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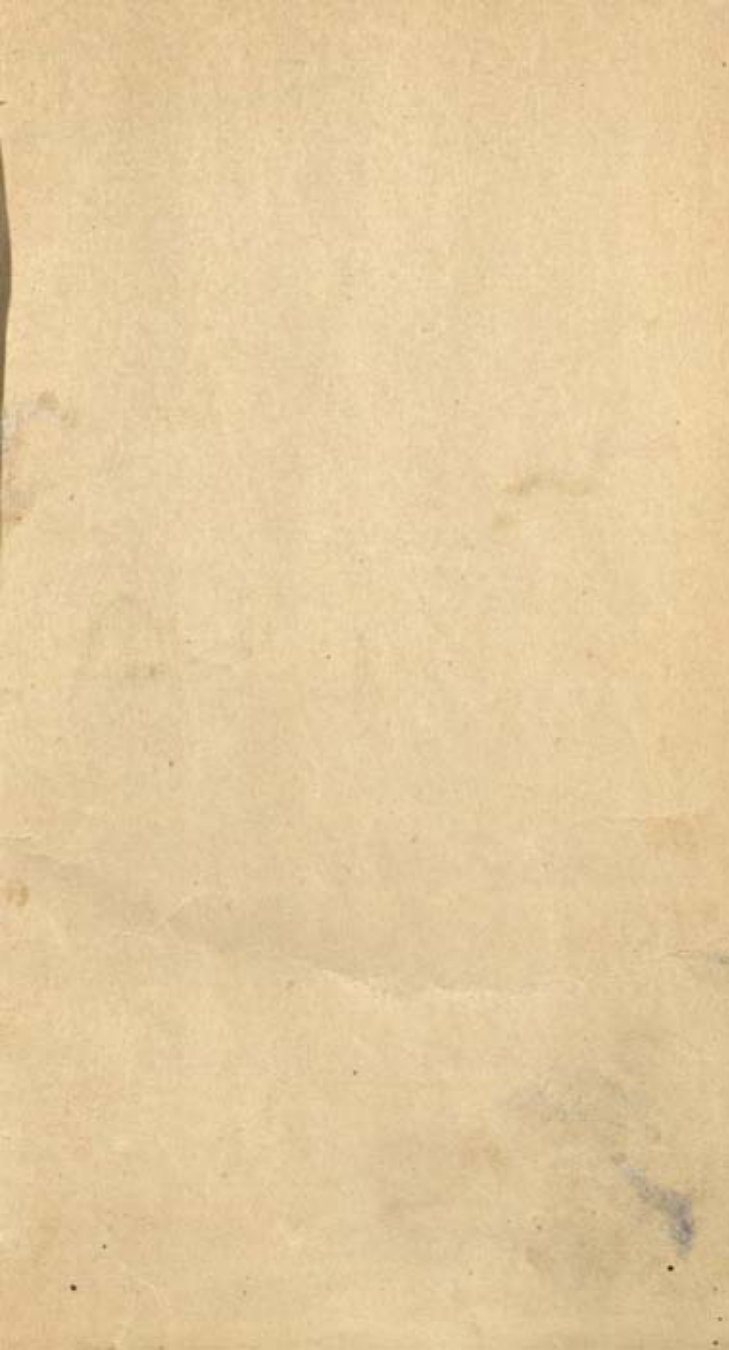
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THE CITY OF THE TAJ

A Book for Tourists and Students of History

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BY

R. C. ARORA B.Sc., (Ag.)

Author of

Delhi, The Imperial City, New Guide to Kashmir,

The Fort, Delhi, etc., etc.



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To

My Wife

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED



PREFACE

There are few so interesting, full of details and illustrative works on the Taj and the historic buildings of Agra as this. The numerous cheap handbooks and guides to the Taj lack either in details, illustrations, and maps or are too bulky. I have endeavoured to help my tourist friends and the general public by presenting this practical, useful and condensed book as they needed it from a long period.

In writing the present work, I have kept in view the needs of visitors who will naturally ask to be shown objects of interest peculiar to the place and of Agra residents who wish to familiarise themselves with the story of the world renowned monument, the Taj and the neighbouring historic sites which attract millions of people from far and wide.

The bibliography at the end of the book will prove the fact that materials for the book have been collected from numerous valuable sources and I am confident that they will stand the test of critical observers.

I have also dealt with a short history of Agra as it is essential to be acquainted with the history, otherwise most of its celebrated sights or historical buildings and monuments would have been unintelligible.

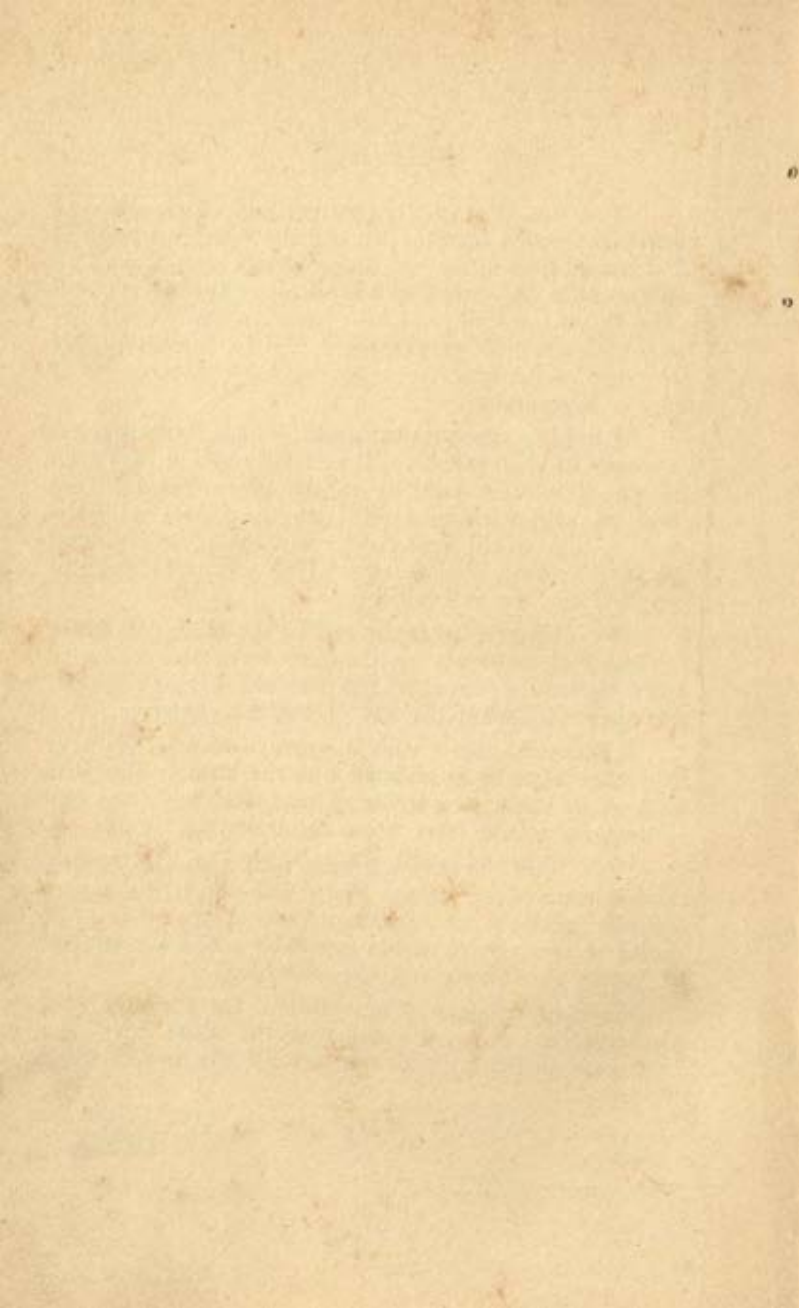
This work, in short, deals with the Taj, 'poetic marble arrayed in eternal glory' and the neighbouring historic buildings of Agra in a manner that it is alike useful to the tourist as his companion and the student of history as a ready reference for him.

To many persons, I am grateful for the supply of photographs. A good number of the views have also been reproduced by the courtesy of the Indian State Railways.

Calcutta,

R. C. ARORA.

25th January, 1937.



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THE TAJ

1, 3, 4.



THE CITY OF THE TAJ.

HOLY and profane men, poets, prosers, and practical people all write of the Taj—"a monument indeed which is admitted by the whole world to be the most beautiful that the earth has ever held"—in the same strain, "Too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands!"—"a poem in marble!"—"that dream in marble!"—"the sigh of a broken heart!"—"poetic marble arrayed in eternal glory!"—"the inspiration is from heaven—the execution worthy of it!"—"lovely beyond description!"—"indescribable!"—"Incomparable in India and in the world!".

This very venerable structure has rightly given a prominent place, in this country, to the city of Agra which is the home of the Taj. This city with the Taj has ever been one that is beyond

all others, unique in its attraction to the tourist, traveller and the student of history—hence Agra deserves to be rightly called the “City of the Taj”.

The city of the Taj otherwise Agra is a well built and handsome town and stands on the right bank of the Jumna. According to ancient Hindu history it was a Hindu stronghold at the time of Raja Kansa about 3000 B.C. and was called Agraban. Later on, Agraban began to be called Agra by long usage. In 1475 at the time when King Edward IV of England invaded France, there was a fort of Badalgarh built by Raja Badal Singh. This was pulled down and the present fort was rebuilt by Akbar.

Thus this ancient city founded in the year 1566 by the Emperor Akbar was the recognised capital of the Moghul Empire for nearly one hundred years during which Agra largely flourished and was one of the most populous and prosperous cities of the world. European travellers have recorded that in Jehangir's reign the population was as large as that of London in those days and the stone-paved streets were lined with shops stocked with the wares of Asia and Europe. Formerly Agra was enclosed by a high battled wall which was erected in Aurangzeb's reign by Raja Jai Singh II, the founder of the splendid city of Jaipur. It had sixteen gates of which the most prominent, the Delhi Gate, is still in existence.

Between Agra Fort and the Taj where the high class palatial buildings of the Rajas, Ministers and nobles were—now a mass of tangled ravines—lies the fine Macdonald Park. To the north of the city, is the Hewett Park close to the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Modern Agra is one of the cleanest and most solidly constructed towns in India with wide and well kept roads. It contains a large number of established private residences as well as good hotels, colleges, churches, banks, a club, a Cathedral, Lady Lyall Hospital, Medical School, Judicial, Revenue and other offices.

Agra is justly celebrated for its excellent work in the carving of stone and inlaid mosaic and for the manufacture of gold and silver embroideries and woollen and cotton carpets.

Among the sights of the city and its environs, the chief are the Taj, the Jasmine Tower, Sheikh Salim Chisti's and Itmad-ud-Daula's Tombs. But the priority of place must of necessity be given to the famous Taj Mahal—'the Dream in Marble'—which for its exquisite symmetry and grace and the marvellous richness and beauty of its materials is unequalled by any structure in the world.

CHAPTER II.

THE TAJ.

THE Taj, the glory of Agra, is a miracle—matchless, gracious and perfect in form. This peerless monument represents the most highly elaborate stage of ornamentation, the stage at which the architect ends and the jeweller begins. This celebrated monument is really the final achievement and the epitome of Moghul art and the *pietra dura* adorning the mausoleum is the finest in the world. In colour and design its interior may rank first in the world for purely decorative workmanship, while the perfect symmetry of its exterior and the aerial grace of its domes and minarets impress the beholder in a manner never to be forgotten. So is the celebrated Mausoleum of the Taj, “the most gorgeous romance of wedded love”, the peerless white monument and the fairest shrine ever raised to love.

The notable features of Persian architectural style, the beautiful floral designs and painting; the prominent features of the Egyptian mosques, the remarkable purity, the exuberant style, the beautiful design; the characteristic features of the

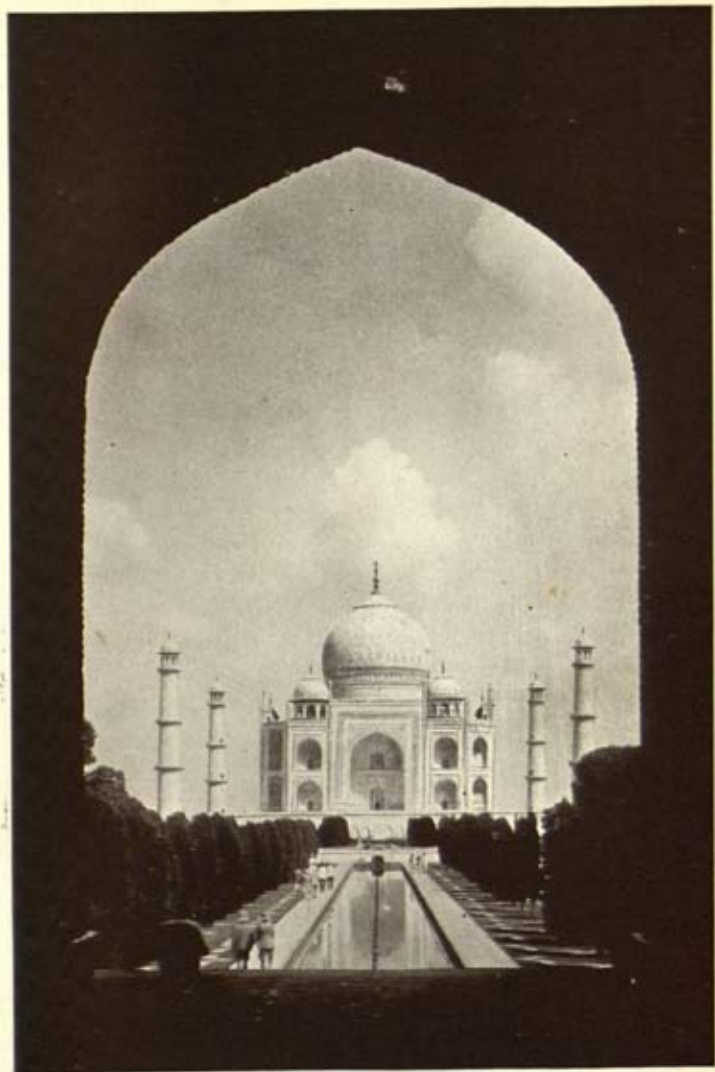
romantic and palatial buildings of Spain, the brilliant colouring, the excellent polish and finish, the wonderful ornamentation and decoration and the charming mosaics are all combined in this world renowned monument, a house not made with hands. It is rather a fairy palace raised by some genie of the Arabian Nights' Tales—the Taj which means in the literal sense of the term, the Crown of Architecture.

The mausoleum erected by Artimisia at Halicarnassus, that of Augustas and Hadrian, or that erected in France by Catharine de Medici do not surpass the unique mausoleum of Mumtaz in elegance and splendour. Hence, its wonderful workmanship is peculiar, the artistic skill displayed in the construction is nowhere else to be seen; its beautiful floral ornaments are, in some places, so extraordinarily fine as to outshine the performances of a painter's pencil. The mosaic work of the stately monument is so elaborate that it would astonish the famous workman, Losus of Pergamos, if he were alive to see it. Indeed, the mausoleum stands unrivalled in magnificence and beauty and is the object of admiration to travellers from all parts of the world.

