

happily it will wander—yet my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your custom, when sitting among you in deep peace, which some outwelling tears would rather confirm than disturb, I have reverted to the times of your beginnings, and the sowings of the seed by Fox and Dewesbury—I have witnessed that, which brought before my eyes your heroic tranquillity inflexible to the rude jests and serious violences of the insolent soldiery, republican or royalist, sent to molest you—for ye sate betwixt the fires of two persecutions, the outcast and off-scouring of church and presbytery—I have seen the reeling sea-ruffian, who had wandered into your receptacle, with the avowed intention of disturbing your quiet, from the very spirit of the place receive in a moment a new heart, and presently sit among ye as a lamb amidst lambs. And I remembered Penn before his accusers, and Fox in the bail-dock, where he was lifted up in spirit, as he tells us, and “the judge and the jury” became as dead men under his feet.”

Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church narratives, to read Sewel's History of the Quakers. It is in folio, and is the abstract of the journals of Fox, and the Primitive Friends. It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley and his colleagues. Here is nothing to stagger you, nothing to make you distrust, no suspicion of alloy, no drop or dreg of the worldly or ambitious spirit. You will here read the true story of that much-injured, ridiculed (who perhaps hath been a by word in your mouths) James Naylor; what dreadful sufferings, with what patience he endured, even to the boring through of his tongue with red hot irons, without a murmur; and with what strength of mind when the delusion which he had fallen into, which they stigmatized for blasphemy, had given way to clearer thoughts, he could renounce his error in a strain of the beautifullest humility, yet keep his first grounds and be a

Quaker still! So different from the practice of your common converts from enthusiasm, who, when they apostatize, *apostatize all*, and think they can never get far enough from the society of their former errors, even to the renunciation of some saving truths with which they had been mingled, not implicated.

Get the writings of John Woolman by heart; and love the early Quakers.

How far the followers of these good men in our days have kept to the primitive spirit, or in what proportion they have substituted formality for it, the judge of spirits can alone determine. I have seen faces in their assemblies, upon which the dove sate visibly brooding. Others again I have watched, when my thoughts should have been better engaged, in which I could possibly detect nothing but a black inanity. But quiet was in all, and the disposition to unanimity and the absence of the fierce controversial workings. If the spiritual pretensions of the Quakers have abated, at least they make few pretences. Hypocrites they certainly are not in their preaching. It is seldom indeed, that you shall see one amongst them get up to hold forth. Only now and then a trembling female, generally *ancient*, voice is heard, you cannot guess from what part of the meeting it proceeds, with a low, buzzing, musical sound, laying out a few words which “she thought might suit the condition of some present,” a quaking diffidence which leaves no possibility of supposing that anything of female vanity was mixed up, where the tones were so full of tenderness, and a restraining modesty. The men, from what I have observed, speak seldomer.

Once only, and it was some years ago, I witnessed a sample of the old Foxianorgasm. It was a man of giant stature, who, as Wordsworth phrases it, might have danced “from head to foot equipped in iron mail.” His frame was of iron too. But *he* was malleable. I saw him shake all over with the spirit—I dare not say, of delusion. The strivings of the outer man were unutterable; ~~he seemed not to speak, but to~~