

Literary News and Criticism.

A Seventeenth Century Venetian in India.

FORIO DO MOGOR, OR MOGUL INDIA. 1623-1638. By Nicolaus Manucci. Venetian. Translated with Introduction and Notes by William Irvine. In two volumes. 8vo. pp. lxxxix, 389; xi, 470. E. P. Dutton & Co.

For sixty years the Hakluyt Society of London has pursued its aim of printing one or two volumes a year of rare or unpublished voyages or travels. Without confining itself to works of English origin, of a particular age or region, it has produced a marvellous succession of books of the highest interest and value to students of history, geography, navigation and ethnology. With these before him the English reader may track Columbus and Vesputi and Cabot across the uncharted sea, may follow Magellan and Drake and Froberisher upon their daring undertakings, measure the assets of the Incas or behold "the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, or where the gorgeous East with richest hand shows on her kings barbaric pearl and gold." These six score volumes are the splendid literary monument of that painstaking, unpretentious British parson, Richard Hakluyt, preacher, late of Christ Church, Oxford, who, as he said, read "whatever printed or written discoveries and voyages I found extant, either in the Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese or English languages," and whose "Principall Navigations" have been for three hundred years the model and inspiration of his successors and have established for all time the uncontented pre-eminence of the English as an exploring and colonizing race.

The modest if efficient labors of a private society are now to be supplemented so far as India is concerned by government support. At the instance of the Royal Asiatic Society and under its supervision, the government of India has provided the necessary funds for the publication of the Indian Text Series, of which the first two volumes are a part of Nicolaus Manucci's lively picture of the Mogul empire in his day. Manucci was a Venetian without family, means, position or even education, but a shrewd fellow, smooth of tongue, quick of eye, very adaptable, and with some gift for languages and a mighty faculty of getting on in the world. He ran away, as a lad, from what he called his home, attached himself to an English nobleman travelling on an official visit to the East, and upon the death of his patron found himself in India, seventeen, penniless, alone and with very slender prospects of keeping body and soul together. That he was able to do so for some sixty years thereafter these volumes are evidence, and we must believe it. We have his own word for it. How he did it, and how he made himself indispensable at court; how he decided to become a physician, and how according to the medical light of those days he led the aristocracy without pecuniary loss to himself; how he witnessed mighty battles and luxurious governments; how he resisted all temptations to become a Mahometan and managed to retain a childlike virtue amid the blandishments of the seraglio, which he describes with microscopic appreciation—this and much more of personal adventure and individual comment may be read in the reminiscences of an old man, dictated many years after the event to French, Italian and Portuguese amanuenses and now first done into English.

The work is a singular mixture of personal recollection and what is meant for sober history, for which the writer professes vast respect. We are first told the circumstances of his leaving Europe and visiting Persia with the English Ambassador, and after a graphic description of his experiences in that kingdom we follow him to the court of the Grand Mogul. He must have been prepared for all the wonders of fairyland when the curtain went up on his first view of the East. Though incredulous enough as to the fables of antiquity, he accepts with reserve the curative properties of a certain liquid collected in minute quantities for royal use. Having received some as a gift, he adds: "If what they say is true—though I have not made the experiment—should the leg of a cock or other animal be broken and you take of the above liquid ten to fifteen drops and give it to the animal to drink, at the same time anointing the wounded place with it, then, if it is a true story, in twenty-four hours the bones will unite." Which only proves that there is nothing new under the sun. Not even nature fakers. And, speaking of fakers or faquirs, we are told that Akbar concluded that men who cut their own bodies must be good fighters, so he recruited four thousand of them at good pay, but at the first encounter, without waiting for the fighting to begin, all of them turned tail and ran as hard as they could go. When the disgusted monarch asked for an explanation he was told that those who cut their own flesh avoided veins, nerves and bones, but an enemy would wound without mercy, and it does not suit us, they said, to have our bodies cut about by the hands of others. A very similar conclusion was reached in respect to the usefulness of prize-fighters in our own Civil War.

When our author finds himself in the Mogul kingdom, after describing his journey thither, he feels moved to pay his tribute to the dignity of history by passing in quick review the Shahs of centuries which divided Tamerlane from Shah-Jahan, who occupied the throne at the time of the Venetian's arrival in India. These chapters, professing to be founded on the "Royal Chronicles," contain the most improbable legends and wild imaginations together with personal recollections and occasional outbursts of common sense. The government is an absolute monarchy, unlimited power and wealth being vested in the Throne and the opportunity of justice depending upon the whim and caprice of the King or of those having access to him. Signor Manucci is a capital story teller and illustrates his theme with grave exaggerations and solemn absurdities, a curious medley of Arabian Nights, Baron Munchausen, Figaro and Robinson Crusoe.

