

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for scanning. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of scanning are checked below.

L'Institut a numérisé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de numérisation sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured covers /
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged /
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated /
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing /
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps /
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black) /
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations /
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material /
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Only edition available /
Seule édition disponible
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion
along interior margin / La reliure serrée peut
causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la
marge intérieure.
- Additional comments /
Commentaires supplémentaires:

Continuous pagination.

- Coloured pages / Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged / Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated /
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached / Pages détachées
- Showthrough / Transparence
- Quality of print varies /
Qualité inégale de l'impression
- Includes supplementary materials /
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
- Blank leaves added during restorations may
appear within the text. Whenever possible, these
have been omitted from scanning / Il se peut que
certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une
restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais,
lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas
été numérisées.

THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL. THURSDAY, 14th FEBRUARY, 1822. NO. XXXIV.

——— But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose slightest word,
Would barrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine. SHAKESPEARE.

Nos patria fines, et dulcia linquimus arva, VIRGIL.
Far from my native land and smiling home I go.

LETTER V.

Pulo Penang, July, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

My last dispatch carried the story of Louisa A—— down to her departure from the house of the time-serving magistrate to whom the East India Company's agents had applied on the occasion. It was between ten and eleven at night that she was sent with a warrant of commitment for further examination, though she had not been examined at all, to the common gaol of the island, in custody of a parcel of blackguard police-officers, and, would you believe it, accompanied, as if in a triumphal procession, by the still greater blackguards at whose instance she was thus brutally persecuted. They were not content with having secured their innocent prey in their vindictive toils, but must enjoy the diabolical satisfaction of seeing her safely lodged within the bars of the prison. It was but a short

distance, but that distance was embittered by several mean and unmanly sarcasms quite in character, and consistent with the talents, education and manners of the honourable agents of the honourable Company. In the confusion of her mind; and amidst the distraction of her thoughts as to what was to be her fate, and the fate of S—, she does not recollect the particular persons who so politely did the honours of her entrée into prison, but she well remembers on turning round when the entrance grate was closed behind her that she saw the satyr-like face of Lieutenant General Tonguetye, viewing his victim through the bars with satanic triumph. There he

“grinn’d horribly a ghastly smile;”

that made her very soul shudder. A sneering smile of fiend-like rancour that she declares she never can forget, and which often visits her in dreams and in the dead of night. She was now, however left under the care of the notorious Captain Liver, who delivered her to the gaoler, with such whispered instructions as no doubt he had received from his honourable employers. We may judge what these instructions were from the treatment which followed. She naturally concluded that, although in an East India Island and not a great distance from shores inhabited by the most savage Malays, yet as she was still in the hands of Englishmen (although were I an Hibernian, I should perhaps say that most of the English here are Scotch) she should receive such treatment as her sex, and her appearance, if not her situation in life, demanded. She expected to have had something like an apartment assigned her, a bed to lie on, and to be able to procure some refreshment after the exhausting scene of the last six hours, especially as the hypocritical

Major General had told her the falsity before-mentioned that she might have whatever she wanted. Her purse was fortunately pretty well stocked, for, although the plunderers took all the money they found in the house, they had left what she had about her person. But no refreshment was to be obtained for money nor for entreaty, and she was brutally ordered down a flight of steps that led to the lower regions of the prison under ground. At the bottom

*"No light, but rather darkness visible,
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades where"*—

naked, blaspheming, and miserable wretches, rushed forward with the eager curiosity incited in a state of confinement by every novelty, to behold their new companion in misery. Another massy grate was unbarred, and the affrighted Louisa, for now her long-suffering fortitude began to forsake her, was thrust in amongst the abject victims of crime and oppression that flocked around her, staring at her by the light of a solitary candle whose melancholy ray was worse than total darkness. But this light was almost immediately withdrawn. The heavy grating was closed behind her and she was left to shift for herself in a situation of indescribable horror to a mind of sensibility, and of poignant suffering to a female of delicate habits, tender health, and refined manners. She turned round, and before the outer massy door was closed, begged at least to have some water. O, water she would find there, or if not, she should have some in the morning. But even water there was none, for in the suffocating temperature of this island, you may readily conceive, my good friend, that were even the supply of water to the inmates of a dungeon-prison as ample as it was parsimonious, it would be

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.

