In 1655, the Piedmontese governor ordered all Vaudois families in this area of the Luserna Valley -- where many of our ancestral families then lived -- to convert to Catholicism or move from their homes within three days. In the dead of winter they picked up what belongings they could carry and sought refuge with Vaudois families in the higher valleys. The governor offered peace if the other settlements would only quarter a regiment of troops in each for a few days as a token of loyalty. For two days the Catholic soldiers were quartered in the Vaudois homes and ate and slept with the families.

At 4 a.m. on the third day -- the Saturday before Easter of 1655 -- a cannon boomed from this tower situated on a hillside overlooking Torre Pellice. At this secretly awaited signal, the soldiers sprang upon their sleeping hosts. No age was spared, babies were slung against rocks; men were tied into balls and rolled down mountainsides; every atrocity, mutilation and horror known to man was perpetrated and counted a virtue, because the victims were deemed heretics. This was the great massacre of 1655 about which the English poet,

Milton, wrote:

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy Slaughtered Saints whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine Mountains cold
Even them who kept thy faith so pure of old
When all our fathers worship stock and stones
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the Rocks "

These engravings, published in 1669, depict these events and include this representation of the death of our ancestral relative, Daniel Cardon, at the hands of the Catholic soldiers.

Our scene now shifts to Rora Valley. There a Vaudois leader named Gianavello had a foreboding and was on watch. He spotted the 500 Catholic troops sent to finish off his hamlet and with but six companions laid an ambush in the narrowest defile on the pass. Well chosen placement of his men and the reverberation of musket fire from the echoing rocks gave the impression of a much larger welcoming party and the Catholic force retreated. The next day 18 Vaudois routed an invasion force somewhat larger than the first. The third invading force was so well deployed and so large that the inhabitants of Rora fled their homes and left them to be plundered by the Catholics. As the governor's troops, booty laden and driving the cattle of the Vaudois before them, passed back through the pass they were attacked and scattered by Gianavello and the men of Rora.

The governor's fury now knew no bounds and he sent an army of thousands to attack the hamlet of Rora from three sides at once. Gianavello's troops of defenders was driven deep into the mountains and many of their families suffered the same fate as those massacred in the other villages.

Gianavello and our distant great uncle, Bartalemy Jahier, led a guerilla war against the occupying army. After Bartalemy's death in an ambush, his brother, our ancestor Jacques Jahier, took his place as leader of the defenders. Political pressure from France and England led to a negotiated peace but left Catholic forts overshadowing the Vaudois villages.

Thirty years later Louis XIV of France sought his confessor's advice on what he might do to assure his welcome in heaven. The reply was: exterminate the Protestants of France and the Alpine Valleys. A treaty was made with the Duke of Savoy and in January 1686 this decree was issued:

"The Vaudois are forbidden to have religious meetings under pain of death and confiscation of their goods. All children of Protestant parents shall be compulsorily trained up as Roman Catholics. Every newborn child shall, within a week of birth be brought to the Priest to be admitted to the Roman Catholic Church under pain, on the part of the mother of being publicly whipped, and on the part of the father of laboring 5 years in the galleys."

Shortly thereafter, the records indicate, a number of Cardon children from three families, Jean, Daniel, Madeline, Marie and Piacenza, were taken from their widowed mothers and lodged with Catholic families in nearby areas. Later that year many of the Vaudois, including a number of our ancestral families, fled into exile in Switzerland. For three years the valleys were nearly deserted.

Then, in 1688, the Vaudois Soldier-Pastor Henri Arnaud, and 800 fighting men crossed Lake Geneva and marched southward to reclaim their ancient homeland. After defeating a much larger French force sent to divert them, they entered the valleys and scoured the Piedmontese troops garrisoned there -- striking quickly and then dissolving back into the hills.

The Duke of Savoy marshalled his forces and sent them to track down and destroy this little band which soon dwindled to less than 400 men. Arnaud was finally surrounded atop the terraces of this natural fortress. After one unsuccessful attack in early winter, the Catholics retired to await the return of spring, leaving only a garrison of guards. Arnaud spent the winter strengthening his position, and with spring came the Catholic armies -- 4000 French and a larger number of Piedmontese arrayed against Arnaud's 370. Nearly 500 of the Catholics lost their lives on the first day of battle, while, incredibly, not a single Vaudois life was lost. A state of siege ensued while great cannons were brought up to positions that overlooked the Vaudois fortifications. On the eve of battle, however, a thick fog settled over the mountain fortress and the surrounding valleys. When it at last lifted, the Vaudois were miles away, having silently scaled down from their fortified position and slipped between the fingers of their besiegers.

In the backcountry hamlet at this battleground there is a small museum which contains a list of 128 names known of those who accompanied Arnaud. Of these, four were Cardons, one likely our direct ancestor, Jean Cardon. Other direct ancestors were Phillipe Roman and Bartalemy Malan. Among the remainder are over a dozen with our ancestral names, Gaudin, Bonnet, Rostagn, Gardiol, Mondon, Coisson, Robert, Forneron, Peyrot and Pons.