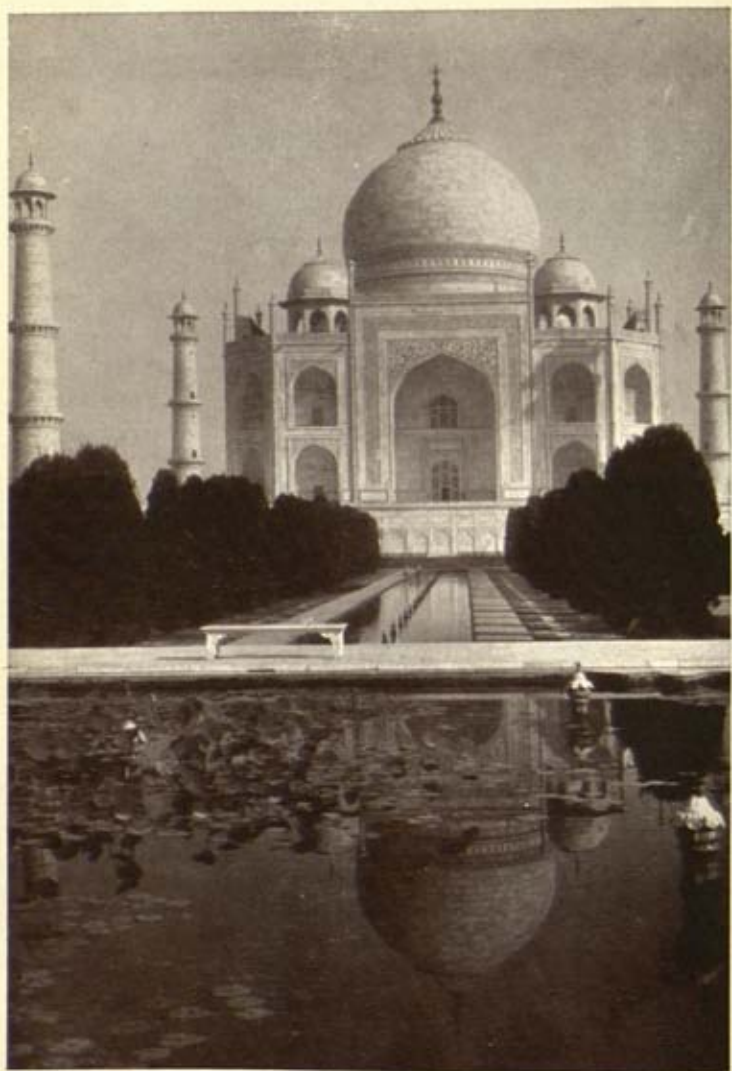
James Fergusson, observes: "With its purity of material and grace of form, the Taj may challenge comparison with any erection of the same sort in the world. Its beauty may not be of the highest class, but in its class it is unsurpassed".

Bernier concludes: "I decidedly think that this monument deserves much more to be numbered among the wonders of the world than the Pyramids of Egypt, those unshapen masses which when I had even seen them twice yielded me no satisfaction, and which are nothing on the outside but heaps of large stones piled in the form of steps one upon another, while within, there is little that is creditable either to human skill or human invention".

✓ The first impression of Samuel Smith, member of the Parliament of England in his book is as follows: "We stood spell-bound for a few minutes at this lovely apparition; it hardly seems of the earth, earthy. It is more like a dream of celestial beauty. No words can describe it. We felt that all previous sights were dimmed in comparison. No such effect is produced by the first view of St. Peter's or Milan or Cologne Cathedrals; they are all majestic, but this is enchantment itself. So perfect is the form that all other structures seem clumsy. The first impression is that of a temple of white ivory draped in white Brussels lace. The exquisite carving and tracery on the walls look like lace rather than sculptures. A beautiful dome crowns this building and four graceful minarets stand at each angle some distance apart; they remind one of the Eddystone Light House built of white marble. Such is the dazzling whiteness that it looks like a work of art when first unveiled.



TAJMAHAL THROUGH AN ARCH, AGRA.



THE TAJ

✓ J. Talboys Wheeler observes: "It is lovely beyond description but the loveliness is feminine. It awakes ideas of fair complexioned beauty; the soul is dead; the form, the charm, the grace of beauty are lingering there. The walls are like muslin dresses, radiant with flowers and jewels. The perforated marble gates are like lace veils".

✓ Mr. Oscar Browning, Cambridge Professor observes: "There are morningites and eveningites, moonlighters and mid-dayers, but they are all agreed that the Taj is the one incomparable building in India and in the world. . . . See the Taj, it will fascinate you so as to deprive you of all power of laudatory expression and it will haunt you ever after till your dying day. It will float in the clear Tuscan air above the bell tower of Giotto and arise across the lagoon beside the Doge's palace at St. Mark's".

A writer observes: "While the sepulchral works adorning the valley of the Nile will be regarded as wonders of art for their solidity of construction and sublimity of conception; the Taj at Agra shall always call forth the admiration of mankind for its being the most exquisite specimen of human architecture and the most gorgeous romance of wedded love".

"No building", says G. W. Forrest, "has been more often described, drawn and photographed. But no drawing or photograph can give an idea

of so rich and poetical a subject. No description can show forth the whole, combined out of marble dome, fair minarets, and fragrant garden. Words cannot express the multitudinous richness of its ornamentation, perfection of form, and minuteness of decoration, each lending assistance to the other. This is the true charm of the Taj. It is like unto one of those daughters of the gods, who were most divinely fair. It is the fashion now to say that the Taj is lacking in strict architectural beauty". A well known writer states; "The truth is that the Taj is not, as an architectural group, altogether satisfactory. No doubt in parts of the Taj genius is brought into jeopardy by unskilfulness; but the divine gift prevails. If a man possesses the sentiment of form, the Taj will please him. As we sit on the steps of one of the minarets in the cool air of the evening and gaze upon the marble dome and the smooth, broad part of the marble, warm in the rays of the setting sun, across the memory comes Keats' line—"In form and shape, compact and beautiful". What has been said of Keats' *St. Agnes' Eve* may be applied to the Taj—"A monody of dreamy richness".

✓ Bayard Taylor says: "There is no mystery, no sense of partial failure about the Taj. A thing of perfect beauty and of absolute finish in every detail, it might pass for the work of a genie, who knew nought of the weakness and ills with which mankind is beset".

✓ "No description, however vivid or precise," observes the late Bishop French, "No colouring however brilliant or varied even if supplemented with painting or drawing, can give one a correct idea of the Taj for its nobleness, an edifice unparalleled in the annals of Eastern Architecture".

Another writer says: "It is too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands. Angels must have brought it from heaven and a glass case should be thrown over it to preserve it from every breath of air".

✓ It will not be devoid of interest to go through Lord Roberts': "I will not attempt to describe the indescribable. Neither words nor pencil could give the most imaginative reader the slightest idea of the all-satisfying beauty and purity of this glorious conception. To those who have not already seen it, I will say, "Go to India. The Taj alone is well worth the journey".

So is the fairy-faced Taj that even the most authoritative writers and world tourists have been so much charmed with its surpassing beauties that they have made a confession that it is indescribable.

I lay down my pen here and conclude the subject with the wonderful remarks of His Royal Highness, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales: "Most writers who have tried their hands at a description

of the Taj set out with the admission that it is indescribable, and then "proceed to give some ideas" of it. I do not know how many of the fair ladies present agreed with Colonel Sleeman's wife, who said to him, "I cannot criticise, but I can tell you what I feel. I would die tomorrow to have such a tomb". Holy and profane men, poets, prozers and practical people all write of the Taj in the same strain "Too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands!"—"a poem in marble!"—"the sigh of a broken heart!....."

Shahjahan commenced the building of the Taj in 1631, the fourth year after his accession to the throne. Several designs were prepared by the masters of the art from distant lands but it was Afandi's which was approved. From this, a wooden model was constructed in 1630, the very year of Mumtaz Mahal's death. The splendid Taj was completed in 1648, a year before the Commonwealth was declared in England. This unrivalled specimen of Moghul architecture was built by Shahjahan at the zenith of his power, and under the influence of his tender passion for Mumtaz, and at a period when the Imperial coffers were full of silver and gold, when the income of the State from land revenue alone was more than 37 crores of rupees.

✓ Eminent artists and architects were sent for from all parts of India as well as from foreign

countries like Turkey, Persia and Arabia. Mohamad Isa Afandi of Turkey was the chief architect and Mohammad Sharif of Samarkand was his assistant, each drew a salary of Rs. 1,000 per month. Amanat Khan of Shiraz was Tughra-writer (salary Rs. 1,000). Mohamad Khan of Shiraz and Wahib Khan of Baghdad were the calligraphers (pay Rs. 600 each). Ismail Khan of Turkey was the dome-maker (pay Rs. 500). Manohar Lal of Kanauj, Manohar Singh and Mannulal of Lahore were the mosaicists (Rs. 500 each). Kazim Khan of Lahore was the Kalas-maker (Rs. 200). Mohammad Hanif of Agra was the Chief Engineer. Zadir Zaman Khan of Arabia was the general artist. Ata Mohamad of Bukhara was the sculptor; Amir Ali, Raushan Khan and Baldeo Das of Multan were flower sculptors. Abdullah of Delhi, Mohamad Sajjan of Balkh and Shukrullah of Multan were masons. In short, the services of the most skilful men of the age of Asiatic origin were secured. The whole gang of labourers including the designers, calligraphers, draftsmen, sculptors, masons, mosaicists, inlayers, dome-maker and general artists numbered about 20,000. Makramat Khan and Mir Abdul Kasim were the Inspectors-General of the several branches. With so extensive an establishment the building was completed in nearly 20 years.

Some are of opinion that mystery enshrouds the name of the designer of the plan of the Taj.

Some European historians give credit to an Italian, Geronimo Veroneo and in evidence of it, they put forth the statement of Father Manrique of Spain who was at Agra in 1641. This is a myth and is unreliable.

Peter Munday, who was here at Agra, received a visit from Geronimo Veroneo at the English Agra House between the 3rd and 6th January 1630-31. He mentions him as a goldsmith in Shahjahan's pay. Sir R. C. Temple in the introduction of *Peter Munday's Travels* writes: "It is note-worthy, however, that though this building (Taj) was in course of construction while Munday was in residence at Agra and Veroneo was personally known to him, yet he says nothing of the Italian's connection with the work. Had Veroneo really been the architect, it is unlikely that so accurate a chronicler as Munday would have failed to mention the fact. These details are of special interest, as we have no other account of the Taj by an English traveller at this date".

Havell, a well known historian, writes, "It is even believed that one Geronimo Veroneo, an Italian, who was then in Moghul service, submitted designs for Shahjahan's inspection, a fact which has led many writers into the error of supposing that the Taj as completed was actually designed by him. The design eventually accepted was by Ustad Isa Khan. The artistic history of the

period and the style of workmanship of the Taj, all testify in a remarkable way to their accuracy and the falseness of theory that the European directed the designs of the building".

The well-known travellers, Bernier, Tavernier and Thevenot (French historian) who visited the Taj in 1666 have not mentioned Geronimo Veroneo in their historical records of great value. Also in the *Badshah nama*, the authoritative record of the time, the name of this Italian is nowhere mentioned.

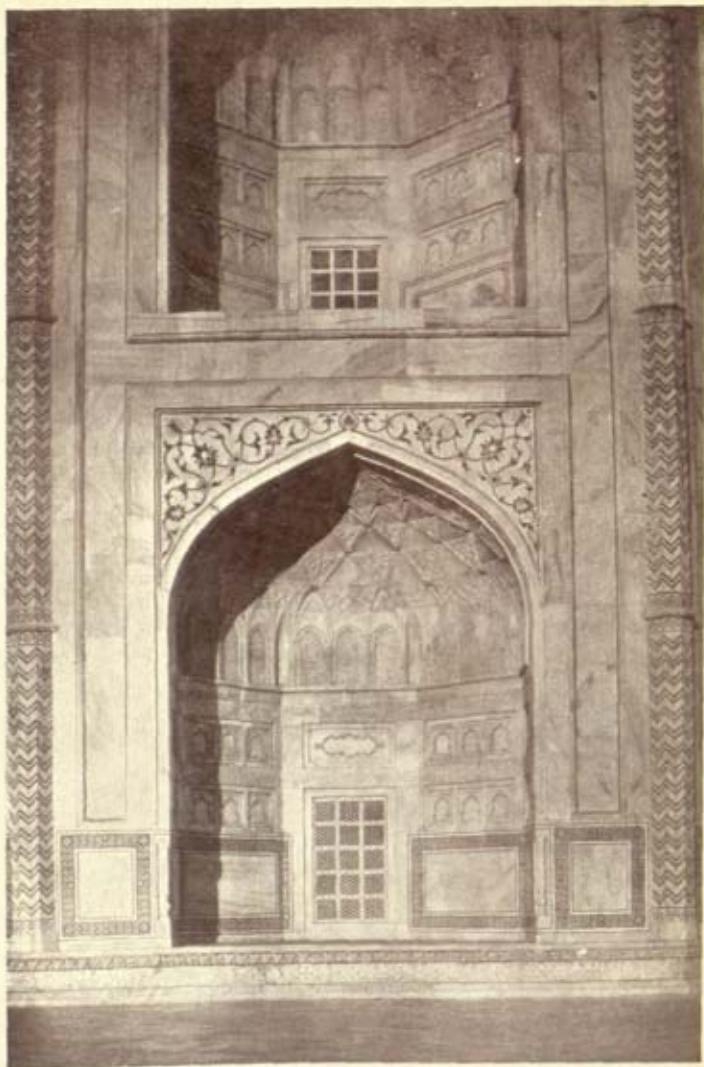
Peter Munday calls him, a Venetian and goldsmith; W. Foster mentions him in 1637 as an Italian jeweller. None of the historians mentions him as an engineer, designer or an architect. It is possible, he might have been a member of the extensive establishment employed in executing the work but he never played the part of an architect or engineer. Any supposition of the sort would be unreasonable.

There are others who believe that the mosaic work was done by Austin de Bordeaux, French jeweller of genius. This is also unfounded because France was unacquainted with the name of art when it flourished in Persia, Egypt, Syria, Spain, etc. and this fact is proved by the records of the Islamic architect. Mr. J. F. Fanthom says, "There is no foundation whatever for the allegation that a Venetian or Frenchman had a hand in

the designing or the construction of the Taj. This is a pure fabrication of the European brain".

As regards the material for the building, the white marble so plentifully used came from Makrana and Raiwala in Jaipur, the red sandstone from Fatehpur Sikri and the neighbourhood of Agra, diamonds from Panna, turquoise from Tibet, cornelian from Baghdad, jasper from Cambay, Chrysolite from the Nile, Ruby from Badakhshan, and the other precious jewels and stones from various parts of the world. The jewels and precious stones were mostly sent by the Kings of the empire and of other lands as a present to the Emperor Shahjahan. A discerning eye can observe that a variety of precious stones of different kinds are united in all curious ways as to form a perfect miracle.

It will surely interest our readers to know the observations of A. Fuhrer, Ph.D. about the building decorated and ornamented with so a large and enormous precious articles: "The building, too, is an exquisite example of that system of inlaying with precious stones which became the great characteristic of the style of the Moghuls after the death of Akbar. All the spandrels of the Taj, all the angles and more important architectural details, are lightened by being inlaid with stones, such as agates, bloodstones, jaspers, and the like. These are combined in wreaths, scrolls and frets,



"DECORATIVE WORK",

TAJMAHAL



SHAH JAHAN
U.L.P.H



MUMTAZ MAHAL

as exquisite in design, as beautiful in colours, relieved by the pure white marble in which they are inlaid, they form the most beautiful and precious style of ornament ever adopted in architecture. This mode of ornamentation is lavishly bestowed on the tombs themselves and the scenes that surround them”.