Louisa A—— driven down to herd amongst such a group; and, if you can, avoid both shuddering at the picture, and execrating the vile authors and perpetrators of such opprobrious, such savage, treatment. Summoning all her fortitude, however, she enquired where she was to lie; as we do, on the stone floor was the reply; what no bedding, not even a bedstead? No, you will lie comfortably enough if you take this log for a pillow. She surveyed the floor; 'twas loathsomely filthy, damp to wetness, and covered with innumerable swarms of vermin, cockroaches, lizards, etc. She dreaded even the bite of a centipede, a scorpion, or a cobra di capello; but her new associates informed her there were no venemous reptiles there. Ah! thought she, true enough, the venemous reptiles are those I left outside of the gate of this dreary abode. The place she was in was a large kind of subterraneous hall arched over, on each side of which were several doors, which were those of the cells or apartments which were destined for the sleeping-places of the wretched women. In one of these a middle-aged woman who was sick had a miserable bed of straw which had been sent her from the work-house on account of her illness: this accommodation she offered to Louisa, and indeed insisted on her taking it; it was the only article of the kind that was to be found in the whole ward;—Louisa has not forgot that woman.—After some persuasion she accepted the offer, and lay down in her clothes, hoping to find in

“kind nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!”

some relief for her harrassed mind and body, and some alleviation of her woes. 'Twas long, however, before she could close an eye, and not until some copious showers of tears had relieved

the oppression with which her heart was bursting; for hitherto she had shed no tear, she had felt no softened emotion, but the burning force of resistance to insolence and tyranny, and the swelling of her soul to repel unmerited insult, had fevered her veins, and parched her lips. When, however, she could weep, the bow unbent, the string relaxed, and the sweet slumber of conscious innocence and rectitude visited her, though but for a very short time, in the gloomy cell and upon the hard and noisome bed, where she reposed. Four of the poor creatures lay down on the floor of this cell, which was about ten feet by eight in size, which shows the populousness of the mansion; but the appearance of a well dressed person of rank and elegance, in these subterraneous abodes of horror, was too extraordinary a circumstance, and afforded too interesting a topic for conversation and remark, to allow of the ladies of the house retiring to rest at an early hour; those who had lain down, rose up from their stony couch, and blacks, Hindoos, Malays, mulattos, mixed with the few white females that were there, entertained each other, for several hours, whilst they smoked their tobacco, and caught their fleas, amidst repressed laughter and smothered oaths; with conjectures as to the causes and consequences of poor Louisa's misfortune. In this receptacle of human misery there was a wretched mad woman, who kept singing all night, and added greatly to the horror of the abode. A bucket of water was brought in in the morning, and shortly after bread was distributed, and Louisa had her loaf of brown bread also thrust through the bars to her. This produced a still more poignant feeling, and, in her own artless words "after a hearty cry," she gave her bread to the poor creatures around her, who thankfully received it to eke out their scanty al-

lowance. To behold the half naked wretches take their bread to the bucket, and sometimes eating it dry, and sometimes soaking it in water, make their miserable meal with the keenness of hunger, mingled with oaths and execrations, was a horrid scene, which will never be effaced from her memory. Soon after this Louisa's servant brought her some tea from home, which, as no doubt, the honourable gentlemen had forgotten to prohibit being sent to her, she received; and about eleven o'clock the gaoler's daughter came down to the grating of her prison, and, seeing her deplorable situation, said, she should not remain there; and with that humanity and commiseration which are the characteristics of her sex, persuaded her father to appropriate a ward in the body of the prison to Louisa, whither she was then removed. 'Tis now time, however, to conclude, and refer you to my next for the continuation of her history.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE SCRIBBLER.

A Lady's soliloquy while crossing the Atlantic Ocean from England to Canada.

Love, O love! thou sovereign passion,
 Tyrant of the human breast,
 Who that does not own thy mandates?
 Who obeys not thy behest?

I have own'd thy pleasing empire;
 To Alexander now I fly;
 He hath not deceived Elvira;
 We're each other's faithfully.

But how hard was the condition,
 Sacrificing all my friends,
 I left them all, perhaps for ever
 Gone to earth's remotest ends.

To the partners of my childhood
 I have bid a last adieu
 All the scenes of youthful pleasure,
 Where my infant breath I drew.

