

self of the charges he is liable to incur, and of the advantages it has in that respect over the other ports in the Eastern seas. What renders the traffic at Singapore still more convenient is, that almost every thing is sold by weight, probably because so large a proportion of the population is from China, in which country this method is habitual. In employing it, however, the articles from different countries are sold by the weight of the country whence they come. For instance, gold-dust being for the most part brought by the Malays, is sold by their weight, called a "bunghal," which is about equal to two ounces; rice, &c., the produce of Bengal, is sold by the bag, containing one hundred and sixty pounds, which is termed a "maund." The foreign business is generally in the hands of a few English houses, but the greater part of the mercantile class at Singapore are engaged as agents, or do a commission business, for various houses in Europe, Calcutta, &c. There is a branch of the India Bank at Singapore, which, however, is limited in its discounts and business; and there are besides a large number of insurance offices, in which policies may be effected on almost any risk. The capital of these companies is for the most part owned in Calcutta.

Although Singapore has fewer real advantages for trade than many of the ports around, yet it has now acquired the superiority, and holds intercourse with the surrounding countries.

Its trade with China has of late much increased, in consequence of the difficulties between that country and England, during which it was the only port where the junks were allowed to trade free of molestation. It in consequence became for the time a place of transshipment for teas and other Chinese articles to English vessels. For this reason, Singapore may have appeared to us a more active place of business than it would have done had the trade with China been no more than ordinary. No large commerce can well exist between China and Singapore alone, for the supplies the latter furnishes to that empire, are confined to birds'-nests, biche de mar, tortoise-shell, &c.

Borneo probably furnishes the most valuable products that are brought to Singapore, and there are more than one hundred prahus engaged in the trade. These are for the most part navigated by Bugis from the island of Celebes, who may be termed the carriers of this archipelago. This people frequent all the ports on the south and southwest side of that great island, and are frequently employed by the rajahs or chiefs to conduct their trade with the other ports. The restrictions they are under in visiting the Dutch possessions, and the restrictive policy of the latter, which admits them to but one or two ports, has driven them to seek that of Singapore, though more distant.