The exact cost of the Taj with its complementary buildings is nowhere recorded and valuations hitherto made range from 50 lakhs to 6 crores of rupees.

THE LADY OF THE TAJ.

The lady, exalted of the Palaces, wonder of the Age, who rests in the Taj which has become the resort of pilgrims of all nations and creeds, was the beloved consort of Shahjahan. Her name was Arjumand Banu Begam, better known by her title Mumtaz Mahal, a name since converted into Taj Mahal by long usage. A Persian by descent, she was the daughter of the celebrated Prime Minister, Asaf Khan, brother to the Empress Nurjahan. Mumtaz Mahal was married to Shahjahan at the age of 21. Though she was his second wife Mumtaz Begam's feminine grace, benignity of heart and wit proved so powerful that Shahjahan's affections were soon transferred to his new bride. She became all in all to Shahjahan and the emperor's impassionate love for her made them inseparable companions both

at home and abroad and she ever accompanied him in campaigns. Mumtaz was to Shahjahan in a manner what her aunt Nurjahan had been to Jehangir. Mumtaz was so capable that she was consulted in all complicated matters relating to the administration of the empire.

In 1630, while Shahjahan was busy in a campaign against Khan Jahan Lodi at Burhanpur, Mumtaz Mahal gave birth to a daughter and due to some disorder in the system, she looked despairingly at her lord and closed her eyes in death at the age of 39. The bereavement lacerated the heart of the emperor for weeks and weeks together. Its extent cannot be spoken or written. He abstained from all pleasures and amusements for two years.

Mumtaz Mahal's remains were temporarily deposited in the garden of Zenabad at Burhanpur and after 6 months conveyed to Agra and interred in the open area of the Taj garden (this site is still noticeable and lies on the left side of the Taj at one corner in the lawn, well protected by green foliage). After six months, in 1631, it was removed to its last resting place the renowned Mausoleum, the Taj.

ENTRANCE TO THE TAJ.

Jilo Khana.

The spacious court between the fine gateway of red sandstone and the grand portal of the Taj is a quadrangle enclosed by rooms and the whole

structure is known as Jilo Khana. It measures 204 yards long and 150 yards broad with 128 rooms of which 52 have disappeared. Formerly, Jilo Khana was once a valuable appendage to the Taj and possessed beautiful buildings of which the ruins supply no information. Here a bazar was also held in great pomp and splendour. There are three gates to it, east, west and south.

The usual approach to the Taj is by the west gate which is handsomely built of red sandstone. Outside this gate on the left side is the Ossuary of the Maids of Honour. It stands on an elevated square measuring 156 feet each way. There are two uninscribed marble tombs in the central chamber. History does not give a true account of the ladies buried here. All agree with the probabilities that here the personal attendants of Mumtaz Mahal are entombed. The cupola of the building is turnip shaped and the platform octagonal.

Opposite to the Mausoleum of the Maids of Honour is a redstone edifice, the Fatehpur Mosque. It stands on a splendid terrace. The court is paved and measures 103 ft. by 55 ft. where 176 worshippers can sit. The cupola is beautifully constructed.

Just after entering the west gate, on the right a few steps lead to a platform over which stands a dome-crowned Mausoleum measuring 137 feet

each side. Here sleeps Sati-un-nisa who was a Maid of Honour in Mumtaz Mahal's house and governess of her dear daughter, Jahanara Begam. She was a childless widow and died in 1647 at Lahore whence her body was brought to Agra in 1649 and buried in the tomb built by Shah Jahan at a cost of Rs. 30,000. The tomb is elegant. It is paved with marble. The lower portions of the walls are also built of marble. In the centre of the octagonal hall lies the tomb, a structure of shining marble. The sides of the tomb are embellished with trceries and adorned with arabesques. The walls and ceilings are beautifully ornamented and painted. Today, much of its former beauty and lustre have vanished.

It is erroneously believed by some to be the Tomb of Fatehpuri Begum, a wife of Shah Jahan; the Rauza Sahaili tomb outside the Taj garden to the east, being really assigned to Sati-un-Nisa Khanam.

The south gate is the Sirhi Darwaza or steps gateway. From here a picturesque glimpse of the old town of Mumtazabad, now Tajganj, is worthy of notice. Tajganj was once the colony of the workmen who worked in the construction of the Taj.

The east gateway leads to Fatehabad. In the immediate neighbourhood it adjoins a high plat-

form to the south and is reached by a few steps. Here stands the dome-crowned Mausoleum of Sirhindi Begum, one of Shah Jahan's wives. The building is eight sided with twenty four arches with an octagonal hall and a verandah. The tombstone is highly ornamented with mosaics and is a piece of admirable workmanship. The building has remained in a neglected condition which is a pity.

THE MAIN GATE OF THE TAJ.

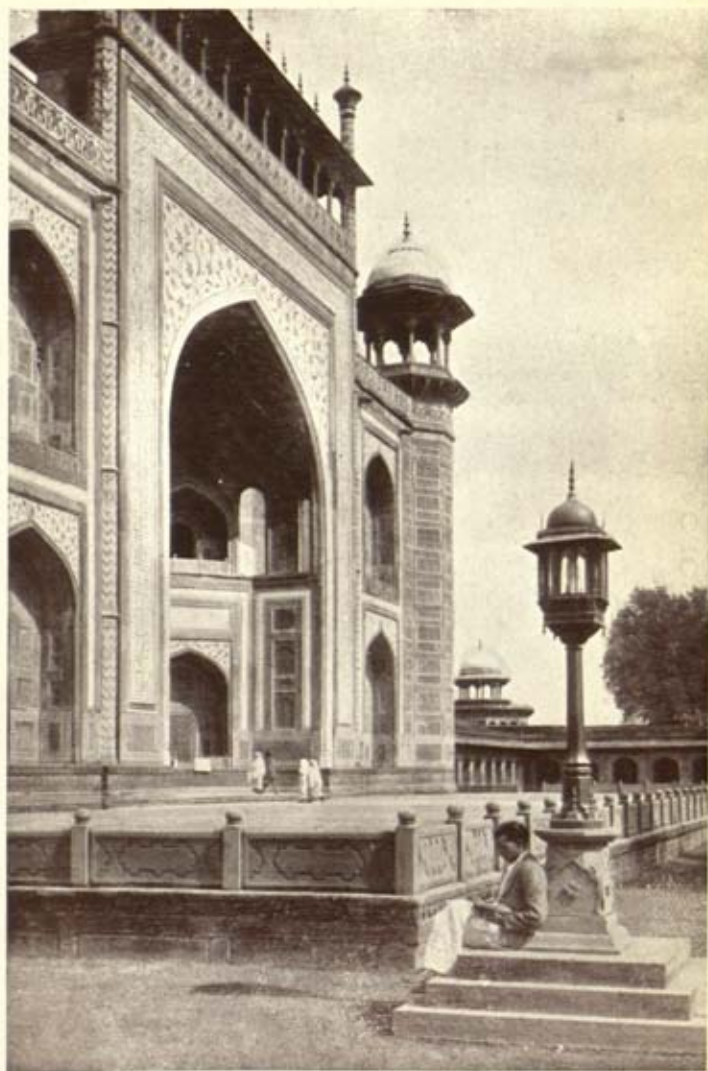
The grand portal of the Taj is a splendid structure rising to a height of 100 feet above the ground floor. The whole entrance is a masonry dome with its interior ornamented with mosaic. There is a spacious platform 211 ft. by 86 ft. in front of the gate. The front face of the gate is nicely inscribed with Quranic texts in black letters in a manner that their height from the ground produces no diminution in the size of the letters. They do not look any bigger at the bottom than they are at the top, 80 ft. high. This artistic work is worth noticing. This gate resembles the splendid gateway of Sikandra being profusely inlaid with marble. The gate opens into an octagonal chamber. At each side, there is a fenced recess with a room and at each corner there is a staircase leading up to the storey above. A flight of stairs brings one to the very top. It is spacious, airy and pleasant. There are four fine towers crowned with cupolas at each corner. In the centre of the roof there is

a sixteen sided terrace. The top, in all, contains four bouquets, 22 turrets and 4 towers. The eleven turrets just above the archway greatly heighten the beauty of the whole structure. The top commands a grand panoramic view of the neighbourhood of the Taj.

Under the vaulted roof in the octagonal chamber hangs a beautiful lamp of Persian style in the centre. This was presented by Lord Curzon. On the left side, a few steps lead to the Taj Museum. Here a good many scenes, pictures of the Taj and the interesting sights of Agra and such like can be seen.

Now, we are in the garden. This Taj garden, rectangular in shape, is enclosed by lofty walls and measures 1,800 ft. from north to south and 1,000 ft. east to west, approximately equal to 42 acres. On the two sides of the gate along the walls towards the garden are a series of halls. Both rows have three storeyed towers at the corners or ends.

Down the steps of the inner side of the main gate, there are paved causeways on either side between a double row of cypress trees. In the central space provided with bronze fountains, two canals, $16\frac{1}{4}$ feet wide run along the middle of the garden straight to the foot of the terrace of the Mausoleum. There is a very fine marble reservoir of water, 412 feet from the platform of



ENTRANCE TO THE TAJMAHAL.



TAJMAHAL ACROSS THE RIVER

the main gate. Its central position in the garden is very charming. The terraced bank is square in form, one side measuring 74 feet. In the middle, there is a water reservoir with four jets at the corners and one in the centre stocked with fish of various colours. There are a few plain chairs on the margin of the reservoir. The distance from this to the foot of the Mausoleum is 438 feet.

The Taj Garden was once a most beautiful spot. Innumerable varieties of fragrant flowers delighted the scene and loaded the breezes with their aromatic odour. A great variety of delicious fruits were produced. M. M. Ahmad writes in his *Taj*, "The rosy light of the morning, the evening shade, the refreshing dew, the flowers in bloom perfuming the air, the cuckoo's cheerful notes, the fitful glimmer of the fireflies, the merry dance of the fish in the marble basin, the melodies of sweet warblers on the smiling green, these were the enchantments of a scene, which needed the graphic pen of a Ruskin to depict in all its vividness and reality".

Most of the old trees of the garden have been cut down as they obstructed the view of the Taj from a distance and are replaced by smaller plants and ornamental grass plots. The oldest tree in the garden is a "Simul" or cotton tree (Asoka) with its girth nearly 50 feet and is reputed to be 425 years old. It stands towards the eastern side, below the Jamait Khana.

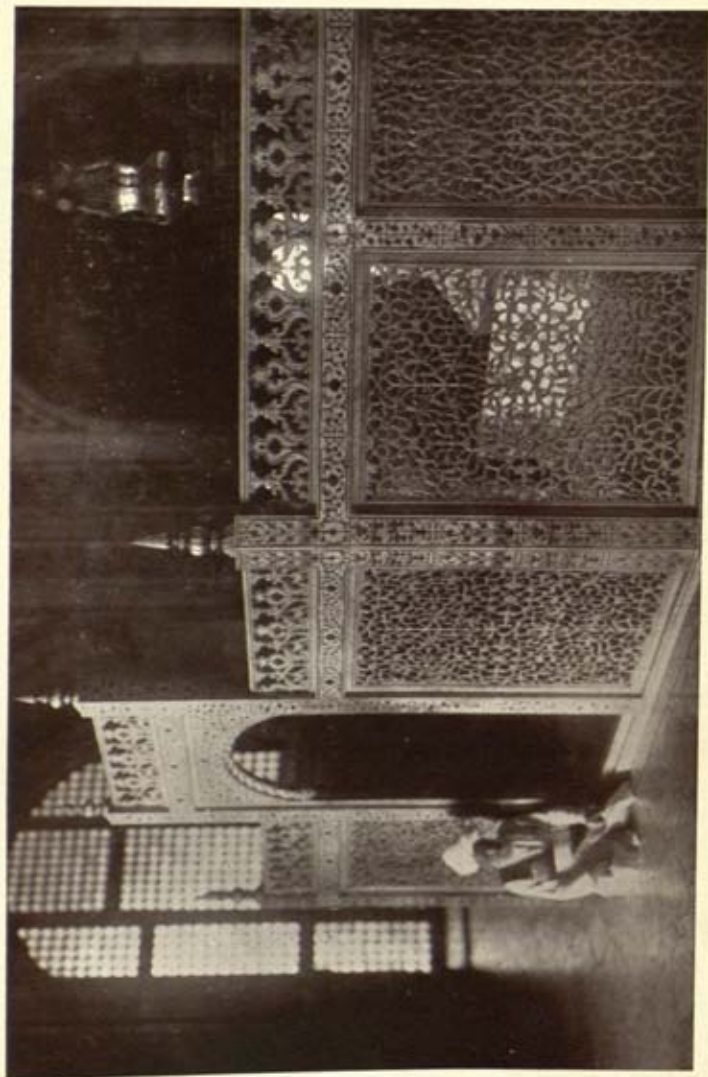
The grand mausoleum stands on a double platform, the first is of red sandstone, $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high above the ground and in the centre stands the second marble platform, 18 ft. higher than the first platform and $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the ground and measures 313 feet square. The Jumna flows on the north: on the south is a pretty garden: on the west is an interesting mosque and on the east is the Jamait Khana.

The marble platform is paved with alternate squares of black and white and at its four corners stand four lofty minarets like grave and kindly sentinels keeping guard over beauty. Each minaret rises to a height of $162\frac{1}{2}$ ft. from the surface of the garden and possesses three galleries and a flight of 164 steps in the interior which lead to the top whence the view all around is so charming that it is indescribable. No structure of the kind can compare with this in beauty and shape. In elegance of workmanship it matches the best in the world. The Mausoleum proper is in the centre of the marble platform measuring 186 ft. square with a central archway at each of the four sides $66\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high. Now we go in through the central door. This beautiful portico is inscribed with Arabic texts; it is remarkable to note how beautiful it looks, the big black lettering of which stands out boldly from the snowy whiteness of the facade. Further, a vestibule admits one to the interior. The interior is indeed remark-

able—a model of art. The whole structure is an irregular octagon. There are four eight sided rooms on the four sides and the diagonal measuring 26 feet 8 inches. The floor is nicely paved with octagonal pieces of marble. The other four large rooms are square each side measuring 15 feet 11 inches. A gallery connects both sets of rooms. A walk through these rooms ultimately brings the visitor back to the starting point. The walls, ceiling, screens and galleries are of pure marble polished and shining and are beautifully engraved and ornamented with plants inscribed. Mosaics and arabesques are seen here in perfection; the entire interior is exquisitely decorated with emeralds, sapphires, onyx, cornelian, jasper and other precious stones which are profusely used in executing the inimitable inlaid work.

In the centre of these structures is the octagonal chamber—rather the Cenotaph Chamber richly carpeted and brilliantly illuminated. The cenotaph of the Empress Mumtaz occupies the middle of the marble floor and about 6 inches apart and a little higher is the cenotaph of her lord, Shah Jahan. In Shah Jahan's time, there was in the centre a screen of pure gold studded with gems, erected at a cost of 6 lakhs of rupees, but for fear of theft it was replaced in 1642 by the present marble screen which took 10 years to construct at a cost of Rs. 50,000.

