PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This volume is a verbatim reprint of a book, or rather manuscript, which never saw print till the years 1907-9 when it saw the light of day in the excellent four-volume edition published in the Indian Text Series in London.

It gives a vivid eye-witness' account of Mughal India during the reign of Shahjahan (1628-1658), of which period the author draws a rather partial picture of the last six years, and deals fully with the reign of Aurangzeb (1659-80).

Niccolao Manucci was a native of Venice. He was born in 1639 and reached India in 1656. He went to Delhi at a time when the Mughal Court had taken up its residence. During the struggle between Dara on the one hand and Aurangzeb and Morad Bux on the other, he succeeded in obtaining a position of artilleryman in the army of Dara on whose fall he fled to Agra and attached himself in disguise to the army of Aurangzeb. Subsequently he joined the service of Raja Jai Singh (1664 A.D.). He met Shivaji at Aurangabad in 1865. He had a romantic career and occupied various positions of trust and responsibility in the Mughal Court. After resigning his service in the evening of his life he made his way to Bassain, north of Bombay, and stayed for some time in Goa. He was granted late in life by the Governor and Council of Madras household land in perpetuity together with a house in the city where he died in 1717.

Spending as he did a life-time in Mughal India, the record of his reminiscences published here in this volume cannot but be of the highest value. Catrou, the French historian of the Mughal Empire who wrote in 1705 had access to his original MSS. written partially in French, Italian and Portuguese. Like its author, the MSS. wandered from India to France, Italy, Holland, England and finally in Germany where these first came to light in book form.

Needless to add, Manucci played many significant roles in Indian history. He fought in the battle which made Aurangzeb master of the Mughal Empire. He gives herein a succinct, discursive narrative, but all the more interesting and valuable is
his work on that account, and as Irvine so aptly puts it, "he supplies us with the necessary correction of life-like detail."

On long and insistent demand from research scholars and the reading public, the first volume is being published, to be followed up by subsequent three volumes in the near future. It is hoped that like the other celebrated travellers' account of the Mughal Empire, this work will be found of great interest and value to students of historical research.

A word now remains to be said about William Irvine (1840-1911), who is responsible for unearthing the Manucci MSS., and bringing to light this valuable historical document in its English version. He joined the Indian Civil Service in 1863. He was Magistrate and Collector N. W. Provinces till 1889 and acted subsequently in various executive and judicial capacities in Bengal. In the 'Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society', Bengal, 1896-1908, he wrote on Mughal history. In a series of articles in the 'Indian Antiquary', 1907, he wrote on Ahmed Shah Abdali and the Indian Wazir 'Imad-ul-Mulk (1756-7). He possessed all those qualities that characterise a historian and translator as will be evident from the perusal of the following pages.