Successful at last in reaching Pra del Tor where they hoped to make a final stand, Arnaud and his men were surprised to be met by emissaries from the Duke of Savoy who offered favorable peace terms. While his soldiers held the Vaudois under siege, the Duke himself had made a new political alliance with Protestant England, and further war with the Protestants in his own country was inappropriate. After a three year exile, the Vaudois were restored to their homeland in what they call "the Glorious Return."

The fortunes of war are strange, and this same Duke, Victor Amadeus II, who forced the Vaudois into exile was himself forced to flee Torino for his life in 1706. He sought refuge here in Rora at the home of our kinsman, Antonio Durand. The humble room in which the Duke slept is still in use today. In the museum at Torre Pellice may be seen a silver spoon, given to Antonio Durand by the Duke as a token of gratitude for his hospitality.

What was the nature of these people -- their personal lives -- that they should be so hated of those that dwelt around them? What distinguished them from other people of their times? One of the Catholic Inquisitors, Ranier, in his writings against them, noted: "The heretics may be known by their manners and by their language; for they are well ordered and modest in their manners; they avoid pride in their dress, the materials of which are neither expensive or mean"

From another Catholic Inquisitor, DeSychel: "They are such scrupulous observers of honor and chastity, that their neighbors, though of a contrary faith, entrusted to them their wives and daughters, to preserve them from the insolence of the soldiery." Again from Ranier: "They are temperate in eating and drinking . . . they do not frequent taverns or dances . . . They are on their guard against the indulgence of anger. They may be known also by their concise and modest discourse; they guard against indulgence in jesting, slander or profanity."

One of their own historians noted, on the subject of profanity: "I am convinced in a whole century here one could not hear the name of God taken in vain."

When, in 1592, the French government ordered the destruction of the Vaudois in the town of Salucis, one of the council of that town wrote: ". . . his Majesty must assuredly have been misinformed as to these poor people, who were good men and did him honorable and faithful service, living peaceable with their neighbors, with whom there was no fault to find except their religion."

There were two characteristics of their religious devotion that were frequently noted. The first was their knowledge of the scriptures. All classes studied the Bible, which from the 12th century onward they had in their popular tongue. Many, both men and women, could recite complete books of the Bible. Their pastors and missionaries often memorized both the Old and New Testaments.

Their second notable characteristic was the singing of biblical psalms. So common was it for the Vaudois to entertain themselves by signing psalms while working in the fields or about their homes that anyone found to be so engaged was presumed to be a Vaudois.

In 1848 their then ruler, King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia, revoked all of the ancient edicts against the Vaudois and granted complete freedom of religion, restoring to them all the civil and political rights accorded to his other subjects.

The following year, October 1849, in a mountain valley halfway around the world, 35 year old Apostle Lorenzo Snow was called to establish a mission of the Latter-Day Saints Church in Italy. After an overland journey of six months he left New York for England and in June of 1850 he arrived in Genoa, Italy, to take up his assigned responsibilities. Lorenzo became very depressed with the prospect of proselyting in Catholic Genoa, but from an Englishman he encountered he learned of the Protestant valleys in the Piedmont region. He sent his companions, Elders Toronto and Stenhouse to learn more of the area. On July 1, 1850, he noted in his journal:

"I have received a letter from Elders Stenhouse and Toronto. I have felt an intense desire to know the state of that province to which I had given them an appointment, as I felt assured it would be the field of my mission. Now with a heart full of gladness, I find an opening is presented in the valleys of Piedmont, when all other parts of Italy are closed against our efforts. I believe that the Lord has there hidden up a people amid the Alpine mountains, and it is the voice of the Spirit that I shall commence something of importance in that part of this dark nation."

Apostle Snow joined his companions in Torre Pellice which he called by its French name, "La Tour." Elder Toronto shortly left for Sicily to visit his family there and in September Elder Jabez Woodard arrived from England. These missionaries made little headway because, as Elder Snow commented, "Every man holds a creed which has been transmitted from sire to son for a thousand years . . . Often he will lay his hand on his heart and swear by the faith of his forefathers that he will live and die as they lived and died.

In early September an incident occurred which gave them some encouragement. The son of their landlady became deathly ill, and recognizing this as an opportunity, the three missionaries after fasting, retired to the mountains to pray. Apostle Snow wrote that he knew of no sacrifice he could possibly make that he was not willing to offer to have the Lord grant

his request in this child's behalf. Returning in early afternoon, they anointed and blessed the child. The next day he was much recovered and soon was fully restored--much to the joy of both his parents and the missionary trio.

On September 19, 1850, Apostle Snow and Elders Stenhouse and Woodard ascended Mount Vandalino -- called by them "Mt. Brigham" and atop this prominent rock outcropping, the Castelluzzo -- which they named the "Rock of Prophecy" -- they organized the Church in Italy and formally commenced their missionary labors.

