

in confusion when savage mastiffs have seized upon and are worrying some of the flock. In a few moments all the windows of the prison, which looked into the yard, were filled with spectators gazing upon the scene below with mute astonishment, while they saw fifty of their comrades surrounded by the soldiers who had seized them. On a sudden, the large folding-doors of our prison, which we had never before seen opened, were thrown wide, and presented two lines of infantry, with fixed bayonets, drawn up on either side of the gateway. Without any information whither they were going—without permission to take any thing with them, or even to bid farewell to their friends or relatives, they were marched within the lines prepared to receive them. The doors of the prison were again closed, and the sound of the drum announced to us that they had commenced their march, but for what purpose, we were left to conjecture.

The terror which pervaded the prison in consequence of this occurrence, cannot easily be conceived, much less described. Each looked upon the other as being indeed “a sheep appointed for the slaughter,” whilst imagination was left to body forth the manner in which we were to be put to death; whether by the stroke of the guillotine, or by the less tardy method—which we heard was then in use among themselves—of filling vessels with their prisoners, and sinking them in some of their rivers at high water, so that they might be left dry at the ebb tide; or by the military method, which had been adopted on some occasions, of drawing up their victims in a square, and firing upon them with grape-shot. While such terrific scenes were continually flitting before our imagination, another and another seizure were made, of fifty prisoners each time, after the interval of three days, and they were marched off in the same manner as the first. Nor was it till about a fortnight after the first draft, that we were assured our poor comrades had not been put to death, but only marched into the interior of the country to make room for others who were expected from Brest. With such diabolical ingenuity did the spirit of the times delight to afflict and terrify the minds of unfortunate and helpless prisoners! Nor could it but appear to us, that whatever might be the unknown reason why the decree of the Convention was not carried into execution, it was through no lack of inclination on the part of those who could treat their victims with such barbarous cruelty as to sport thus with their feelings. The reason, however, why we escaped all the murderous intentions of the Committee of Public Safety, we afterwards learned, was, that both the French soldiers in the army, and the sailors in the navy, refused to fight till a decree so ferocious and sanguinary was abolished.

The immediate prospect of a violent death was thus removed. Our joy on the occasion was not, however, destined to be of long duration. There were other methods, more circuitous and tardy, indeed, but not less decisive in their results, by which the prison