Jahangir was by nature very generous and forbearing; the least sum he ever ordered to be given to any one was 100,000 rupees; nor was it wisdom that he made this present, he did so many times, just as if it were of no account, while it is a huge amount. The King ordered 20,000 rupees to be laid on the ground, so that he might see what he had on the ground, and that he would be might it had. This was done. The wazir believed that on seeing the giving of so much coin, it was the contrary that happened, for he said he thought 100,000 rupees would take up more space, than from this time, when he made a gift, he ordered the double to be given of what he had given before. The wazir reported of seeing that he could thereby check the King's extravagance.

Of Shahjahan we have abundance of anecdote showing his love of justice, his skill in settling disputes and above all his expansive and affectionate nature. He is represented as being greatly under the influence of his Queen, Taj Mahal, who compelled him to make war upon the Portuguese who had carried off two of her slave girls. "There cannot be the least doubt," we are assured, "that if the Portuguese had reached the court in the lifetime of Taj Mahal she would have ordered the whole of them to be cut into pieces after great tortures, for thus had she sworn when they did her the injury." But the Queen died, and "Shahjahan gave orders for the construction of her mausoleum opposite the royal palace at Agra with great expenditure. It is in two stories, in the lower being deposited the body of his beloved wife." It must have been a man of cultivation he would scarcely have dismissed in such words a thousand workmen for upward of twenty years and of which in its present state the historian and architect says that "it is the combination of so many beauties, and the perfect manner

In which each is subordinated to the other, that makes up a whole which the world cannot match, and which never fails to impress even those who are most indifferent to the effects produced by architectural objects in general."

The Moguls were among the most indefatigable and enlightened builders the world has ever seen. Many of their most splendid productions have been swept away by the vandalism of successive conquerors, but enough remains to hold the veneration and delight of the civilized world. Manucci might have seen the most exquisite palaces, temples and tombs in course of erection, but such was his ignorance, his narrowness and bigotry that he has hardly a word to say of them. After a brief description of the decorations of Akbar's mausoleum, he has only this to say: "Most curious of all is the reason for having these paintings; it was only because they were a novelty in those days; it was not on account of religion." And that of the broad minded and progressive Akbar, who preached and practised toleration when the Inquisition was having its palmiest days in Europe!

But, if we may not make a silken purse out of certain material, there may be other uses for it. The littletattle of the court; the yanns about the palace harem; the delinquents thrown to the lions or trodden under foot by elephants; the hypocritical princes affecting a devotion to Mecca while conspiring against their own flesh and blood; the naughty little ways of the princesses and their jealousy of one another; the monstrous rewards to favorites (it is a rare privilege to cause elephants to fight together whenishments of the King directing rats to be placed in the trousers of an unsuccessful general's wives and daughters simply to disgrace and frighten them); the buffoonery, the presents, the Jewels (the Kohinoor), the bribes, the vindictiveness; the minute regulative ordinances of a centralized government (an official was appointed whose business it was to measure beads in the middle of the street and to dock those exceeding four finger-breadths); the elephants, the cobras, the cheerful doses of timely poison, the mutual spies, the devoted slaves, the faithful wives, the widows consumed, the plots, the counterplots, the stratagems and powers—these are the pictures thrown upon the canvas by a lavish hand with every facility of brush to produce a heightened color.

Aurangzeb, whose long reign covered much of the Venetian's Indian residence, seems to have been a particular object of his dislike, and is the theme of many disparaging anecdotes. As this monarch had reached the throne by poisoning his father, he was constantly on the lookout lest he be treated by his own children in the same way. Thus he had a fine and delicate policy of espionage. One night it happened (when there was very bright moonlight) that the prince Shah Alam was having a good time when his father suddenly decided to visit him. The prince, however, was "tipped off" as to the raid, and by the time of the King's arrival silken skirts were hidden in capacious closets and Shah Alam was reading the Koran aloud. Aurangzeb opined that the moonlight rather invited to delectation than to pious meditation, to which the prince replied that what he read appeared to him more lovely than the moon and afforded him more delight than the light of the sun. This answer, reflecting his own experience at a like age, charmed the King, who at once augmented the prince's allowance. Shah Alam now became very expert in dodging his father.

He gave himself up to pleasure but only in secret, his occupation being drinking and other pastimes, according to the whim of the moment. His father heard nothing of all that, for he knew his son's disposition, and his love of seeing his children imitate his felicitous strictness. Thus, to gain his approval, the prince displayed as many signs of devoutness as ever he could. As he perceived that his father was also much to the taste of the old fellow, he showed the greatest contempt for the riches of this world. He ordered his bowls and dishes to be made of iron, and caused it to be noticed about that he ate out of these. Further, the trappings of the horse he rode were of plain leather, devoid of ornament, though those of his retinue were not of that simple style.

