

small mud volcanoes were created, and the strongest of engineering structures were ruined."

Our learned men are busy with their explanations, saying that, after all, earthquakes are only the infrequent irregularities of the force on which our globe in its life-sustaining form depends. Were that force to die and the elevation of the continents to cease, the waste of wind and rain and storm would make uninhabitable the earth. The earth is alive and the mountains are thrown up from the depths. Thus was Japan formed in the past, and the process still goes on.

The great forces of sorrow and death call forth the hidden good. Japan were not so beautiful were its physical conditions the placid background of Sir Edwin's dream; and human nature would miss its highest excellence were there no great griefs, no evil to call forth pity and beneficence. When the foundations are moved distinctions of creed and race vanish. Money was poured out, and philanthropists rushed to the stricken region with ready aid.

So do we comfort ourselves in the midst of destruction. "Oh, yet we trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill." And yet we cannot forget, the defeatist poet cannot persuade us to forget, that the soil which bears camellia, chrysanthemum, bamboo, and pine is formed by forces which in a moment slay ten thousand men and wreck the dwellings of a province.

#### THE IMPERIAL DIET.

The first session of the Diet ended with a compromise. The government yielded much, a group of radicals sacrificed party to patriotism and the crisis was averted; but the second session was less fortunate. The government was not ready to repeat its compromise, and the opposition said "No" to every proposal of the government. Even the grants for the relief of the distressed provinces were opposed on trumped-up technicalities. The lower house seemed determined to force the government to resign or to dissolve the Diet. The government promptly chose the latter alternative.

The conflict between the opposition and the government involves much more than the existence of a particular ministry. The government is a faction, the representative of two provinces or clans, Satsuma and Choshu. It won its power twenty years ago on the field of battle, and has strongly entrenched itself. Army, navy, police, judiciary, civil service, the department of education, the great banks, steamship companies, and business houses, all are its own. Its continuance is not compatible with a representative, constitutional government. The gradual transfer of power demands a spirit of concession and of patience on both sides which is not now apparent. An immediate settlement of the question would involve the empire in serious difficulties and dangers. What is to be the solution the future alone can show.