

taken in the Singapore for to be the chief apt to give a ore would fall considered as an and are distri- ness are esta- , so that any ges he is liable in that re- Eastern seas. ore still more ing is sold by proportion of ch country this , however, the re sold by the y come. For st art brought eight, called a o two ounces; is sold by the sixty pounds, e foreign busi- a few English the mercantile agents, or do a ses in Europe, of the India , is limited in e besides a which policies The capital part owned in

al advantages and, yet it has ds intercourse uch increased, between that it was the only trade free of e for the time other Chinese reason, Singa- active place of ad the trade y. No large ia and Singa- furnishes to sta, biche-de-

most valuable re, and there engaged in the navigated by who may be . This peo- and south- frequently conduct their tions they sessions, and hich admits en them to ore distant. or employ- piracy, if a

favourable opportunity should offer; though no one seemed disposed to class them as pirates of the same character as the Malays, but rather to look upon them as generally inclined to be peaceable.

The island of Celebes sends to Singapore nearly a hundred prahus annually, and they also come from Flores, Timor, Amboyna, Sumbawa, Lubok, and even from Papua and Aroo. From the latter countries they bring the bird of paradise, so abundant in the market of Singapore. The prahus that come annually from these distant ports are not more than fifty in number.

With the ports of Sumatra and Java there is a great deal of intercourse, and I was told that the native vessels engaged in it, independently of those belonging to Europeans, amount now to some six hundred. These are of various sizes, and keep up a constant intercourse, some of them visiting the ports several times during the year. These arrive from both coasts of Sumatra, and belong to the rajahs or chiefs of small places, of which even the names are little known, and whose subjects are mostly engaged in piracy. The island of Bali likewise engages in this trade, through the agency of the Bugis. The products of the Malayan peninsula, and of all the ports of the Malacca Straits, are also brought to Singapore; but these may be termed incidental supplies, for they fluctuate much, both in quantity and value.

The most regular of all the trade is that with the islands of Rhio and Lingin, in the neighbourhood of which the Dutch have a factory. This trade is carried on in the sampan boats, and the people of these places prefer resorting to this free port to dispose of their produce, rather than sell it to the Dutch. The number of the vessels employed in this traffic was represented to me to be somewhere about five hundred. The articles brought from all these places are very much the same, and consist of pepper, rice, camphor, sago, coffee, nutmegs, oil, tobacco, wax, benzoin, seaweed, dragon's-blood, biche-de-mar, birds'-nests, tortoise-shell, diamonds, gold-dust, pearls, the pearl-oyster-shell, sandalwood, rattans, ivory, some hides, and articles of native manufacture, such as sarongs (worn as a wrapper, which come principally from Celebes), salendongs, and lacquered ware.

The foregoing detail exhibits a vast variety of articles of commerce, and accounts for the employment of the fifteen hundred, or two thousand vessels of various sizes, that are continually pouring into this mart. It may readily be imagined what a stir and life this commerce must create; and when it is considered that nearly all the various nations of the East resort here for the purpose of trade, it will not excite much astonishment that Singapore has grown up so rapidly in the face of older and longer-established marts, which it bids fair to surpass, both in wealth and importance.

The opium shops are among the most extraordinary sights in Singapore; it is inconceivable with what avidity the smokers seek this noxious drug at the shop windows. They then retire to the interior, where a number of sickly-looking persons, in the last stage of consumption, haggard, and worn down with care, are seen smoking. The drug is sold in very small pieces, and for ten cents enough to fill a pipe once is obtained. With it are furnished a pipe, a lamp, and a couch to lie on, if such it may

be called. The pipe is of a peculiar construction, and is in part of metal, having an interior or cup just large enough to contain a piece of the size of a pea. The opium is difficult to ignite, and it requires much management in the smoker to obtain the necessary number of whiffs to produce intoxication in one habituated to its use. The couch is sometimes a rude bench, but more often a mat on the floor, with a small raised bench. Each of these mats in the frequented shops is generally occupied by a pair of smokers, who have a lump between them.

These shops with their inmates formed one of the most disgusting spectacles I saw during our extended cruise; although, to one who could be amused with human degradation, this sight could not have failed to afford pastime.

It was not difficult even for a stranger to distinguish those who have long indulged in this pernicious practice, from those to whom it is yet new. The eagerness with which the former sought the mat, seized the pipe, and inhaled the smoke, showed a nervous anxiety to reach that point where forgetfulness should come. This in the novice was but the work of a few minutes, while those whose organs had become accustomed would draw long whiffs and puff away until the weakened state of their lungs would betray them, and cause them to stop to renew their breath before they were enabled to accomplish their wishes. I learned that many of the old smokers found so great a difficulty in inducing the action of the smoke, that they were accustomed to have recourse to swallowing the drug itself. The Chinese only are addicted to this practice: the Gentoos and those of the Moslem faith look upon it with great horror and disgust.

The individuals whom I have described above are the wealthy, who can afford to smoke the drug as it is found in commerce. From the difficulty with which it burns there is a large residuum left, which is carefully taken out of the pipes, and sold to the less opulent, who in like manner smoke it, though without the luxury of mats and lamps. I was told that there is still a poorer class of Chinese, that again use the residuum of this second smoking.

The Chinese at Singapore possess every facility for full gratification in the smoking of this deleterious drug; for there is no interdiction to its introduction, and most, if not all the vessels engaged in smuggling it, resort there in their passages to and from Bengal, and many of them are owned or under the agency of the merchants of this place. It is not a little remarkable that even those who are engaged in the trade, condemn its immoral and hurtful results, while others at a distance offer many reasons in its defence. I must say that it appears to me truly strange that with the scenes that daily offer themselves in Singapore, before the eyes and under the cognizance of the governor and officers of the place, some steps should not be taken to put a stop to the practice altogether, instead of making it a source of revenue.

The population, from the most authentic returns, is in all about sixty thousand souls: of these forty-five thousand are Chinese, eight thousand Malays, seven thousand natives of India, and about one hundred and fifty foreigners; and only one-tenth of the whole are females.