As for myself, I knew quite the contrary of all this, and in his palace led a jolly life of it, drinking and eating out of dishes and cups of gold. Above all, as to the drink, that I know to be exact. For he had charged me with procuring good wines of Persia and Europe. These I caused to be brought from Surat, and frequently, when he was out of them, he sent to my house for some. For I had more trust in me than in his Mahometans. One day when he was eating and drinking, he said that he would like to see the king who did not eat out of vessels of emerald.

His children were just as great hypocrites as he was, and were all of them grandfathers. For in secret they led the same life as their father. One day, as it happened, one of the spies reported to the King that he had seen a bottle of wine being taken into the house of Sultan Muizz-ud-din. It was one that he had sent to me for. Upon this the King made a long discourse to Shah Alam and Muizz-ud-din. The latter said as his excuse that the wine was for some medicine to be given to his mother, who the King made it appear that he had no part in the matter.

If this is not history it is at least material for the historian. There is a very marked difference when the narrative concerns the period of the author's residence in India, but, even so, the editor is at pains to show us that the few dates given are almost invariably erroneous. It is strange that a European could spend a lifetime among an Oriental people and receive wealth and honors at their hands while retaining so much prejudice and aversion. But apparently the clouds overshadowed the end of his life. The man who set himself up as a physician without adequate training lost vigor with the elasticity and animation of youth. These annuals were written in old age for the diversion of European readers. No one could exact from the writer the vulgar accuracy, no one could impeach his assertions, and if his facts were not as stated what difference did it make? His readers would share his prejudices and have many a hearty laugh at the heathen who had heaped their choicest treasures on an itinerant quack. Our laugh is later and better, for we laugh at his tales and then turn round and laugh at him. Even if his history be lacking in breadth or continuity, or in the convincing qualities that compel credence, his anecdotes, his comments and his comparisons form a picture of the period that makes good his belief when he says, "Without speaking of the Emperor of China's court, which according to the accounts we have is extremely splendid and majestic, I assert that in the Mogul Kingdom the nobles, and above all the King, live with such ostentation that the most sumptuous of European courts cannot compare in richness and magnificence with the lustre beheld in the Indian court."

WILL TRY TO FLOAT TO POLE.
Captain Amundsen, of Norway, Will Make Attempt in 1910.
Chicago, Nov. 12.—Sailing under the American flag, Captain Roald Amundsen, of Norway, will attempt in 1910 to reach the North Pole.
At a dinner given in his honor by Chicago Norwegians Captain Amundsen announced last night that preparations for his next journey into the frozen north were about completed. He said he would sail from San Francisco to the Bering Straits and attempt to float on the ice to the North Pole.
CANDY MAY HAVE POISONED HIM.
After a consultation of three physicians it was said yesterday Herbert Gill, of Glen Cove, Long Island, was suffering from some form of poisoning and probably could not recover. It is believed that Herbert ate poisoned candy. He is the six-year-old son of Charles Gill, Superintendent of the Poor of Nassau County. Lives in Glen Cove, will make rigid investigation if it is shown that Herbert was poisoned by candy. Specimens of candy from every store from which he might have purchased sweets are said to have been obtained for evidence.

Books and Publications.

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Will Command Second Brigade of the National Guard. Many Men Lose Employment by Closing of Factories in Yonkers.

Governor Charles E. Hughes has sanctioned the retirement of Brigadier General James McLeer, for twenty-two years the commander of the Second Brigade of the New York National Guard. He will be succeeded by Colonel John G. Eddy, colonel of the 4th Regiment, Brooklyn. General McLeer's service in military affairs has extended over forty-six years.

Several thousand men have been thrown out of work by the closing of two sugar refineries of the National Sugar Refining Company in Yonkers and Long Island City. Many men have also been laid off in the large refinery of the Federal company, an independent concern, in Yonkers. The reason for the closing down of the National refineries, which is to be followed by the closing of the American refinery in Jersey City, is said to be the great size of the stocks on hand, and the desire to increase the consumption of beet sugar.

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TO CONTINUE WATCH TRUST FIGHT.
Dueber Estate Tied Up so Stock Cannot Easily Pass to Others.
Canton, Ohio, Nov. 12.—In the will of the late John C. Dueber, watch manufacturer, in which an estate valued at over \$3,000,000 is disposed of, Mr. Dueber provided against any move that may be made by the so-called watch trust after his death. None of the heirs can sell any of the stock in his company without first giving thirty days' notice and giving the other stockholders of the company an opportunity to buy. With the exception of \$100,000 in cash given to his sister, Mrs. Henry Huffman, of Cincinnati, the whole of the Dueber estate is bequeathed to the widow and three children. One-third of the estate is given to the widow and the remaining two-thirds is divided equally between the three children—Albert, Pauline and Estella.

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