

August the 6th, 1797

“Attended by particular invitation, a public meeting of the Quakers, at which P. W. of G. with his suite and between three and four hundred soldiers, were present. There were four principal speakers, two men and two women. The dismal twang, the braying whine, the suspiration of forced breath, the sudden and violent transitions, from oracular slowness to vehement rapidity, and from sibyllistic fury to colloquial familiarity, in wild rhapsodies without coherence or drift, and perplexed applications of shreds of Scripture, Old and New, with no discoverable propriety, to no apparent purpose—contrasted with the unite attention, the sobs and tears of their own auditory—were really convulsive. With every disposition to be serious it was difficult to preserve a decency of deportment. This sect completely puzzles me. That persons, all above the vulgar, many of excellent good sense and extensive information, most exemplary in their conduct, mingling in the business if not the pleasures of the world, performing all the common offices of life like other folks, and governing their own society by maxims of the soundest discipline, should, at this time of day, persist in nourishing a fanaticism so extravagant and revolting to all common sense is very surprising: that they should wish, as in this instance, to exhibit a public spectacle of their folly is altogether unaccountable.—On shewing a disposition to withdraw, we were repeatedly pressed to stay till the conclusion: and thanks were then formally returned for the general silence and decorum maintained by the spectators (which indeed was exemplary) as if they were sensible of the difficulty of preserving it.—I really thought the thanks well merited.”

Taken from the Diary of a Lover of Literature.

From a MS. in **D**. Information desired as to the Diary and the persons mentioned therein.