This marble screen or rather enclosure or Muhajjar round the cenotaph is a network in marble most elegantly executed. It is 6 feet 2 inches high, and is eight-sided, each side being 12 feet 2 inches in length. To the south, facing the entrance gate, the enclosure is open for the passage of people. The enclosure is so finely ornamented and beautifully adorned and indeed the floral ornamentation is of such an excellent character and so minutely worked that no less than 61 tiny pieces of valuable stones of various hues are united in one rose. The surface is smooth and velvety. Really, the eye of Jean Goujon, a German Pilon would have appreciated it were he living. In 1909, Lord Curzon presented the beautiful bronze lamp inlaid with gold and silver, from Egypt, now hanging over the centre of the dome. In a word, the super-excellent mosaics, the super-fine arabesques, the most beautiful frescoes, the most attractive paintings, the artistic inscriptions, the marvellous calligraphy have all been done most exquisitely. An admirer says, "The firmanent with his myriads of eyes never desried on the earth another mansion so splendid, so graceful, and so elegant". The cenotaph bears the names of the Empress and Emperor with the years and dates when they expired (Mumtaz Mahal died in 1630 and Shah Jahan 36 years later). The tomb of Mumtaz Mahal bears the ninety-nine names of the Almighty very beautifully inscribed together with some passages from the Quran, meaning: "Do



THE PIERCED MARBLE SCREEN,
TAJMAHAL.

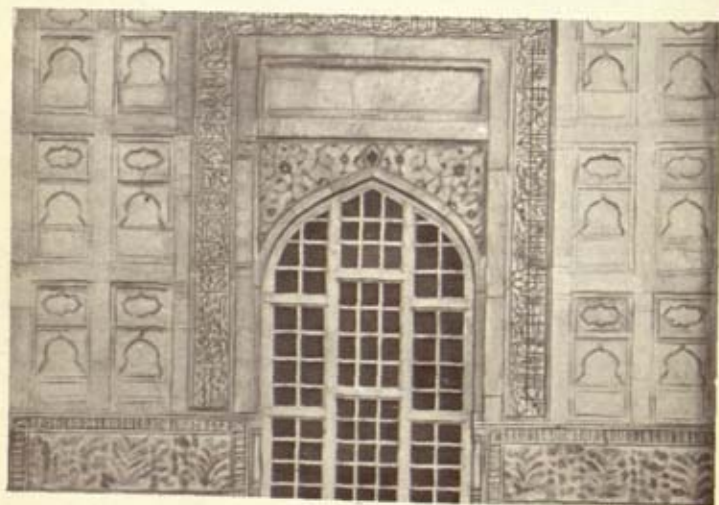
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TOMBS OF SHAH JAHAN & MUMTAJMAHAL

U. L. P. H.

TAJ.



"DECORATIVE WORK,"

U. L. P. H.

TAJMAHAL

not make us, O Lord, to bear what we have not strength to bear. He is God, besides whom there is no God, who knoweth both the future and the present" and so on. Shah Jahan's tomb, also bears some inscriptions meaning: "Deprive not of the mercy of God. He forgiveth all sins" and so on.

The epitaph of Mumtaz Mahal's tomb is inscribed and the inscription when translated, means this:—"The illumined tomb of Arjumand Banu Begam called Mumtaz Mahal who died in the year 1040 A.H. (1630 A.D.); as Mumtaz from this world pass away, the hurs (fairies) of heaven come down at once to greet, the angels for her date of death did say: 'In heaven may always be Mumtaz's seat'." The epitaph of the emperor Shah Jahan's tomb also bears an inscription which, when translated, means:—"The sacred scpulchre of his most Exalted Majesty, dweller of paradise, the second lord of constellation, the King Shah Jahan, may his mausoleum ever flourish, 1076 A.H. (1666 A.D.)".

Up to Bernier's time, the underground chamber was opened once a year on the occasion of an anniversary and nobody except Mohemadans were allowed to go inside but now it remains open every day for all. Formerly, the graves were very beautifully adorned with precious stones such as diamonds, rubies, emeralds etc. Unfortunately, they are now no more. Cruel vandals could not resist the temptation to take them away.

The dome with its gilt pinnacle rises to a height of $243\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the garden level and is 270 feet from the level of the river. Visitors are sometimes astonished to know that this dome is higher than the Kutab Minar at Delhi by a little more than 5 feet. No doubt, this structure is one of the loftiest in the world.

Shah Jahan had a mind to erect a grand mausoleum for himself—a fit counterpart of the Taj in the Mahtab garden and the foundation stone was laid but the intrigues and struggles among his sons and the captivity of Shah Jahan by his son, Aurangzeb put an end to the scheme. He closed his eyes in death carrying his cherished hopes with him to the grave. Aurangzeb, who thought to build another mausoleum like the Taj a waste of money, said that the remains of his parents who loved each other so strongly should lie side by side and hence he interred Shah Jahan's body by the side of his beloved Mumtaz.

THE MOSQUE.

To the west of the Mausoleum of the Taj stands the magnificent building of the mosque. Its minars are triple storeyed of red sandstone, pierced with stone windows, screens and balustrades. The domes are of white marble and the pinnacles gilt. The pulpit and recesses in the west wall are also of marble. The ceilings and walls are adorned with beautiful floral designs. There is a very vast

open space in front of the mosque nicely paved with a brilliant stone that looks like shining red silken velvet. In the pavement, seats are marked out by pieces of black stone inserted in the shape of arches. Five hundred and thirty nine worshippers can sit here at a time. The pavilion towards the river side commands a romantic view of the garden.

It is asserted that the site of the northern tower was formerly occupied by a collection of houses going by the name of *Basai*. Shah Jahan asked the owners of the land to sell the land to him for the mosque. They offered to him gratis their settlements on the condition that one of the several structures of the Taj should be called after the name of *Basai* hence the Basai Tower was erected. This tower is 42 feet high. Attached to it is a large deep well provided with steps right down to the level of the water.

JAMAIT KHANA.

To the east of the Taj stands a magnificent mosque-like building called Jamait Khana or Place of Assembly. Whatever is to be seen in the mosque on the west of the Taj has been repeated here except that the Jamait Khana has no seats for worshippers. But the interior of the edifice is beautifully ornamented and adorned. This building was probably intended to accommodate the company gathered on the occasions of anniversary of the Empress Mumtaz.

There is a spacious court with a tank in the centre between the Jamait Khana and the mausoleum of the Taj. Hard by there is a passage enclosed by a railing which leads down to a number of basement apartments. These were probably used as a hot weather retreat. Towards the river side in the pavement the figure of the pinnacle of the Taj is copied exactly to the original in black stone inserted in the surface of the platform of the cloister. This can give the visitors a correct idea of the real size of what looks so small when seen from below. It measures 30 ft. 6½ inches from north to south. The right base of the crown is 8 ft. 6 ins., the diameter of the globe 4 ft. 4 ins., the neck 5 ft. 6 ins. and the globe over it 3 ft. 9 ins. The area of the crown is 9 ft. 8 ins. and the chord 5 feet.

Visitors should note here the beautiful system of drainage.

See the outside of the Taj by moonlight and the inside by daylight. By moonlight its seduction is irresistible and the sight most wonderful. The dome shines like a pearl of enormous size placed on a silver plate; the mosaic work in the marble looking as a set of jewelled ornaments, the aromatic breezes refreshing the brain, the broad bosom of the Jumna below, the reflection of the trees in the waters of the river and the undisturbed and continuous silence are really some of the peculiar charms of the Taj. A sight of the Taj in the fading

evening light is also very attractive. By the broad light of noonday, you will enjoy exquisite glimpses of snowy structures so light and graceful that they seem to rest on the air of buoyant cupola and climbing campanile. There is beauty as well as grandeur. By day light the interior touches of the coloured marble and artistic adornments will be appreciated to greater advantage.

There are three spots whence one can have a good distant view of the Taj, first from the top of the gateway; second from the marble platform or water reservoir in the middle of the pathway leading to the Taj and third from the top of one of the minarets around the mausoleum. But by moonlight one may view with greater advantage by sitting on the steps of the entrance gate and in daylight one may wander about the gardens and see the interior. Some have very kindly observed that the ethereal beauty of the Taj can hardly be seen to better advantage than from the Jasmine Tower of the Agra Fort. In short: see the outside of the Taj Mahal by moonlight and the interior by daylight.

It is certainly an act of appreciation and foresightedness that Emperor Shah Jahan attached thirty villages to the Mausoleum for its upkeep and maintenance, the income of which amounts to a lakh of rupees.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORT.

THIS remarkable citadel rather a palatial stronghold designed in the shape of a crescent with its giant shape along the bank of the Jumna is without exception one of the most important strongholds on the face of the globe. Its vigorous and exuberant style of decorative architecture as well as delicate inlay work and the low reliefs in white marble are marvellously beautiful. Though it stands to-day bereft of imperial pomp and grandeur, untenanted and unfurnished, yet the remarkable palatial buildings, mosques, balconies, kiosks and terraces that are enclosed within its walls make it of unfailing interest to the tourist.

The actual labour in construction of the fort lasted eight years, commenced by Akbar in 1565, a year after the birth of Shakespeare and completed in 1574—three years after the Harrow School in England had been established—at a cost of thirty five lacs of rupees. The work was entrusted to the chief architect Kashim Khan. The excellence of the work is proved by the fact that the fort is still in a perfect state of preservation.



AMAR SINGH GATE,

FORT, AGRA.

G. D. B.



JAHANGIR PALACE,

FORT

U. L. P. H.



THE GOLDEN PAVILION.

I.S.R.

FORT, AGRA.



DIWAN-I-KHAS.

U. L. P. H.

FORT, AGRA

As a matter of fact, the fort, as it stands to-day, is the combined effort of successive sovereigns. Designed and built by Akbar, it was added to by Jehangir and Shahjahan; while the white marble edifices, in particular, belong to Shahjahan, emperor and lover, devotee and artist. It is said that this fort stands in the same site of Badalgarh, a Hindu stronghold built by Badal Singh which was pulled down to make room for the present fort.

The exterior walls of the fort look almost semicircular in shape, the area of the whole circuit measures one mile and a half. There is a double wall system in the fortification pierced with four imposing gateways, embattled ramparts and banquettes. The outer wall is forty feet high and the inner one seventy. The fort was enclosed within two paved ditches; the outer one, 25 feet wide, has disappeared; while the inner one, still extant, is 35 feet deep and 30 feet wide, a work attributed to the Emperor Aurangzeb. The inner defence wall is similarly loop-holed for musketry and has sixteen bastions. The two of prominence are those of the Shah Burj and the Bengali Burj on the riverside.

The four gateways are those of the Delhi Gate on the north-west, Amar Singh Gate on the southern extremity of the fort, the Water Gate on the river side and the fourth gate just under the Jasmine

Tower. Of the four gateways, the Delhi Gate is the most imposing with a massive tower on either side and ornamented with inlaid marble work of excellent pattern. This was formerly the main entrance to the fort but it is now closed and only soldiers are allowed through. The gate, open for the public, is the Amar Singh and is connected by means of a drawbridge. It is said that it was formerly covered with bright-glazed tiles of blue enamel. There are many stories current as to the reasons which led to the name. One is that Amar Singh, the brave Maharaja of Jodhpur slew Salabat Khan, the imperial treasurer and brother-in-law of Shah Jahan, when the Maharaja was insulted by him in 1644. This turned the army against him. Being alone on horseback, he jumped off the high walls of the fort near the spot now called Amar Singh Gate after his name. His horse was half in the ditch and half on the road; he cut off the half body of the horse over the ditch with his sharp sword and ran away. In memory of this marvellous incident a horse carved in red sandstone may still be seen protruding above the ground near the gate.

The Water Gate, situated in the centre of the base facing the river, is now entirely closed. It formerly served as an entrance to the bathing ghats on the Jumna for the ladies of the harem, and was also used as a passage for boats to and from the Taj. The fourth gate just under the Jasmine Tower was closed by Aurangzeb when he kept his father,

Shah Jahan, a captive inside the fort. From here the Emperor used to see and be seen by the public at dawn.

The Music Gallery otherwise the Naubat Khana was situated at the top of the Delhi Gate. Here kettle drums were sounded whenever the Emperor passed through the gate as well as at state functions.

An ascending ramp runs from the Amar Singh gate to an open courtyard. Attention is drawn to the right side. Here is a huge basin otherwise Jehangir's bath, which is hewn out of a single block of porphyry and measures 5 feet high, 8 feet in diameter and 25 feet in circumference. Steps are cut both in the inner and outer sides. This was formerly delicately carved of which traces are still visible. It bears a mutilated inscription which records the name of Jehangir and the date 1611. There are many stories told as to the origin of the basin. In 1611, Jehangir was married to Nurjahan and it is supposed that it was given as a gift to her. In it Nurjahan first made the discovery of the essence known as, "Attar of roses". Hindu tradition claims it to be the Bhim Raja's Bang bowl, associated with the five Pandavas and founders of the earliest Delhi, Indraprasth, about 3000 B.C.

JEHANGIRI MAHAL.

Palaces of Jehangir

The majestic edifice of red sandstone otherwise called Jehangir Mahal is frequently considered the finest and most significant building in the fort. It possesses a fine two-storeyed facade which bears the name of Jehangir. The entire building is full of an indescribable wealth of carving. In addition to it the walls and ceilings were formerly highly adorned with brilliant colours and gold plating. Various pavilions of red sandstone exquisitely and intricately carved with birds, lotus and other designs are after the Hindu style of Jaipur and neighbouring states. The courtyard is also very fine.

Some authorities are of opinion that the similarity in the design of this building with that at Fatehpur Sikri shows that it, too, dates from the greatest of the Moghuls who built it for his son's Hindu wife, Jodh Bai. Contrary to this, some think that much of Akbar's adjoining palace was demolished by Jehangir to make room for it.

These palaces are situated at the south of the vineyard and occupy an area of about 260 feet by 250 feet with a spacious courtyard in the centre. On both sides are spacious halls which, it is said, were used for 'hide and seek' and dances. In an arched hall in the centre is the library. The gilding and colour decoration of the library is

remarkably beautiful. Akbar allowed freedom of worship to the ladies of the harem and built a Hindu temple in this compound near the central courtyard which was subsequently demolished by Aurangzeb.

Under British rule, a military prison stood to the south of these palaces. This was removed after the visit of the late King George V, as Prince of Wales in 1905.

AKBARI MAHAL.

"Akbari Palaces"

The ruins of Akbari Mahal or Akbari Palaces lie to south-east of the Jehangiri Mahal. Their traces are, to-day, only visible by excavation. It is said that these formed the southern section of the Great Moghul's seraglio and consisted of three sets of apartments where the ladies resided. As such each was named after the particular day of the week on which Akbar visited it. De Laet, writes; "In addition, there is a fifth set of women's apartments to which foreign women were brought for the pleasure of the King. This is called the "Bangali Mahal".

Just near the Akbari Mahal is a big stepped well otherwise called Baoli built by Akbar. It is said to be 105 feet deep and seven storeyed with cool apartments on all sides in each storey. The staircases lead down to the apartments. Formerly,

the subterranean chambers were probably highly adorned and richly gilt and painted and these were used as a hot weather retreat by the Emperor.

Though the big well is attributed to Akbar yet it may be of still earlier date because Baber has recorded in his 'Memoirs' thus: "There was an empty space within the fort of Agra between the palace and the ramparts. I directed a large well to be constructed in it twenty four feet square. In the language of Hindustan, a big well, with steps down into it, is called a wain. The wain was begun before the garden was laid out. They were busy digging it during the rainy season but it fell in several times smothering the workmen. After my holy war against Rana Sanga, I gave the order for finishing it, and a very excellent wain was completed.....In the middle storey is a hall of carved stone and close by is a dome for the oxen to turn in as they move the water wheel round.....water is raised to its uppermost tier. A second wheel lifts the water to the level of the ramparts whence it flows into the upper gardens".

SHAHJAHANI MAHAL.

