

THE
MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

Vol. XIII. No. 5.—*Old Series.*——MAY.——Vol. III. No. 5.—*New Series.*

I.—LITERATURE OF MISSIONS.

JAPAN: REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1889.

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The events of the year 1889 have been of high importance. No year since 1867, the year of the restoration, has shown such rapid changes, or been so full of surprises. The hidden forces of popular feeling have manifested themselves with unexpected violence, and the warmest friends of Japan are, for the moment, uncertain of the future.

Nature has been in sympathy with society. Nowhere is nature more luxuriantly beautiful, and nowhere are its forces more ready to display their overwhelming powers. It has been a year of earthquakes, typhoons, terrific rains, bursting rivers and engulfing waves. The calm and beauty that attract every beholder contrast sharply with the elemental fury, and one never knows when the pent up forces may explode. The relatively low estimate placed upon human life in the East and West has been clearly illustrated. The flood at Johnstown horrified two continents, and was the occasion for a manifestation of sympathy and benevolence almost unparalleled. The disasters in Japan have exceeded the horrors of Johnstown, and have been thought worthy of an occasional telegram and newspaper paragraph. Here in Japan, funds have been collected for the distressed, but they can have met but the merest fraction of the terrible need. Months after the disasters, we are still without exact and complete details of the losses of life and property, and the great newspapers of the capital make but passing reference to the calamity, in their reviews of the year.

The New Constitution.—In its opening, the year was bright with promise. On the 11th of February, the new Constitution of the empire was promulgated amid the rejoicings of the nation. The Constitution promises liberty of religion, of the press, of speech, of public assembly and of petition. It makes a man's house his castle, to be invaded only with due forms of law. It carefully preserves the rights and liberties of the subject. It guards the independence of the judiciary. It transforms the emperor into a constitutional monarch with limited and well defined powers. It establishes an Imperial Diet, that shall assemble first in 1890. Thus Japan peacefully ac-