

## PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

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LITTLE did I think, some thirty years ago, when I received a copy of the first edition of this grand work, that I should be one day entrusted with the difficult but glorious task of supervising the third edition. When the first edition of the *Book of Ser Marco Polo* reached "Far Cathay," it created quite a stir in the small circle of the learned foreigners, who then resided there, and became a starting-point for many researches, of which the results have been made use of partly in the second edition, and partly in the present. The Archimandrite PALLADIUS and Dr. E. BRETSCHNEIDER, at Peking, ALEX. WYLIE, at Shang-hai—friends of mine who have, alas! passed away, with the exception of the Right Rev. Bishop G. E. MOULE, of Hang-chau, the only survivor of this little group of hard-working scholars,—were the first to explore the Chinese sources of information which were to yield a rich harvest into their hands.

When I returned home from China in 1876, I was introduced to Colonel HENRY YULE, at the India Office, by our common friend, Dr. REINHOLD ROST, and from that time we met frequently and kept up a correspondence which terminated only with the life of the great geographer, whose friend I had become. A new edition of the travels of Friar Odoric of Pordenone,