"The Rang Mahal"

The Rang Mahal consists of a purely sand-stone edifice. As a matter of fact, this is a part of Jehangiri Mahal and Shahjahan made subsequent alterations and additions (the brick work, coating

with plaster etc.) in the building and adopted it to his particular tastes and requirements. No doubt the entire building is excellent to look at. The rooms behind the engrailed arches are lavishly gilt and coloured. The central hall is pointed out as Jehangir's bedroom. A beautiful palace towards the river side is styled as 'Hawa Mahal' or Wind Palace. From here, a passage leads to the marble screened court to the south of Khas Mahal. This palace was looted and scraped off by the Jats during their short sway in Agra.

Under British rule, some of the rooms of the palace were used as a Museum, until 1875, when the Archæological Society of Agra transferred their exhibits to Allahabad. Near the Rang Mahal, a few stone pipes and stone pillars are kept lying at one side and are regarded to be the portions of Jodh Bai's Bathing Ghat of Akbar's time.

THE GHAZNI GATES.

The Ghazni Gates are preserved in a safe chamber near the Shahjahani Mahal and measure 12 feet high and 9 ft. wide. Like the originals, they are beautifully and elaborately carved. These gates are erroneously believed to be the Somnath Temple Gates of Gujrat which were wrenched off by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1625. Investigation has revealed them to be of Himalayan cedar; and as the Somnath gates were of Sandal wood, naturally these are not the Somnath Gates.

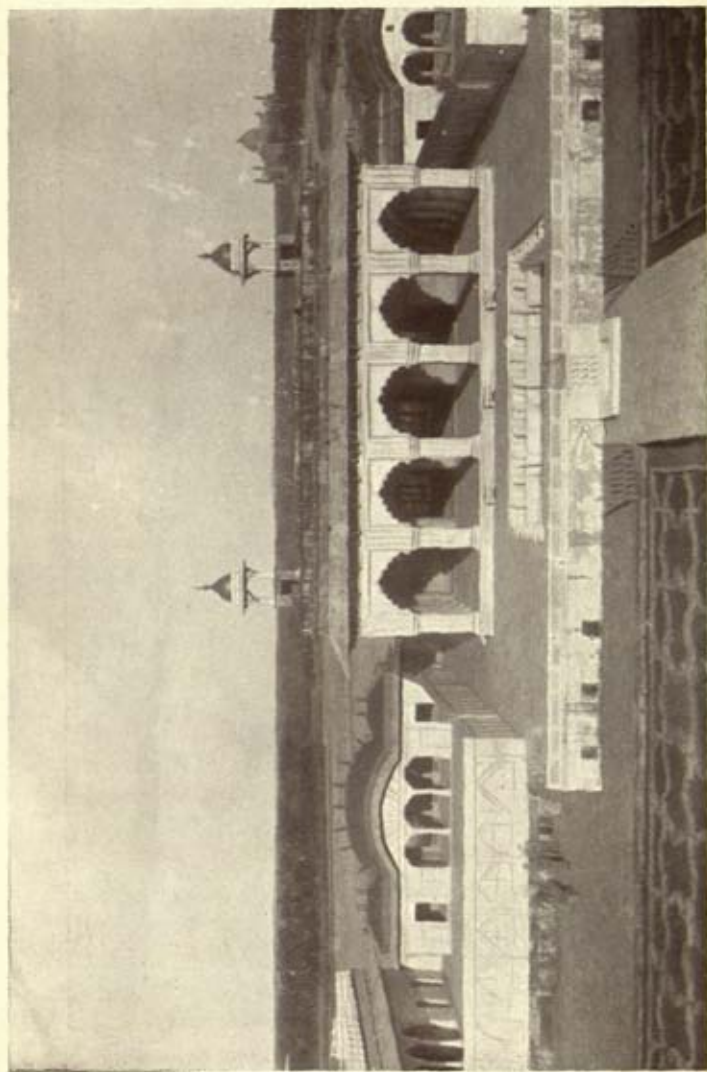
They were brought by General Nott as spoils of war after the first Afghan expedition in 1842. It is purely of deodar wood and contains *Kufic* inscriptions involving the Forgiveness of God and His blessings on Sultan Mahmud, to whose tomb they really belonged. For many years, they remained in the Diwan-i-Am but were removed in 1870 to its present position in the Shahjahani Mahal.

From here, proceeding towards the Khas Mahal on the river side, is a pavilion or Jharokha whence the view of the Taj is splendid. Here the beloved daughters of Shah Jahan, Jahan Ara and Roshan Ara, used to enjoy the fresh air.

KHAS MAHAL.

"Private Palaces"

It is a charming block of buildings of very fine white marble elaborately carved and richly ornamented. The ladies of the harem used to reside here in this most beautiful part of the fort. The inscription on its walls states that this was built by the Emperor Shahjahan in 1636 and was his small drawing room. In the days of the Great Moghul, Akbar, here were other buildings of red stone which were subsequently demolished by Shahjahan to make room for these marble palaces. The Khas Mahal commands a fine view of the river and the Taj at a distance.



KHAS MAHAL AND GOLDEN PAVILION,
FORT.
I.S.R



SUMMAN BURJ,
FORT, AGRA.

The Khas Mahal consists of three white marble pavilions and stands just in front of the Anguri Bagh or Grape Garden on an elevated platform by the side of the Jumna. The central pavilion measures 70 feet by 40 feet and overlooks a court measuring 96 feet by 112 feet.

The entire hall is beautifully adorned. The pillars and arches are elaborately carved. The walls are very beautifully carved and adorned but the golden plating on the ceiling has disappeared. A portion of the ceiling was renovated by Lord Curzon and this conveys an idea of the original Moghul paintings with their beautiful floral patterns in gold. The escape channel of the tank in the chief court is worth noticing. The tank contains five fountains and 32 jets.

The side pavilions are joined with the central one by means of doorways. The south pavilion was the residence of Shahjahan's eldest daughter, Jahan Ara whom he loved the most. The roof of the pavilion is brightly gilt. It was once here that the portraits of all Moghul Emperors were kept; these were taken away as booty by the Jat Raja of Bharatpur. The northern pavilion was the residence of Roshan Ara, the second of Shah Jahan's daughters. It consists of a hall in the centre and two small chambers on the sides.

Below the marble screen projecting to the west side of the south court of the Khas Mahal is

the Chhatri or pavilion of Raja Jawanir Singh of Bharatpur who was assassinated here in the fort in 1766. It consists of a miniature carving in bass-relief of a pavilion.

ANGURI BAGH OR VINERY.

The large courtyard in front of the Khas Mahal is the Anguri Bagh or Garden of Grapes and measures 220 feet north and south by 169 feet east and west. It was laid out by Akbar for the ladies of the Seraglio. Formerly, three sides were encircled by the usually arcaded cloisters where the ladies used to dwell.

There is a beautiful tank in the centre on an elevated platform of white marble, 26 feet each way and 2 ft. 6 in. deep provided with fountains. Four terraced walks radiate from the central platform. The spaces between are intersected by paved ridges which form geometrical flower-beds. It is remarkable to note that this lay out provides us with a typical specimen of the old Moghul gardens laid out in beautiful geometrical designs.

The soil of the vinery is very rich and is said to have been brought from the Happy Valley of Kashmir. H. A. Newell remarks about this garden in his book thus: "Stone posts and latticed screens supported the grape vines. The parterres were gay with blossoms, brightly coloured and fragrant, as well as rare plants".

TAI KHANA.

A few subterranean chambers are situated under the platform of the Khas Mahal known as Tai Khana. Here, it is said, that the fair damsels of the harem for the pleasure of the King used to retire at noon to keep away from the terrible heat of the summer. Here were also some gloomy chambers which were used for the punishment of the offending ladies of the harem.

SHISH MAHAL.

"Palace of Mirrors"

The name, Shish Mahal, was given because of the small innumerable fragments of looking glass inserted in Moorish stucco reliefs. Built by Shah Jahan, it was a Turkish Bath attached to the Khas Mahal for the use of the ladies. Here was an arrangement of both hot and cold water.

The entire walls and ceilings are studded with innumerable pieces of glass set into gorgeously gilt and coloured stucco. Originally the stucco reliefs were painted in golden and silvery colours and the chambers paved with marble floors carved and inlaid with beautiful designs of fishes. Here, the emperor used to enjoy himself with his many wives, while the tiny lamps hung from the ceiling, the fountains emitted fragrant water and an unceasing current of water rolled on the marble floor.

Ask the Archaeological peon on duty to bring in a light. The reflection of light on the mirror mosaic is so striking that the effect produced is not easily forgotten. From here, a passage leads to the Water Gate and the bathing ghat (now closed).

SAMMAN BURJ.

"The Jasmine Tower".

The octagonal tower rather Samman Burj is a miracle of marble filligree work inlaid with elaborate designs in jasper, cornelian, agate, jade, lapis lazuli, bloodstone and turquoise. Very fine artistic screens of marble surround the Samman Burj and the tower above is delicately inlaid with patterns of jasmine flowers (hence the name) and the top is beautifully adorned with a fine cupola. From here the view of the pearly dome and the minarets of the Taj Mahal like a "house not made with hands", is very picturesque.

It was here that the captive Emperor Shah Jahan closed his eyes in death in 1666 with his daughter, Jahan Ara, by his side gazing steadfastly on the tomb of his beloved consort, the lady buried in the Taj.

The octagonal tower consists of mainly a court, 44 ft. by 33 feet, faced by an entrance hall to the south, flanked by two rooms and the hall

measures 28 feet by 18 feet. An idea of the former grandeur of the place can be had from the traces of brilliant colour decoration and gilding that are left on the walls. The present structure is attributed to Shahjahan to have been built for his wife, Mumtaz-i-Mahal, the lady of the Taj. But according to Fergusson, its architecture suggests Jehangir to be its builder. However, the *pietra dura* decoration used in the beautiful little fountain hollowed in the floor in front of the Octagonal Tower is the work of Shahjahan and besides this some more additions.

In front of the Tower, the pavement is made up into squares in coloured marble. Here, the game of *Pachisi*, a species of backgammon was played by the emperor. The gaily dressed nautch girls served as pieces moving from square to square under the directions of the Emperor who used to sit in the centre.

To the west of the tower was an exquisite marble verandah. This was demolished by Lord Hastings and its fragments sent to England, while the white marble screens to the north were damaged by cannon shot and subsequently repaired.

The Samman Burj goes by various names such as Saman Mahal, Jasmine Palace, Jasmine Tower and Musamman Burj (Octagonal Tower).

DIWAN-I-KHAS.

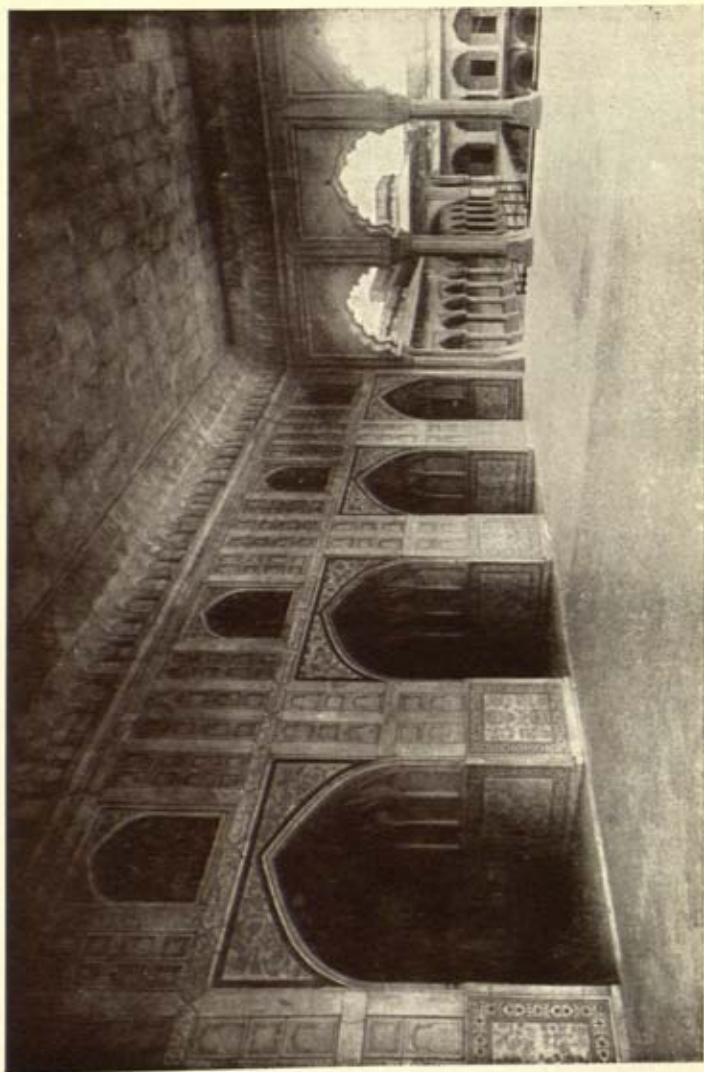
"The Hall of Private Audience"

The hall of Private Audience built by Shah Jahan in 1637 is an exquisite production of art and its beautiful marble inlaid work with precious stones displays artistic decorations of the Persian style which places it among the best architectural productions of the age.

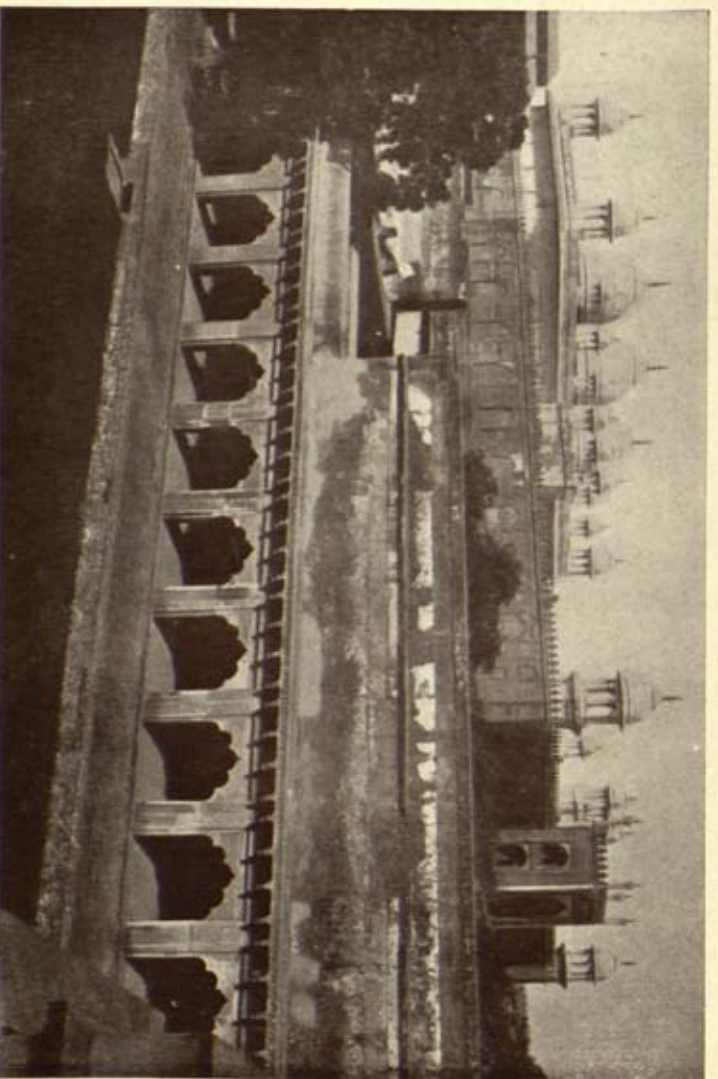
The audience chamber stands on a plinth beautifully carved and consists of two halls and measures 65 feet long and 34 feet wide. The twelve-sided pillars are exquisitely chiselled and inlaid with many coloured flowers in semiprecious stones. The inner chamber contains a beautiful window-screen of marble. The dadoes are carved and are furnished with mosaic.

