

NINGPO, CHINA.

The following interesting description of the above-named city is taken from a letter in the *London Times*, dated Ningpo, May 22:—

“Notwithstanding the complete eclipse of Ningpo as a foreign settlement by Shanghai, it is still an important place of Chinese trade, and one of the largest cities in the empire. It was at Ningpo that the first development, on a large scale, of European intercourse with China took place. As early as 1522, we read of a Portuguese settlement at the mouth of the Yung, which rapidly developed till, twenty years later, it comprised 1,200 foreign residents, a Senate-house, two churches, and two hospitals. But the outrages perpetrated by the Portuguese in the surrounding country brought this colony to an untimely end. It is related that under the rule of one Lancerote Pereira, they were in the habit of plundering the neighboring villages and carrying off not only the property, but the wives and daughters of the inhabitants. The flat accordingly went forth that the intruders and their houses were to be exterminated and destroyed, and a force of 60,000 Chinese, with 300 junks, accomplished this high behest. The East India Company next established a factory on the island of Chusan, some fifty miles from Ningpo, towards the end of the 17th century; but it was closed in 1703 as being unremunerative, and we hear little more of Ningpo till, in 1841, Sir Hugh Gough captured it and Chinbae, a fortified town at the mouth of the river, after a gallant defence of the latter by the Chinese garrison. Next year Ningpo was thrown open by treaty to foreign trade, which, however, has never attained great importance in consequence of the superior advantage of situation enjoyed by Shanghai, with which daily communication by steamer exists. It received a serious blow in the Taeping occupation, which was put an end to by Captain Dew in 1862; and foreign merchants now complain that it has reached the last extremity of dulness.

“The same cause, however, which renders it so little remunerative as a place of foreign trade, does not account for the extreme depression of native interests which is also observable. When I was in Ningpo, about twelve months ago, the streets were thronged, and closed shutters were an exception. Now the place looks almost like an English country town on a Sunday. In the most important thoroughfares, every third shop seems closed; and you can walk without being hustled where it was formerly difficult to make your way. The necessary consequence of this suspension of business is, that a number of people are thrown out of employment, and depend on the charity of their relations for subsistence. This state of affairs in China portends brigandage swelling into rebellion. Accordingly, apprehensions are entertained by the better classes of Chinese that grave disturbances may ensue if the present excessive imposts continue to be obstinately levied.

“At this juncture a new Taotai has arrived, on whom, no doubt, strong pressure will be brought to bear to induce the desired reform; for, though the Futai is the actual arbiter, the Taotai's influence and advice will be potential. But the Chinese augur ill from the vast concourse of relatives who have arrived in his Excellency's train. Eleven sons and twelve daughters aid an innumerable host of cousins, connections, and friends in crowding the Yamen to excess.

“The Anglo-Chinese force which was instrumental in expelling the Taepings from Chekiang is still kept up, under command of Colonel Cooke, though on a reduced scale. The Franco-Chinese contingent which was associated with it was disbanded immediately after peace had been restored. Its officers had not ingratiated themselves in the affections of the natives, private or official.

“But, though Ningpo offers little attraction to foreigners in the way of trade, it, or rather its neighborhood, does possess in a very high degree the attractions of landscape, and numbers of people come here from Shanghai for change of air and scene. The favorite resort is a spot among the hills, called ‘The Snowy Valley,’—why, I cannot profess to say, for there is nothing approaching snow there in summer; but there are high hills clothed with flowers, valleys rich with cultivation, and waterfalls varying in depth from 500 to 1,000 feet. One must go into the interior of this province to realize the aptitude of the term ‘Flowery Land,’ bestowed by the Chinese on their country. ‘Few,’ says Mr. Fortune, ‘can form any idea of the gorgeous and striking beauty of these azalea-clad mountains, where on every side the eye rests on masses of flowers of dazzling brightness and surpassing beauty.’ The journey to the Snowy Valley is performed by boat from Ningpo to the foot of the hills, and thence by mountain chairs to the Buddhist temple, which, like the Christian monasteries of old, gives shelter to the traveller. So long as the ascent is gradual, these chairs are by no means an unpleasant mode of progression; but in steep parts of the road, where steps have been cut to afford sure footing to the Coolies, visions of being precipitated bodily down the ravine will occur to the bravest.

“It is only at intervals, however, that the attention is sufficiently withdrawn from the surrounding scenery to notice the apparent imminence of the peril. After some months spent on the detestable mud flat which stretches a hundred miles in every direction from Shanghai, the attraction of hills clothed with luxuriant and diverse-colored azaleas, of trees shrouded in clematis, of wild rose and honeysuckle, of hill and valley, and of the river winding its tortuous way in the distance, entrance the beholder. Every necessary, from food and drink to blankets and pillows, must be taken with one. Buddhist fare would not satisfy an appetite excited by the novel freshness of mountain air. But room to any extent and for any time is at disposal. Each day an excursion may be made to a new point,