Some distance from La Tour lived our ancestor, Philippe Cardon, his wife, four sons and three daughters. Originally he had lived in this small hillside hamlet in Prarostino parish -- named "Les Cardon" for his ancestors who had lived there many generations. He was a stonemason -- a builder -- an architect. As he had achieved some measure of prosperity in the early 1840's he moved from his ancestral home down into the Piedmont Valley where he built his home and bought a farm and a vineyard. Their first home in the valley burned and the family was left without shelter in the dead of winter. But a larger and better home soon replaced it and Philippe continued to prosper, employing a crew of men to work under his direction on his building contracts.

His daughter, Marie Magdeline, remembers the Saturday afternoon when Philippe returned home, unexpectedly. A man he had just hired told a tale of three foreign missionaries preaching strange religious doctrines at La Tour. Philippe remembered a vivid dream his daughter had had years before of three men presenting to her an unfamiliar book of scriptures, and felt compelled to learn more about these preachers. Stopping only to change clothes and gather a few essentials, Philippe walked that afternoon and all night to arrive in La Tour in time to hear the Mormons speak at a meeting the following day. He brought the missionaries back with him to his home, and there Marie had the remarkable experience of looking up from her book, just as she had done in her childhood dream to see three strangers standing there, who soon laid before her and her family the additional scriptures of the Restored Gospel.

Philippe and his family, except for one married daughter, were among the first to accept baptism into the Mormon Church in Italy. Because the mission records failed to show the day of their original baptisms, he and some of the family were rebaptized in 1852.

After the conversion of Philippe's family, Mormon meetings were often held in his home, and in summer in a large bowery which he and his sons constructed nearby. He had a large and prosperous farm and often, Marie reports, a full miller's bag of flour would be baked into bread on Saturday to feed everyone who came from all over the mountains to hear the Mormons preach on Sunday.

Predictably, the Vaudois ministers came to regard conversion to Mormonism as an evil nearly as bad as acceptance of Catholicism. Active opposition to the work of the Elders began, and on occasions it was necessary for them to hide for their safety. There were those who would have liked to forcibly convince them to leave the valleys. Somewhere on the south slopes of the hillsides overlooking Prarostino parish, President Franklin D. Richards and two Elders found haven near the home of a Mormon convert, Jean Pierre Stalle', and his teen-aged daughter, Suzette, carried goat's milk and other food to them.

In 1854 the Church authorities advised the Cardons to sell their property and emigrate to Utah. Philippe gave his daughter Anne a large segment of the farm and then sold the remainder for enough to comfortably pay passage to the United States for his family and for five other Church members. They Left Prarostino in early February and sailed to Liverpool

where they embarked on the ship "John M. Woods" bound for New Orleans.

President Richards wrote to Jean Pierre Stalle' and advised him to emigrate. In December, 1855, Jean Pierre, his wife and four children sailed from Liverpool on the ship "John J. Boyd." They reached Florence, Nebraska, in time to join the first handcart company for the trek to Utah. The journal of the company contains this entry for August 17, 1856: "Along the Sweetwater River. Peter Staley died today. He was from Italy."

After reaching Utah, Jean Pierre's widow married Philippe Cardon. His daughter Suzette married Philippe's son Louis Philip. Most of the Cardons in the southwestern states are descended from Louis Philip and Suzette and therefore have a double portion of Vaudois ancestry in their genealogies.

When President Snow first visited the Vaudois valleys he encountered one of their hymns which forcibly impressed him with its aptness to the circumstances of both the Vaudois and the Mormon pioneers in their mountain homelands. He translated the words into English and upon his return to Utah hummed the tune to Evans Stevens who arranged the music as we now know it. This hymn serves for all Mormons of Vaudois descent as a fitting memorial of the ties that still bind them to the "Children of the Valleys." As originally composed by the Vaudois poetess, Felicia Hemans, and transcribed by President Snow, it reads:

"For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.
Thou has made Thy children mighty
By the touch of the mountain sod.
Thou has fixed our ark of refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod.
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.

We are watchers of a beacon,
Whose light must never die;
We are guardians of an altar
"Midst the silence of the sky."
The rocks yield founts of courage,
Struck forth as by Thy rod.
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.

For the dark resounding caverns,
Where Thy still, small voice is heard;
For the strong tall pines of the forests,
That by thy breath are stirred;
For the storm, on whose free pinions,
Thy Spirit walks abroad;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.

The royal eagle darteth
O'er his quarry from the heights,
And the stag, that knows no master
Seeks here his wild delights;
But we, for Thy communion,
Have sought the mountain sod.
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.

The banner of the chieftain,
Far, far below us waves;
The war-horse of the spearman
Cannot reach our lofty caves.
The dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom's last abode
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.

For the shadow of Thy presence
Round our camp of rock outspread;
For the stern defiles of battle,
Bearing record of our dead;
For the snows and for the torrents,
For the free hearts burial sod;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God.