Diwan-i-Khas was the place where the Emperor received Kings, ambassadors, and nobles in private audience and dealt with the more important affairs of State by the help of the counsel.

In front of the Diwan-i-Khas is a spacious courtyard 116 feet by 82 feet. According to tradition this was roofed with a beautiful white marble pavilion and the floor paved with marble and inlaid with coloured mosaic; these were pulled down by the Jats during their short occupation of



INTERIOR OF DIWAN-I-KHAS,



GENERAL VIEW OF PEARL MOSQUE.

Agra. A low carved rail of white marble protects the courtyard. Here are placed two thrones, black and white, opposite each other.

The white Throne is made of marble and was originally enclosed by a rail. It was the favourite seat of the Court Jester whence Shahjahan amused himself by casting a fishing iron into the tank below.

The Black Throne carved with its four legs from a single block of slate measures 10 feet 7 inches by 9 feet 10 inches and 6 inches thick. The throne bears three inscriptions round the edge which lead one to suppose that it was used by Prince Salim (afterwards Jehangir 1605-27). He rebelled against his father, Akbar and held his court at Allahabad (1602). Shortly afterwards, he came to Agra, sued for pardon and was forgiven. It is assumed that the throne was brought from Allahabad to Agra on his accession to the throne in 1605 (*vide* the inscriptions on the Throne).

Some Persian poems in the Diwan-i-Khas which, when translated, mean:—

"From this interesting palace the heart poener, the head of Akbarabad (the Fort) became the sky toucher; from the forehead of heaven its pinnacles are visible, like the silver teeth of the sky; the tyranny is being tied up with the chains of his justice", and so on.

William Hawkins who visited Agra during Jehangir's reign describes that this throne was

used by the Emperor for his early morning devotions. The slab of the throne is cracked right across by Lord Lake's cannon ball striking against it in 1803 and not on account of the desecrating touch of Raja Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur who attempted to mount the throne upon his father's death in 1763 at Delhi. As evidence of proof the Diwan-i-Khas towards the riverside and the courtyard bears a bullet hole to corroborate the statement.

MACCHI BHAWAN.

"The Fish Palace"

The Macchi Bhawan is mainly a red stone structure in front of the Diwan-i-Khas and at the back of Diwan-i-Am. It consists of a court 200 feet by 150 feet and is surmounted by a roofed gallery in the upper storey on the north, west and south; while on the east there is a terrace in which are the two thrones, black and white. In the splendid days of Shahjahan, there were tanks of marble for fish in the courtyard below as well as fashioned fountains, water channels and geometrically designed flower-beds bordered with white marble. The water was conveyed to the tanks by artificial channels from the Jumna. This afforded sportive amusement to the Emperor and the ladies of the harem who took delight in ensnaring them (hence the name Fish Palace).

The marble tanks were dug out and carried off by Suraj Mal to Bharatpur, during the Jat supremacy at Agra. With them, he adorned his palace garden at Deeg about 24 miles from Muttra where they may still be seen in a perfect state of preservation. The major portion of the most beautiful surrounding buildings were demolished and their fragments were sent to England by Lord Hastings (1813-23) and Lord W. Bentinck (1828-35).

NAGINA MASJID.

"The Gem Mosque"

The Gem Mosque is a beautiful little mosque of pure white marble and is situated near the Macchi Bhawan and Mina Bazar. It was exclusively reserved for the ladies of the harem. It is attributed to Aurangzeb who built it about 1658. The sanctuary is raised on a plinth and consists of two aisles of triple bays. This mosque is believed to have been originally connected with the Moti Masjid by a covered way.

This small but beautiful mosque is said to have been erected by Aurangzeb for his imprisoned father, Shah Jahan who was not allowed to go to Moti Masjid. Ignorant guides relate many fantastic stories about the mosque which are not supported by history and should be accepted with reserve.

MINA BAZAR.

"The Fancy Bazar"

Close by the Macchi Bhawan is the Mina Bazar. The building consists of an unassuming structure of red sandstone with open chambers on the sides for merchants. It was built by Akbar to be used as a small market for the ladies of the harem. The wives and daughters of the nobles acted the part of merchants. None of the male sex except the Emperor in feminine disguise was allowed to enter this place. Here, the articles were sold at exorbitant prices. The market was held once a month and on New Year's Day, it was continued for nineteen days and was styled Nau Rauza.

In the later part of the reign of Akbar, the quaint old custom had degenerated and brought about an evil reputation. It is said that the beautiful consort of Prithvi Raj, the court laureate, and younger brother of Raja Bikaner and a relative of Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar gave a good lesson to the Great Moghul. By her manly character she managed to escape the dishonourable assault committed by Akbar. Since that incident, the Emperor stopped the functioning of the Mina Bazar. No doubt, this event has left a blot on the attractive personality of the Great Moghul.

Towards the south east of the Mina Bazar stand the famous Chitoor Gates handsomely built

of wrought metal. They were brought from Chitoor, the celebrated stronghold of the Rajputs, by Akbar in 1568.

To the east of Chitoor Gates and close by is a place believed to be the site occupied by the residence of Raja Ratan, General of Maharaja-Prithivi Indra during the Jat Supremacy (1761-74). Mr. Havel identifies it as a Hindu Temple. Also, an inscription on the south face of the chamber proves the fact and as such it is said to be the temple of Raja Ratan.

MOTI MASJID.

"The Pearl Mosque"

The pearl mosque is a splendid lofty building of white marble visible from afar. Fergusson has described it as "one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere". K. C. Mazumdar in his *'Imperial Agra of the Moghuls'* remarks that this splendid mosque is the best of its kind in the whole of Asia. The beautiful sculptured panels and marble lattice-work screens are very charming. The whole structure except the Persian inscription on the arch, too little for the purpose, gives the impression of unbroken whiteness, in and out, above and below. This comes as a surprise after the prevailing red glow outside.

The walls of the mosque measure 234 feet from east to west, and 187 feet from north to

south. The courtyard in front of the mosque is marble paved and contains a beautiful tank measuring 37 feet each way. The interior enclosure of the shrine measures 146 feet by 56 feet with a seating capacity for 570 worshippers; while the two small chambers on either side have the seating capacity for 90 members. These side chambers are screened off by marble lattice work and were exclusively used for the ladies. The white floor is delicately inlaid with pale yellow marble the only touches of colour in the entire building. There are three graceful white domes above the mosque, 142 feet long and 56 feet deep. The roof commands a very fine view of the Taj.

It is said that a wonderfully large sized pearl of immense beauty and lustre used to hang from the ceiling by a golden chain near the pulpit (hence the name of the place).

The mosque was built by Shahjahan, commenced in 1647 and completed in 1654 at the time when the British commonwealth was supreme in England and involved an expenditure of 3 lacs of rupees. During the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 it was used as an European Hospital.

DARSHINI GATE.

A short distance from the Moti Masjid is an old gateway called Darshini Darwaza. Finch is of opinion that this was the spot where the emperor

used to come daily at sunrise to see and be seen by the public. His subjects used to stand here with their eyes turned towards the ground. He further states that the Emperor used to witness fights between wild animals in the arena below.

DIWAN-I-AM.

"The Hall of Public Audience"

Diwan-i-Am is an extensive hall built entirely of red sandstone with white polished stucco over the arches, pillars and ceilings which make them look like marble. A spacious court in front of the hall measures 500 feet by 370 feet. This was the theatre in which the court ceremonials were held and the enclosure below was for the petitioners and other subjects of the Empire.

The Diwan-i-Am is raised on a plinth and approached by six steps. It measures 201 feet from North to South and projects 67 feet Westward. The pavilion opens in front on to a large court enclosure, the sides of which are surmounted by small apartments. The actual hall of audience measures 192 feet by 62 feet. The roof is flat and is supported by three aisles. Saracenic pillars coated with white stucco support the elaborate arches.

A few feet above the ground towards the back of the hall is the Imperial balcony otherwise termed *Jharokha* or the Judgment Seat which is the most beautiful piece of work in the whole of

Diwan-i-Am. Its walls are of white marble prettily inlaid with mosaic flowers in semi-precious stones. The balcony is protected by a carved railing and triple arches of white marble. This decoration is attributed to Shahjahan. Below, on the floor, is a marble dais supported on four legs probably meant for the prime minister. Terry who was here in Agra during Jehangir's reign described the throne as ornamented with jewels and supported with a canopy of pure gold.

It was here in the Diwan-i-Am that the Emperor appeared daily to hear the petitions and grievances of his subjects. Finch's remarks will not be devoid of interest about a royal darbar as held by Jehangir. "A little further you enter a rail into a inner court within which none but the King's Addis, and men of position were admitted. Men are placed by officers. There are others to keep order. In the midst, in front of the King, stands an officer with his master hangman, accompanied by forty others of the same profession, with axes on their shoulders, and others with whips. Here, the King heareth causes some hours every day. He then departs to his House of Prayer". It was the custom for elephants and horses to be paraded before the Emperor when the proceedings grew monotonous.

There are several stories narrated as to the builder of this building. Authoritative writers:

Hawkins, Finch and Terry are of opinion that the Diwan-i-Am minus the stucco plaster and the adornments of the throne room which were the work of Shah Jahan date from the time of Akbar. Some are of opinion that the stucco plaster and the fine lines of gold on them are the work of Aurangzeb.

Attention is very commonly called to the tomb in the court enclosure. Here are the remains of the Hon'ble J. R. Colvin, Lt. Governor of the North Western Provinces (now United Provinces) who died in the fort during its siege by the mutineers of the Bengal Army in 1857.

Near by is a large step well otherwise termed *Baoli* built of red sandstone. It measures 80 feet deep and 26 feet in diameter. Steps lead down to the level of the water and it was formerly worked by bullocks.

CHAPTER IV.

ITMAD-UD-DAULA'S TOMB.

THIS exquisite mausoleum of Mirza Ghias Beg otherwise called Itma-ud-Daula, the Prime Minister of Jehangir is one of the finest examples in India of inlaid work in a style derived from Persian mosaics. (In construction it marks the transition from the style of Akbar to that of Shahjahan.) The building is entirely built of white marble and inlaid work with coloured stones, similar to that exhibited in the Taj as the Taj was begun only three years after this had been completed.

Of Itmad-ud-Daula's tomb, Fergusson says, "We have both systems (mosaic and inlay work) in great perfection". In short, the entire mausoleum, of strictly Indian art of the Moghul period and not in the least Florentine in character, may be spoken of as an architectural gem of the highest purity. But one should not omit to refer to the exquisitely beautiful pierced marble screens on the four sides of the principal hall.

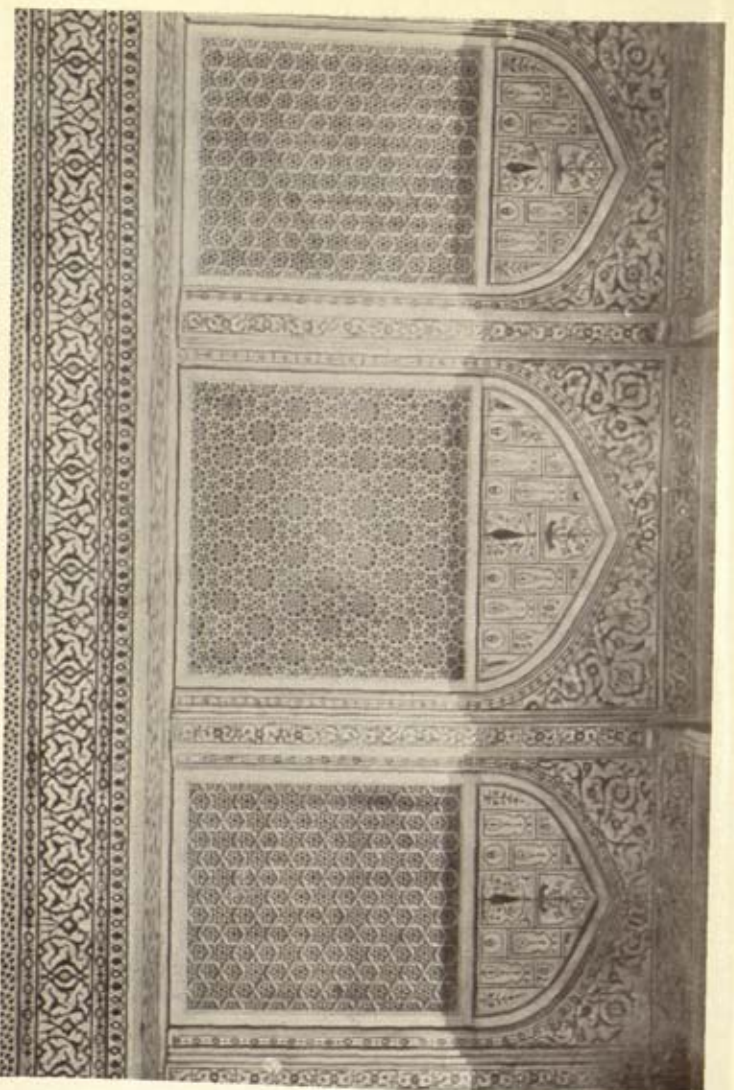
This famous tomb is situated on the left bank of the Jumna, a mile from Agra and is enclosed



ITMAT-UD-DAULA'S

I. S. R.

MAUSOLEUM, AGRA.



U.L.P.H.

DECORATIVE WORK ON MARBLE,
ITMAD-UD-DAULA'S TOMB,

AGRA.

within a large and spacious garden, 180 yards each way. The garden itself is fenced by high walls on three sides, while the fourth opens on to the river. The main entrance gateway of the mausoleum is most imposing and is a double storeyed structure of red sandstone artistically set in marble mosaic. On the left and right sides of the garden enclosure are two closed doors, similar in design to the main gateway. They are for decorations and are called "Pesh Taqs".

Towards the Jumna, there is Baradari otherwise termed pavilion, whence the view of the river as well as Agra Town is not less interesting. (The rooms in the lower storey of the pavilion once decorated with frescoes in gold and colour, were provided with *khas khas tattis* and afforded a cool retreat from the scorching winds of summer. At the south end of the Baradari is a staircase leading to a subterranean apartment, traditionally known as *Zenana gusal khana* (ladies' bath room).

In the centre of the beautiful garden enclosure is a raised platform of red sandstone, 150 feet square where stands the tomb proper. The cenotaphs of Itmad-ud-Daula and his wife, Asmat-ul-Nisa lie in the highly decorated central hall, a parallelogram measuring 22 feet 3 inches each way. The stone of the tombs is of a yellow variety of porphyry of high polish and elegance. The marble floor is richly decorated with mosaic.

The sides of the chamber, too, are lined with marble inlaid with mosaic. The ceilings of the mortuary chamber, likewise, are elaborately ornamented with gold and silver paintings. The paintings were destroyed by the Jats during their short occupation of Agra but they were partially restored by Lord Curzen in 1905 before the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to convey an idea of the original. Surrounding this central hall are some other small apartments where are the remains of Itmad-ud-Daula's family including those of Asaf Khan, father of Mumtaz Mahal and brother of Nurjahan.

