

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

VOL. XIV. No. 9.—*Old Series*.——SEPTEMBER.——Vol. IV. No. 9.—*New Series*.

THE YEAR 1890 IN JAPAN.

BY REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE WM. KNOX, D.D., TOKYO, JAPAN.

The forecast of 1889 was fulfilled in 1890. The year was full of difficulty, and in empire and Church the cheerful confidence of the past gave way to uneasy anticipations and fears.

THE SUFFERING PEOPLE.

A short harvest in 1889 sent the price of rice up so high that thousands could not buy it. The multitude who ever live near the starvation line became wholly dependent. Had benefactions not been large and constant they would have died from the lack of food. In the spring and summer the suffering was at its height, the abundant harvests of the autumn first giving permanent relief. During the summer cholera carried off tens of thousands, and late in the autumn the influenza paid a second and virulent visit that was fatal to very many.

Business suffered in sympathy with the general distress. The poverty of the people interfered with the usual course of trade; and a number of circumstances, which need not be repeated here, combined to render business unprofitable; failures were very many. But for the most part the distress, both physical and financial, was endured in silence. These Orientals have not yet learned our Western fashion of loud wailing over the misfortunes which they accept as a part of nature. Does our thought of the Heavenly Father, in whose hands are the issues of life, render us less patient than these who know no such all-loving guide and God?

THE STRUGGLING POLITICIANS.

Politics occupied a new place of importance in the popular esteem. The struggles which had been obscure and underground came out into the light of day as the elections for the first members of the Diet drew near. But no great issue divided the nation, and the contests were between factions and individuals. No faction or individual obtained a decisive majority of the whole number of members, though the "Liberals" constitute the largest group. When the Diet met in the autumn, only one thing was settled beyond doubt—the Lower House of the Diet was not friendly to the