

of the *nuncheon** scandal of Pulo Penang. An English lady of Louisa's person and manners, and arriving, consigned, as it were, to use a mercantile phrase, to S—, who then stood high in the estimation of the whole settlement, could not make her appearance without remark. As she never assumed that station in society for which she was so well adapted by her personal qualifications, and to which she was entitled in her own right; she consequently became an object of frequent animadversion, and various surmises, thoughts, and opinions, became in a short time, facts and certainties. She was not only stated to be the mistress of S—; but, of the gentlemen who were occasionally admitted into the magic circle of pleasure and refined happiness that were to be found in her family parties, the three who were the most familiar in their visits were set down, first as her admirers, then they became her lovers, and, rumour being once busy and afloat upon the tongues of ladies, (though to tell you the truth, General Tongue-tye, being one of the veriest Sir Benjamin Back-bites in existence, was not backward in his insinuations,) when it could not be determined which was the favoured lover, did not hesitate to call them all so. Now this was evidently sheer, pure, unadulterated back-biting, and could only originate in foul minds, and corrupt hearts, perhaps in consciousness of private profligacy, for there are many things in this settlement hidden behind the

* In Prince of Wales's island, as at Madras, Bombay, and other British settlements in India, the ladies always assemble in the forenoon about twelve or one, and partake at each others houses of *nuncheons*, as they are called, consisting of various articles of Asiatic and European luxury, with wines, confectionary and fruits. Betelnut and arcca are also served round, and perfumes sprinkled. At these meetings all the ceremonials that attend the tea-table in England are observed, and scandal of course is not forgotten. Vide Maria Graham's letters on India.