A staircase leads to the second storey. Here is a marble pavilion on a slightly raised platform with its canopy shaped roof. The roof rests on twelve marble pillars with marble screens of exquisite pattern, wrought like lace between them. In this pavilion, there are two altar tombs of plain marble similar to those in the central chamber below. At each corner of the tomb are two storeyed minarets. It will not be devoid of interest to know something about Itmad-ud-Daula.

Itmad-ud-Daula, a Persian adventurer from Teheran, was the father of the celebrated Nurjahan and maternal grandfather of the illustrious lady of the Taj. He was styled Itmad-ud-Daula (Reliance of the State) after his daughter Nurjahan's marriage to the Emperor Jehangir in

1611. Mirza Ghias Beg (original name of Itmad-ud-Daula) died at Kangra in 1622 and his daughter, Nurjahan is believed to have commenced the construction of this mausoleum the same year and finished it in 1628.

A short distance from Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb and just in front of it lies the 'Chauburji', Baber's temporary tomb. From here, the body of Baber was removed to Kabul and interred there according to his wish. This building is not worth a visit but is important from an historical point of view.

CHINI KA RAUZA.

"The Tiled Tomb"

Two furlongs off the Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb lies the Chini Ka Rauza so-called from the mosaic work in glazed tiles of a variety of colours with which it is externally covered. The tiles, though the major portion are broken and still extant on the outer walls, amply testify to the magnificence of Persian art.

The building is rectangular, nearly 80 feet square surmounted by a great bulbous dome. Under the central dome are two brick cenotaphs. The ceiling of the chamber bears inscriptions of Quaranic texts. The tomb was built probably during his life time by the famous poet of Shiraz, Shukrullah who lies buried in it and the second tomb is that of his wife. Shukrullah entered the

service of Jehangir in 1618, and became Diwan (Financial Minister) to Shahjahan. He died in Lahore in 1639 and his body was brought to Agra and interred here.

Now, the tomb stands within a small garden, the major portion of which particularly towards the Jumna side is broken.

On the way to Chini-ka-Rauza, you will notice a domed-hall on the left side of the road. This is said to be the tomb of the brother of Itmad-ud-Daula's wife.

RAM BAGH.

This garden lies on the left bank of the Jumna about a mile and a half from Agra. The history of the Rambagh is obscure and its name is even doubtful. Some identify it with Baber's Aram Bagh (Garden of Rest) and as such it disputes with the Char Bagh or Bagh-i-Gul-Afshan, the honour of having been the temporary resting place of the Emperor Baber's remains till their removal to Kabul, while others maintain that it is the Bagh-i-Nur-Afshan (Light spangled garden) the favourite resort of the Empress Nur Jahan and of succeeding generations and that its name was subsequently changed to Ram Bagh by the Marathas during their occupation of Agra (1785-1803). Some people assert that the change in the name from Aram Bagh into Ram Bagh is due to the calamitous campaign against Agra led by the Jats.

of the neighbouring State of Bharatpur. Mr. H. A. Newell remarks in his *'Three days at Agra'* that this garden was planned by Baber and served as the temporary repository of Baber's coffin. As a matter of fact, the Chauburji, lying a little distance in front of Itmad-ud-Daula, is the place which was actually the temporary resting place of Baber's remains. According to the *Memoris of Baber and Jehangir*, Char Bagh stood on the opposite or east side of Itmad-ud-Daula's tomb. This garden was probably not founded by the Emperor Jehangir for his favourite wife, Nur Jahan. The plan of the garden, it is said, was taken from the garden of Bagh-i-Nur-Afshan at Kabul. The fact is confirmed by M. M. Ahmad in his celebrated book, *'Taj'*.

The garden is sufficiently large and spacious. The river Jumna displays a peculiar magnificence of her own from this place. Ram Bagh is a good place of retreat from the clamour and noise of everyday work.

On the north and south of the central marble tank, the two pavilions have been restored as far as possible to their original condition. There are a number of subterranean chambers below the pavilion from which the ladies of the harem are said to have fished.

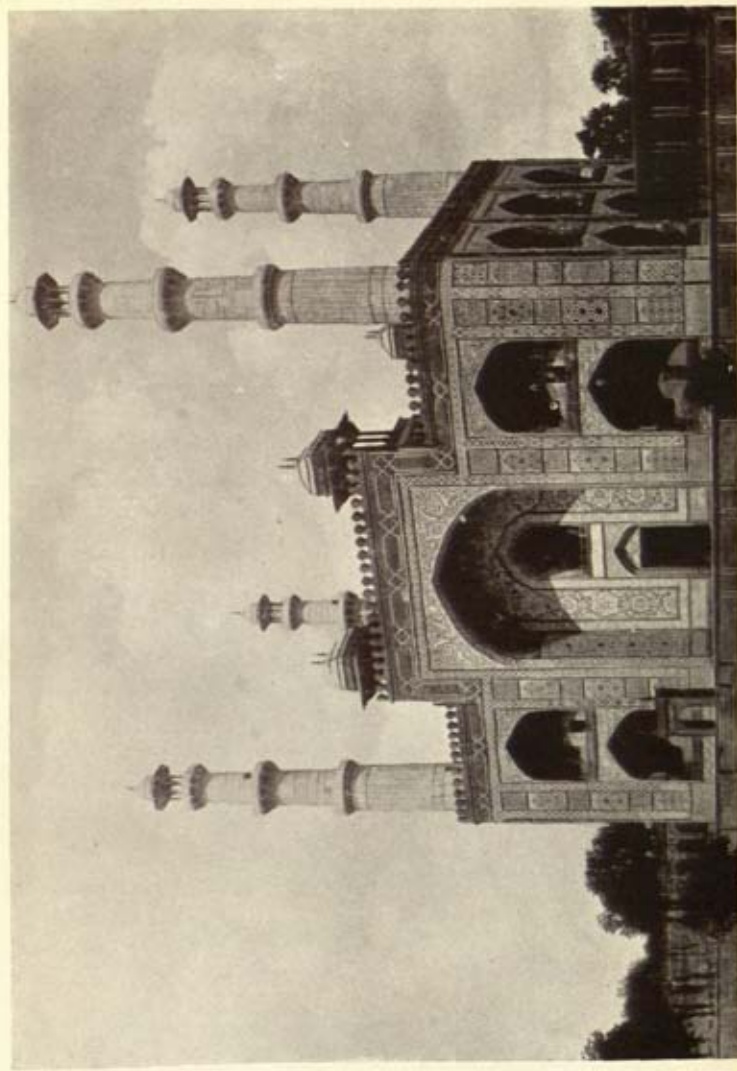
To the north of Ram Bagh are some Chhatris (Towers) of the Moghul days.

CHAPTER V.

AKBAR'S TOMB AT SIKANDRA.

THE Mausoleum of the Great Moghul, Akbar, being pyramidal in form and unique in style has no parallel among Persian or other Saracenic monuments. Architects agree that the design was evolved from a Buddhist Vihara and in its arabesque tracery Hindu carving and Buddhist form, the building witnesses the composite faith of the ruler who sleeps within it.

The mausoleum stands in a spacious garden of rare beauty. This garden called Bahistabad extends to 150 acres and is enclosed by battled walls 25 feet high. The walls are pierced by four fine sandstone gateways, one in the centre of each side. That on the west side was used as a Masjid. The main gateway lies to the south, 74 feet high and is unusual among Moghul gateways. The minarets, 86 feet high, at the four corners above the main gateway are of white marble and are three-storeyed. There are flights of steps within leading to the summits of these minarets. Formerly, the doors of the main gate were of sandal wood which were either carried off by the Jats during their short occupation of Agra or



GATEWAY OF AKBAR'S MAUSOLEUM.



AKBAR'S TOMB.

G. D. B.

SIKANDRA.



INTERIOR OF AKBARS MAUSOLEUM

G. D. B.

SIKANDRA.

destroyed during the Mutiny of 1857. A high arched chamber above the portico is known as Naubat Khana or music gallery where kettle-drums were beaten in honour of the dead at dawn and again one watch after sunrise.

The tomb proper occupies a central position and is connected with the entrance gate to the south by a broad stone causeway. The marble platform on which the tomb has been erected covers an area of 400 feet square. The building is five-storeyed and each storey becomes smaller as the tomb ascends higher—the whole structure assuming a tapering shape like a Buddhist Vihara. Each of the five storeys of the main building is surrounded by arcaded cloisters, the series on the ground floor being so vast that a British dragoon, once quartered there for a short time, occupied only a fraction of the available space.

An entrance to the tomb is made from the south by an arched porch decorated with marble mosaic. The hall, rather the ante-chamber, was once decorated with flowers raised in gold, silver and enamel which were scraped off by the Jats during 1761-74 but were partially restored at great cost by Lord Curzon before the visit of Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905 just to convey an idea of the original. From here a long sloping corridor, 60 feet long, leads straight to the mortuary chamber. Here sleeps within the simple tomb stone of marble, the Great Emperor,

shorn of all earthly splendour buried in the dust out of which he was made. The grave is simple according to the wish of the emperor. Formerly, a canopy of gold and silver brocade used to cover the tomb, rich rugs were spread upon the floor, while the books, the clothing and the armour of the Emperor lay beside his grave. Also, the entire chamber was highly painted over in gold. The Jats of Bharatpur during their short occupation of Agra carried off all valuables and scraped off the paintings in gold. It is remarkable to note that the dome above the hall is 74 feet high, while that of the Taj is 84 feet.

It won't be less interesting to cite the actual words of William Finch who visited Agra, six years after the death of Akbar. He says: "Here, within a round fair coffin of gold, lieth the body of the monarch, who sometimes thought the world too little for him. This tomb is much worshipped both by Moors and Gentiles, who hold him for a great saint. The tomb was not finished at my departure (1611) but lay covered with a white sheet interwoven with gold flowers. By his side stands his sword and shield, and on a small pillow his turban, and thereby two or three fair gilded books. At his feet stand the shoes and a rich basin and ewer. Every one approaching makes his reverence and puts off his shoes, bringing in his hand sweet smelling flowers to scatter on the carpet".

Now, there are two embroidered velvet sheets kept in the chamber which are used to cover the tombstone. There is also a beautiful brazen chandelier which hangs over the grave dimly lighted day and night. All the three valuables have been presented by His Highness, the Maharaja of Burdwan. In 1873, Lord Northbrook, then Viceroy of India, presented a gold embroidered pall as a covering for the tombstone but it was stolen. The mortuary chamber is dimly lit by four small openings and needs the help of a good lamp when one goes inside.

Returning to the ground floor, in the arcades flanking the vestibule to the mortuary chamber, there are many inscribed and uninscribed marble tombstones according to which Shukrun Nisa and Aram Banu Begham, two of Akbar's daughters, Mirza Sulaiman Shikoh, the son of Shah Alam II and others appear to have been buried. The handsome chiselled screens of white marble which surround the grave are remarkably beautiful.

The second, third and fourth storeys above the ground floor have the same design and the same kind of ornamental arches and domes of white marble. Thirty-nine steps in the flight lead up to the second storey. Minarets of red stone and marble are erected on all four sides. There is a flight of 15 steps leading to the third storey and one of 14 for the fourth.

Perhaps the top-most storey is the most interesting. It was built by the Emperor Jehangir and is entirely of marble. The fretted marble trellised walls, tessellated marble pavements and the cenotaph hewn out of a solid block of white marble make the cloistered enclosure of surpassing beauty and interest. The cenotaph occupies the central position, is one piece and weighs 400 maunds. At the head of the cenotaph is a marble pedestal in the hollowed recess of which, it is said, the great diamond, Koh-i-Noor used to be laid. Only the socket of this diamond now remains. Both the cenotaph and the pedestal are artistically carved.

There are thirty six Persian rhymes carved on the arches of thirty small apartments, nine on each side. The whole go to make a poem of interest which tells all about Akbar's greatness.

The poem on translation means, "*With the name of the King of mortal world, that his being is free from mortality; all the kings of the world, are from him, the owner of throne, crown and ring; this being of his is the declaration of justice and generosity; He produced the two worlds with the external generosity of his; He hid one and let the other come to light; if such a king were to live in the world, his being will be the shadow of the providence; the 62 years were longer than the 9 hundred in which the shadow of God was upon Akbar the King. He conquered the world in first attack; by the sign of eye brows he issued orders; like that of God's mercy his kindness was all over; for a period of 25*

years in the world, he ruled in this way in the world, he managed the whole world by justice;" and so on.

There is also an inscription at the head of the cenotaph, "*Allah-o-Akbar*", (*God is Great*), and at the foot "*Jilba Jalalhu*", (*Magnificent is His Glory*) and round about the cenotaph, the ninety nine names of the Creator are carved in alto relievo in a remarkably fine Arabic tracery.

The upper storey is now open to the sky but this was formerly according to Finch who described the cenotaph in 1611 was covered by a rich tent. He adds that it was roofed over by a dome of "most curious white and speckled marble, the ceiling to be of pure sheet gold richly inwrought".

The mausoleum was designed and commenced by Akbar himself in 1603, the year of the death of Queen Elizabeth in England. Akbar died in 1605. In the third year of his reign, Jehangir made a pilgrimage on foot to his father's tomb and was so much dissatisfied with the place that he caused the greater part to be demolished and entirely reconstructed at a cost of fifteen lakhs of rupees. Thus the tomb was completed in 1613⁷ a year after the English factories had been established at Surat. The top-most storey and the gate of the tomb are two praiseworthy buildings of Jehangir. Besides them, there are several extensions and alterations.

1613[✓]
misprint

At the tomb of Akbar on the arch over the main gate some Persian inscriptions in the Tughra character are written which, when translated mean:—

"O! what a pleasant air it is; better than that of the garden of heaven; (2) O! what a better foundation it is; better than that of the heaven; (3) There are thousands of slaves for him in the heaven; (4) There are thousands of gardens for him and the earth is a stationery heaven; (5) The pen of the mason of death wrote on his shrine; (6) It is the heaven for you, rest for ever". And so on.

Some rhymes are carved on the arches of the four walls of the portal of the Main Gate, a few after translation, are given below:—

"By the order of God, who is the high and dignity; that his kingdom is unchangeable; he (Akbar) became king in the world by the grace of God; the shadow of God was upon him; Time changes in every moment, never remains in the one way with anybody; when he ascended the throne, he controlled the whole world; he was generous, merciful and fortunate; he controlled the world and left; his soul was like the sun and the moon; may it be enlightened by the illumination of the light of the Alimighty power. And so on.

SIKANDRA.

Sikandra is now a village, 5 miles from Agra, situated on the Muttra-Agra Road. Sikandar Lodi, after capturing Agra laid out the town of

Sikandra after his name in 1492. He was the first sovereign who made his capital at Agra. Of the vanished capital, the only surviving structure is Baradari of Sikandar Lodi, which was converted into a Mausoleum for his mother Marium-uz-zaman by the Emperor Jehangir.

Either you go to Sikandra by tonga, car or train (Sikandra is a flag station on the G. I. P. Metre gauge about 2 furlongs from Akbar's Mausoleum; it is strongly advised to go without luggage); you pass a number of half ruined mausolea which testify to the irresistible conclusion that Sikandra formed a part of the city of Agra in those days. About half way between Agra and Sikandra, on the left side of the road, is a curious life-sized figure of a horse in red sandstone and a small tomb. It is said that the favourite horse and a *sais* (groom) of a nobleman were killed on this spot. He buried them here and caused the monuments to be erected over their remains. Across the fields, on the other side of the road are the Mausolea of Salamat Khan, Chief Treasurer of Shah Jahan, and of Sadiq Khan, a spiritual guide of Akbar. Two furlongs short of Sikandra is Suraj Bhan-ka-Bagh formerly Shakuran-Nisa-ka-Bagh (Garden). The only remnant of this entire building is a lofty gate.

