

were laid hold of by the authorities; turn out to be James Nayler and company."

Sadly ludicrous is this picture of Carlyle—this poor fanatic with his forlorn and draggled companions—tragic insanity enacting its involuntary comedy, and making us smile through our tears. Instead of mercifully shutting up the actors in a mad-house, the authorities of that day conceived the affair to be a stupendous blasphemy, and regarded themselves as avengers in the matter. Nayler was solemnly sent up under a strong guard to London; and the Parliament of England actually spent a good part of two months in hearing evidence and debating over this case of mental delusion. Their horrible sentence on the poor maniac was, "that he should stand two hours in the pillory at Westminster, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets to the Old Exchange, to be there set in the pillory two hours more, to have his tongue bored through with a hot iron, and his forehead branded with the letter B to indicate 'Blasphemer.' Then to be taken to Bristol, carried through the streets on horseback, with his face backward, whipped again, and then committed to Bridewell prison, London, at hard labor, till released by Parliament." All this was carried out to the letter, notwithstanding the efforts of some humane persons, Cromwell among the number, to arrest or mitigate the sentence. Poor Nayler bore it all calmly; and it is touching to find that he afterwards saw his error, wept bitter penitential tears over his mournful delusion, and humbly acknowledged that he had fallen through want of watchfulness. It is also beautiful and touching to find the Quakers of that day receiving back into their communion their greatly erring but deeply repentant brother. His life was ever after blameless and beautiful in its humility and lowly charity, and his death-bed full of peace and hope.

In the same year that Nayler suffered, George Fox visited Exeter, preaching in the Friends' meetings, which were now established in many places, as he went along. From Exeter he passed on to Bristol, where, in an orchard outside the town, some thousands gathered to hear him. This orchard was so often used for such purposes that it was regarded by Quakers as hallowed ground, notwithstanding their strong protests against consecrated brick and mortar. Leaving Bristol, he came to London, holding crowded meetings as he went. As he entered the city he observed a crowd near Hyde Park, and on approaching it he saw that the