

The Great Mogul

giving them the annals of life in far-off Agra. The Franciscan would not abandon his people, and he remained with those who elected to settle in the capital rather than return to Hughli. There, owing to the patronage of Jahangir and Nur Mahal, he established a thriving colony. In course of time, by teaching his flock to eschew politics and stick to trade, he made the Franciscans a greater power than the Jesuits.

Divested of the quaint phraseology and varied spelling then in vogue, some portion of his epistle is worthy of record.

"Each year it becomes more established," he said, "that the Empress rules in Jahangir's name. Truly she is a good and wise woman. She hath effected a beneficial change in his cruel disposition, and put a stop to his savage outbursts of temper. Not only does he drink less wine in the daytime, but he is ashamed to be seen by her if his evening potations are too indulgent. She still retains her habit of going unveiled among all classes, and, indeed, it would be a wise reform were other women of the country to do likewise, for the Creator never intended one half the human race to remain invisible to the other half. Herein, however, she has failed, though it is said, as a quip, that were her own features less noteworthy she would not be so free in their exhibition.

"Nevertheless, she is the most accomplished woman of her age and clime. She rules this land with moderation and firmness, encourages education and good living, and gives freedom to all men to worship God as seemeth best to them. I am reminded, by these last words, that one who sought unfairly to impose his will upon others, Dom Geronimo to wit, died recently in the Convent here. He had been partly demented for years, but you will be glad to learn that his final hours were peaceful. His soul was restored to consciousness when the weak body failed, and he departed this life sincerely regretting the excesses to which he was led by unmeasured zeal. Per-