

MISCELLANEOUS.

DIDEROT AND THE FRENCH ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

Among the mighty agencies which began to work for comfort and progress in the eighteenth century were the Cyclopædias. Voltaire was one of the one hundred and fifty contributors to the most famous of these teachers of useful knowledge in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Great Britain, and her colonies. The editor-in-chief was Diderot (see the frontispiece to the present *Open Court*) who was the main contributor; his department being philosophy, and the arts and trades. For twenty years, persecuted and at times imprisoned, abandoned by his colleagues and at last deceived even by his own publishers who secretly mutilated his productions, he doggedly stuck to his task to the end. Diderot's importance in the history of thought, his excellences and shortcomings, have already been discussed in *The Open Court* (No. 519), and it remains for us only to refer to his universal interest in the sciences (Goethe called him "the most Germanic of French heads"), and to his great literary productiveness and untiring powers of application. In writing his articles for the *Encyclopædia*, it is said of him that he "passed whole days in work-shops, and began by examining a machine carefully, then he had it taken to pieces and put together again, then he watched it at work, and at last he worked it himself. He thus learned to use such complicated machines as the stocking and cut velvet looms."

The first of the thirty-five bulky volumes was published in 1751 for two thousand subscribers; and this number had more than doubled in 1765; but the last volume was not printed until 1780, by which time there were four piratical reprints and several imitations. Industrial subjects are treated with especial care; and the plates are still the best authority to show what kind of ploughs, looms, and coats were then in use. The exemption of the wealthy from taxation is denounced boldly; and so are game-laws, torture of criminals, and that system of compelling the peasants to keep up the roads, which was as deadly as the smallpox. The general tone is not disloyal or irreligious; Christianity is treated with ostensible respect; scepticism is called sinful; atheists are declared worthy of banishment; and future punishment is admitted to be eternal. Persecution, however, is condemned with great severity, as are other ecclesiastical evils; and the old fantastic systems of metaphysics are criticised keenly. Scarcely had the second volume appeared, when the literary censor told Diderot that the work would be suppressed, and advised him to hide the materials. "I have no place where they will be safe," replied Diderot. "Then I will let you have one," said Malesherbes. They were soon restored, and the philosophers resumed their work, for none of their enemies was competent to take it up.

Among the best articles in the early volumes were those on political economy by Turgot and Quesnay. The foundations of this science had already been laid by Hume, who announced in 1752 the great principle, afterwards set forth by Franklin, demonstrated still later by Adam Smith, and since found very valuable for keeping up friendly intercourse between nations, namely that each gains in wealth by the productiveness of her neighbors, and that each impoverishes herself by taxing imports.

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THE TEMPLE OF CONFUCIUS IN SHANGHAI.

The illustration accompanying the present note was intended for the article on Confucius, by Mr. Teitaro Suzuki, which appeared in the November *Open Court*.



The illustration was made from a beautiful engraving by Tyson. The part of the architecture of the temple here represented is the first portal of the entrance.

BUDDHIST MISSIONARIES OF JAPAN IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

Among the Japanese Buddhists the Shin-shu or "Sect of Truth" is the most powerful and influential. Its adherents are at the same time distinguished by great zeal. They were well represented at the Religious Parliament and sent out a number of leaflets and tracts in order that their doctrines might be presented in the true light.

We learn now that the West Hongwanji of the Shin-shu have decided to extend their missionary work to the United States of America. They have missionaries in Korea, China, the Malay Peninsula, the Hawaiian Islands, and other