

in a state of ill health; unfortunately, in the neighbourhood of some lads who were by stealth knocking down apples, and making off with their prize. Without a moment's warning, the gardener, who was watching his fruit from behind a secret stand, fired with his musket. I saw the flash in front from the midst of a bush. In an instant, my friend fell on his back. Not suspecting he was shot, but supposing rather that the report of the musket had been too powerful for his state of nervous debility, and had occasioned only a swoon, I sprang forward to lift him up, when, to my consternation and horror, I saw the blood gushing from his breast. He uttered not a word! my friend was shot; he lay a breathless corpse at my feet! The cowardly wretch who had accomplished his murderous purpose, escaped through a private door by which he had access to the orchard, without coming thro' the prison, and thus eluded the rage of the prisoners. To allay the commotion with which justice was invoked against this flagrant outrage, the Commissary promised that enquiry should be instituted and justice done. On the following day, a committee of gentlemen was appointed to examine the case. Their enquiry was limited to the fact, whether or not the deceased had been guilty of taking any of the fruit. No opinion was ever expressed whether the crime alleged was worthy of death! No fruit had been found on his person. A surgeon was directed to open the body and examine the stomach: No fruit was there. Yet, innocent as he had been proved to be, no farther steps were taken to bring the murderer to answer for his conduct!

This atrocious deed was but the precursor of more melancholy scenes of wide-spreading devastation. We were led, from one or two dark indications, to suspect that deliberate malice, and not mere connivance at murder wantonly committed, was determined against the whole of the prisoners. About this time the frightful intelligence was communicated to us, by some of the inhabitants of the town who visited the prison, that the Committee of Public Safety had actually caused a decree to pass the Convention, for the extermination of all prisoners of war! And that in future no quarter was to be shewn to any of the allied forces who might be taken in arms against the French Republic. In this condition of dreadful suspense we were kept for a considerable time, like criminals under sentence of death, awaiting the day when we were to be brought forth for execution. Our terrors were raised to the highest possible degree, not only by the dismal reports which reached us of the massacres which were daily perpetrated by Frenchmen of opposite factions upon each other at Paris, Nantes, Lyons, and other parts of the country, but also by the following occurrence:—One morning, to our great consternation, a detachment of soldiers under arms entered the prison-yard, which was generally crowded with prisoners, and forcibly seized on fifty of the first persons on whom they could lay their hands, the rest making their escape in the utmost alarm, as sheep are seen to fly