

soon consumed, and probably wasted with the thoughtlessness incident to a situation of utter despair and misery. Endeavouring to collect her scattered spirits, and endure the wretchedness of one night, for she had been told that she was to be examined in the morning,* which she had not the least doubt therefore would bring her liberation, she turned to the poor creatures around her, and as there was one who spoke English, she learnt she was in the ward allotted to females in that part of the prison which is used as a house of correction † ; but into which all female prisoners of every kind it seems are indiscriminately thrown. The scene amongst them baffled description, women and girls of all colours, countries, and ages, scarcely clothed, and in the most brutal state of degradation, prostitutes, thieves, runaway slaves,—figure to yourself, my dear Sir, a lady like

* The magistrates in Pulo Penang, who, with very few exceptions, are great ignorammuses, having found in an Act of Parliament that a prisoner who is brought before them, may be committed for further examination, and kept for 48 hours without being brought up again, which is a provision made to enable magistrates, in extraordinary cases, to make enquiries into the circumstances, have most wisely and most equitably construed it to mean that they shall, in all cases, be kept in prison 48 hours before they are examined; and this is their almost universal practice especially that of the magistrate who is at the head of the police, a Mr. Ropeson, a half-witted old woman, who has been even known repeatedly to reprimand the constables for allowing the prisoners to bring with them any witnesses to exculpate them from the charges made; it being his creed that accusation is guilt, and every attempt at defence, a contempt of that magisterial authority, which he grossly abuses.

† The gaol in Pulo Penang is one of the most wretched construction, and in which a more inhuman and brutal system prevails than in any other place in the British dominions, rendered necessary, they say, from its insecurity; though a very trifling expense would entirely remove that pretext. It is worthy of remark that the Acts of Council (which form part of the provincial law of this island) by which a part of the prison was appropriated to be used as a house of Correction, expressly prohibit any person being confined in that part, except convicts under sentence; yet, in utter defiance of this statute-law, it is the constant practice to put females into the house of correction who are taken up for felonies, because, forsooth, there is no separate room for them in the other part of the prison, but in this most righteous settlement

Law is a farce, and all things shew it;
I thought so once, and now I know it.