

COLLECTION OF EXPORT PRODUCTS.

British firms have devoted their attention in the past chiefly to the export of the main staples of tea and silk. The tea trade from China is now on the decline owing to the competition of Indian and Ceylon teas on the United Kingdom market and Japan teas in the United States. The business in silk has always been highly speculative, depending almost as much on the course of the exchanges as on the condition of the markets. The Germans came to the field rather late, when the trade in teas and silk had been already established along regular lines. They were therefore forced to seek other outlets for their activity and as a result developed the export of the various miscellaneous lines mentioned above.

The Germans organized the collection and buying of South China products with characteristic thoroughness. A good example is afforded by the business in sesamum and other oils, cassia, etc. The German firms dealing in these articles had their own



Weaving Matting. Example of Chinese Household Economy.

native buying agents throughout the country under the supervision of branches managed by Germans and a staff of trained chemists to test the oil. Since the war British and American firms have commenced to devote attention to the trade in all kinds of South China products and to work along the lines followed by the Germans. The largest market for these products is now afforded by North America and this gives American firms a certain advantage in the development of trade with South China. Canadians have hitherto been content to purchase a large part of the Chinese products which they require through United States centres. The tendency is noticed, however, for firms in Canada to take up the importation of certain products such as ginger, rice bristles, etc., to a greater extent than hitherto and it is hoped that these direct dealings with China may increase. There is no reason for instance why firms in British Columbia should purchase Chinese products through houses in Seattle or San Francisco, when the facilities for direct trade through Vancouver are as good.