

CHINA AND ITS NEEDS.*

Behold, these shall come from far :
 And lo ! these from the north and from the west ;
 And these from the land of Sinim.

Isaiah xlix. 12.

CHINA is a vast country. For more than three thousand miles its shores are washed by the ceaseless surges of the sea. It encloses a desert, vast as any over which sterility ever reigned ; it embraces plains as exuberant as were ever pressed by foot of man. The area of its largest plain is greater by one-half than all the German Empire.

Great rivers drain and irrigate the land. The Hoang-Ho is almost three times the length of the Ohio, while the Yang-tse is longer than the Mississippi, and drains a basin more extensive than the whole territory of the Republic of Mexico. One-tenth of the population derive their food from the waters of the country. The extent of its coal-fields was more than twenty times greater than those of all Europe, being 419,000 square miles, and side by side with the coal is iron ore. It has all degrees of altitude, from the sea level to the perpetual snow line. It has all varieties of climate. One may be ice-bound at Peking, while the thermometer seldom falls below 50° at Canton. It is not easy to make real to ourselves an Empire which comprises one-third of the continent of Asia, and one-tenth of the habitable globe ; which sweeps through seventy degrees of latitude and forty of longitude, whose circuit is half the circumference of the globe.

Professor Douglas thus describes it : "From one end of the country to the other the land blossoms as the rose, and yields to the diligent and careful tillage of the natives enough and to spare of all that is necessary for the comfort and well-being of man. Nor have these advantages become the recent possessions of the people. For many centuries they have been in full enjoyment of them, and on every side the evidences of long-established wealth and commercial enterprise are observable."

Extent compared with other countries.—Various are the expedients to which men have resorted to "take the great idea in." Comparisons in geography are now popular. Try France on the chart of China and you may sketch the one seven times on the other, and have space to spare. Try the Chinese em-

* Abridged from an admirable pamphlet on this subject by the Rev. J. T. Gracey, D.D., and from other sources.—Ed.