

The Great Mogul

ing width to his inches and thus adjusting that proper balance between the extremes by which nature at times leaves the common level.

"It will be of interest to his lady, best known to me as the Countess di Cabota, to learn that recently, while on a journey to the Nasirabad mission, I turned aside and visited the deserted city of Fatehpur-Sikri, built, as you know, by Akbar. In Queen Mariam's house I found wall-paintings representing the Annunciation, and other scenes in the history of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, thus proving that the unhappy woman, long since dead, was an apostate. May she have found grace and repentance even at the foot of the throne. It would be a great delight to me if I could win Nur Mahal to the faith. She and Jahangir are ready enough to reason the matter, but they remain obdurate. I trust yet to prevail."

The Franciscan then branched off into such trading information as he thought might be useful to them or their friends in the city of London, and concluded by expressing the hope that, if ever he returned to Europe, they might all meet; though, said he, "I expect little more than that my own bones shall rest in the small graveyard we have established at no great distance from Dilkusha."

Nellie, who had heard the letter when it reached her husband, listened to it again while he read it to Roger and Lady Sainton.

"What an influence Nur Mahal seems to exert on all who meet her!" she said, thoughtfully, when Walter laid down the last closely written sheet.

"Aye, a witch, and a bonny one ât that!" muttered Roger.

"Was she really so beautiful?" asked Nellie, and