

These prahus are said when trade or employment fails, to turn their attention to 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, Lûbok, 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 on 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, sea-weed, 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