

The Great Mogul

haps I err in judging him thus harshly. 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' I Cor. x. 12.

"The Emperor kept his word touching the record of my good Roger's mighty deed in slaying the elephant. Within the Ummer Singh Gate of the Palace he hath erected another gateway called the Hathiya Darwaza, or 'Door of the Elephants.' It stands on the summit of a steep slope, and bears on its two flanking towers life-size models of two elephants, one of which has a man's head. Fra Angelico, of the Blessed Order of St. Francis, newly come here from Barcelona, has a gift in painting, and, at my wish, he has made two oil drawings, which I send herewith, one of which shows the noble design of the structure.

"The other will be equally foreign to your eyes. You will scarce credit that the splendid marble edifice drawn by my worthy brother in Christ is the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula, father of the Empress, and erected by her on the site of the house in the Garden of Heart's Delight. Jahangir wished the place kept as an evening retreat for the days of spring flowers, but Nur Mahal would hear of no other end than the monument. So there stands the mausoleum, a noble building truly, yet a grave. Who knows what unfulfilled desires lie buried with the unheeding bones of the old Diwán! I sometimes think the Empress, who, with all her wisdom, remains a wayward woman, was not wholly swayed by filial piety when she moved the remains of her excellent father to that lovely garden. Once, by chance, I met her there. She spoke to me, and I gave her such meager intelligence of my English friends as I possessed. She was pleased to hear that Roger and you were honored by the King. She sends her greetings. Jai Singh leader of the body-guard, also places his turban at your feet.

"And, in this connection, I am reminded of that verse in the XXVth Chapter of Proverbs: 'As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' Write to me, therefore, my good Walter. May it please the Lord that these presents shall find you and yours in good health and abounding in happiness! They tell me I am growing gray, and thinner than ever, so assure me, I pray you, that Sir Roger is add-