

4. THE EARLIEST OCCURRENCE OF DEVANĀGARĪ IN PRINTED BOOKS.

SIR,—In my article on the Origin and Early History of Chess, printed in the January number of the Journal for 1898, I note on p. 136 that in Hyde's *Historia shahiludii*, published in 1694, seventeen Sanskrit words are engraved in Devanāgarī, adding that this is probably the earliest instance of the use of that character to be found in any printed book. Soon after the appearance of my article I received a postcard from Professor Th. Zachariae, of Halle, referring me to a Dutch botanical work published at Amsterdam in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Having looked up the book in the Bodleian Library, I wrote a note about it for the April number of the Journal for 1898. But I mislaid the slip, and only found it again a few days ago. The work in question consists of twelve large folio volumes describing in Latin the plants and trees of Southern India, and illustrated with numerous plates, which, considering the time at which they were produced, are remarkably fine. The title is *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus adornatus per Henricum van Rheede tot Drakestein*. The first volume is dated Amsterdam, 1678, and the last 1703. The introduction to the former contains a plate in which eleven lines of Sanskrit are engraved in Devanāgarī characters. In this the three Pandits who assisted the author in his work give their names (Raṅga-bhaṭṭa, Vināyaka-panḍita, Āpū-bhaṭṭa), and mention the date as *Śālivāhana-śāka* 1597. The author seems to have understood the meaning of the era, though he transliterates the name incorrectly; for he explains the date with the words *qui apud nos est* 1674 (for 1675). The name of the author appears in some of the volumes as Rheede van Draakenstein. In the first volume of his work we have the occurrence of Devanāgarī sixteen years earlier than in Hyde's book. It is not likely that any earlier instance will be found.

March, 1900.

A. A. MACDONELL.