Three furlongs onward, continuing the same Muttra-Agra road, are situated the tomb of

Maryam-uz-zamanⁱ, the Rajput wife of Akbar and mother of Jehangir. The building was erected by Sikandra Lodi in 1503. The tomb, to-day, is in a perfect state of preservation although the other neighbouring mosques and tombs are in ruins. The cenotaph stands in the centre of the upper storey and the actual grave consists of a simple white slab placed in the middle vault of the fifty underground apartments which are worth noticing. About a mile from here is a place of Hindu worship, Kailash, the temple of which is a fine one. If time permits, you should include it in your visit.



CHAPTER VI.

FATEHPUR SIKRI.

"The City of Victory"

THE dead city of Fatehpur Sikri is an enduring monument to the greatest Emperor India has ever known. The story of this red sandstone city is one of the most romantic in Indian history. In fact, no relic of India's historic past can make a more lasting impression on the mind of the visitor from overseas than the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. This is the conception of one man and on its desertion no one else added to or took away from its beauty. There is, moreover, a mysticism in the utter desertion of its quadrangles and mosque, the tide of life has surged back from this lonely place and only silence surrounds its stately beauty. Moreover, the modern mind can only marvel at the despotic power which caused a second imposing citadel to be erected within a few miles of the original capital of Agra.

Akbar had no issue up to the age of twenty seven and all his children having died in infancy it was his chief ambition to have a son. A celebrated recluse, the most noted saint of his age in Hindustan, Sheikh Salim Chishti dwelt in a cave

in Sikri, a village twenty three miles from Agra. In those days, Sikri was a few huts where stone-cutters worked in the neighbouring quarries. The saint was a descendant of a family renowned for religion and good works that of Sheikh Faride-i-Shakarganj. He took the name of Chisti in honour of his father, a holy man from Chist in Persia. The fame of his sanctity, ascetism and godliness and the wondrous stories of his miraculous powers reached the Great Moghul. While returning from a campaign against rebellious Uzbek nobles, Akbar halted at Sikri and on meeting the saint fell at his feet. His desire was fulfilled. And according to the suggestion of the saint, he sent his Hindu wife, Maryam-uz-zaman, the sister of Raja Bhagwandas of Amber, Rajputana, to reside at Sikri. Within a year a child was born to the emperor. Akbar's joy knew no bounds and he named his son, Salim after the holy saint. Huge sums were given in charity and State prisoners were released unconditionally. Soon a great city of great pomp and gaiety with high battled walls, the magnificent palaces, domes, towers, bastions, gates, courtyards, the great mosque and the other superlative specimens of the skill of the Moghul stone masons, was founded on the lonely eminence. In gratitude for the divine favour accorded to him Akbar made his capital in the place where his prayers met with such ready response. The construction of the new citadel was soon completed it having been com-

menced in 1570 and finished by the year 1574, the year the Agra fort was completed.

It will be of interest to cite the observations of Ralph Finch, one of the first Englishmen to set foot in India. "Agra is a very great city and populous, built with stone, with a fair river running by it. It hath a fair castle with a large ditch. From there, we went to Fatehpur Sikri, which is the place where the King kept his court. The town is larger than Agra but the houses and streets are not so good. The King hath in Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, 1,000 elephants, 30,000 horses, 1,400 tame deer, 800 concubines and such store of leopard tiger, buffaloes, cocks and hawks, that it is very strange to see. He keepeth a great court. Agra and Fatehpur are very great cities, either of them much greater than London. Between Agra and Fatehpur, all the way is a market of victuals and other things. They have fine carts, many of them carved and gilt, with two wheels drawn by two little bulls. They are decorated with silk, or fine cloth, and are used as are coaches in England. The King is apparelled in a white muslin tunic tied at one side, and a little cloth on his head coloured red or yellow".

Fatehpur Sikri was the residence of the Emperor till 1585, after which political reasons towards the latter part of his long reign compelled Akbar to shift his seat of Government to Lahore

and stayed there till 1599. He came back to Agra in 1600 and remained in his Agra Fort till his death in 1605. William Finch declares that Akbar left Fatehpur Sikri owing to lack of a good water supply. Soon the splendid city became a resort of wild beasts and dangerous characters. From then on, Fatehpur-Sikri never enjoyed the Imperial favour except in 1719 when Mohamad Shah was made Emperor and placed on the peacock throne by the two King-making Sayyids, Husain Ali and Abdulla on September 14th, but the court made but a short stay. Soon the palaces and towers relapsed into uninterrupted silence which lasts to this day. As a matter of fact, after Akbar's death, Fatehpur-Sikri was deserted within fifty years of its foundation. But to-day Akbar is a memory and only a few great buildings remain to remind one of the greatness that was his.

Though there are a but few of the chief buildings in Fatehpur-Sikri remaining, the visitor may wander for hours in the city stumbling across fresh discoveries in its nooks and corners. The flat country surrounding Fatehpur-Sikri is a delight to the eye of the sportsman. It is literally infested with game of all kinds including panther.

The deserted capital is six miles in circumference. On three sides it is enclosed by high battled walls built of stone. The walls may be regarded as the ramparts of a city. The walls

were pierced with seven massive gateways namely—Delhi Gate, Agra Gate, Ajmere Gate, Gwalior Gate, Chandra Phul Gate, and Muttra Gate with small doors. On the fourth side there was an artificial lake for protection. Recently it has been drained off as it rendered the neighbourhood unhealthy.

It is remarkable to note that the buildings including the great mosque, even to this day, bear signs of Hindu architecture. The carving of lotus, parrots, etc. are the indications of Hindu style. This carries the conception of Akbar's cosmopolitan taste in matters of religion.

The charm of Fatehpur Sikri is inexhaustible, and in the bright sunshine of the winter months a very pleasant day could be spent observing the beauty of this dead rose-red city of antiquity.

There are, of course, no hotels here but a very fine dak bungalow has recently been erected at great cost. Here visitors can be provided with meals if previous notice has been given. The journey from Agra, is 24 miles, can be made by road or train. Cheap return tickets for all classes are available. (Usually the train leaves Agra Fort about 7 in the morning and returns from Fatehpur-Sikri at about 5 in the evening).

NAUBAT KHANA.

On entrance through the Agra gate for the Sikri palaces, the first building is the Naubat

Khana (Musician Gallery). It is square with four gateways. The arches of the north and south gates are built in Mohammaden style while those on the east and west in Hindu style. It was guarded by troops and whenever Akbar used to enter the city the musicians played the triumphal march.

THE MINT AND TREASURY.

The first of the palace buildings on the summit of the hill is the mint. Here a large number of silver and gold coins were struck in 1577. On the opposite side of the road is the site of Treasury which consists of a quadrangle, 62 ft. by 66 ft. As a matter of fact, these are the only buildings in Fatehpur Sikri which are almost unrecognisable.

DIWAN-I-AM.

"Hall of Public Audience"

The vast hall built by Akbar between 1570-86 was used for all state functions. The building is entirely composed of red sandstone. Its floor is in ruins. The court measures 368 feet by 181 feet. Except towards the Diwan-i-Am on the west side, there are cloisters all round capable of seating thousands of litigants, suitors and others who sought the royal favour. In this hall there is an elevated recess or balcony where the Emperor during his stay at the new city of Fatehpur-Sikri (1570-86) dispensed justice, received homage reviewed the troops and witnessed sports in the court below.



THE THRONE PILLAR, FATEHPUR-SIKRI



AKBAR'S SEAT IN DIWAN-I-KHAS, FATEHPUR-SIKRI.

DIWAN-I-KHAS.

"Hall of Private Audience"

The Diwan-i-Khas is a red sandstone edifice of mural design with unique interior arrangements. The architecture of the Diwan-i-Khas is pre-eminently Hindu, which speaks for Akbar's cosmopolitan taste. From the exterior the hall appears double-storeyed but actually the building consists of a single lofty chamber. The massive octagonal column in the centre is curiously and wonderfully carved, the chiselling on the shaft is of saracenic character. The top of the pillar is arranged as a platform enclosed by pierced screens. Kiosks at each corner adorn the flat roof, which is reached by two staircases hewn in the thickness of the walls. It is said that such a unique plan was inspired by the architects on account of the Emperor's fear of assassination.

Diwan-i-Khas built by Akbar in 1575 was exclusively used as a celebrated Ibadat Khana or Hall of Worship where men of learning and opposing religions assembled for debate usually on Friday nights and Akbar used to occupy the circular space over the capital of the richly carved central shaft, while the outer ends of the four causeways ornamented with pierced screens were assigned to his Ministers. The Emperor used to discuss the different forms of religious faith and the discussion often continued for days and nights. Listening to the arguments of the learned people,

the Emperor evolved the idea of promulgating a faith of his own, entirely new, entitled Divine Monotheism or 'Din Ilahi'.

ASTROLOGER'S SEAT.

This beautiful pavilion with fine artistic pillars is in proximity to the Diwan-i-Khas. The style is that usual to Jain architecture of the 11th century. The platform is distinguished by the elaborate struts that support the flat roof while the raised floor is enclosed by a stone railing. Here, Akbar who had a great reverence for a Hindu astrologer, is said to have spent many hours in deep conversation with the wise man whose astrological knowledge was the marvel of the age.

ANKH MICHAULI.

"Hide and Seek House"

Adjoining the Diwan-i-Khas and behind the astrologer's seat are three houses with staircases leading to the roof. It is supposed to be the place where the Emperor Akbar played hide and seek, a popular game of amusement with the ladies of the seraglio. It is doubtful whether this game was ever played in this particular building, as it stands outside the harem limits. Far easier of credence is the suggestion that this was the special imperial treasury and the repository of the most valuable state records as its proximity to the Privy Council Chamber (Diwan-i-Khas) would suggest. The stone safes were probably the place for coins.

PACHCHISI COURT.

To the south of Diwan-i-Khas and just facing the astrologer's seat is a vast courtyard measuring 756 feet by 272 feet. The whole court is paved. Here is a Pachchisi Court which consists of a court laid out in black and white squares. An elevated stone slab in the centre shows the seat where Akbar used to sit beneath a canopy of silk. The game was played with fair-looking girls attired in gay clothes of various colours, the girls acting as the living chess pieces. This court was formerly screened off from the surrounding edifices.

KHAS MAHAL OR DAULAT KHANA.

"Private Palaces"

On the west side of the Pachchisi Court behind the great quadrangle of Diwan-i-Am is the important block of buildings known as Khas-i-Mahal surrounded by cloisters on three sides the western face being reserved for the Diwan-i-Am. The entire block of buildings consist of three main portions Khwabgah or Akbar's private apartments or House of Dreams; Turkish Sultana's House and Girls' School. These three are connected by a collonnade, and surrounded by the so-called Khwabgah or Akbar's bed room seem to have been reserved for the exclusive use of the Emperor. The exterior room which was decorated in colour, contains numerous recesses probably for books, documents, etc.

Behind this room the raised platform on the south wall of the Chamber was the abode of the Hindu mendicant or astrologer's seat where reposed the man in whom Akbar had implicit faith for the choosing of auspicious days on which to embark on any venture.

The tank in the courtyard is known as Hauz-i-Khas, 95½ feet square. The centre of it displays a square platform whence radiate four stone causeways. Water was supplied through stone channels from the water-works near the Elephant Gate and kept clean and fresh by means of an overflow through an outlet on the north. Under the imperial orders about 1579 the tank was filled with coins which were distributed among Akbar's subjects, both rich and poor.

KHWABGAH & AKBAR'S BEDROOM.

The Khwabgah or Drository, said to have been the bed room of the Emperor Akbar, was originally embellished with artistic frescoes in the Persian style and beautiful inscriptions. The whole chamber was highly ornamented with paintings principally of flowers of which traces are still visible. A huge figure, probably an angel with an infant in its arms, is cleverly painted on the north side of the east doorway and refers to the birth of Prince Salim (Jehangir) said to have been brought about by the intercession of Sheikh Salim Chisti. As a matter of fact, the ornament in gold

and ultramarine has disappeared, but was partially restored by Lord Curzon in 1905 before the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales just to convey an idea of the original painting.

Attached to the bed room is a chamber 20 feet 9 inches wide and 42 feet 7 inches long, said to have been the residence of a learned Brahmin who performed his devotions on the raised platform projecting from the south wall.

Corridors connected this bed room with the Turkish Sultana's House, the Panch Mahal, and the palaces of Maryam and Jodh Bai. The most characteristic feature in this building is its central position whence Akbar could approach any of the Chief buildings in his city in the twinkling of an eye, himself remaining practically invisible behind the screens of red sandstone which have now disappeared.

MADARSA-I-NISWAN.

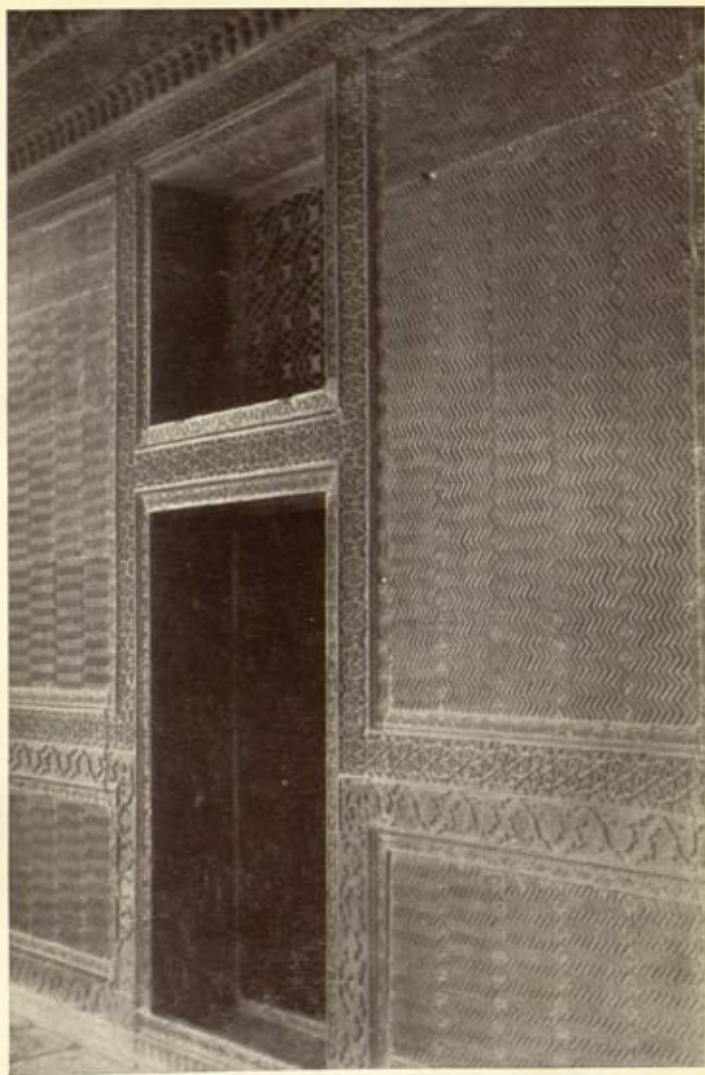
"Girl's School"

This is a low, unpretentious building to the north of Khas Mahal consisting of a room and a verandah on its north side. Here the young girls of Akbar's harem were given a sort of miscellaneous training. Some regard this building to have originally extended towards the house of Turkish Sultana or Istamboli Begum and separated the Khas Mahal from the building to its north.

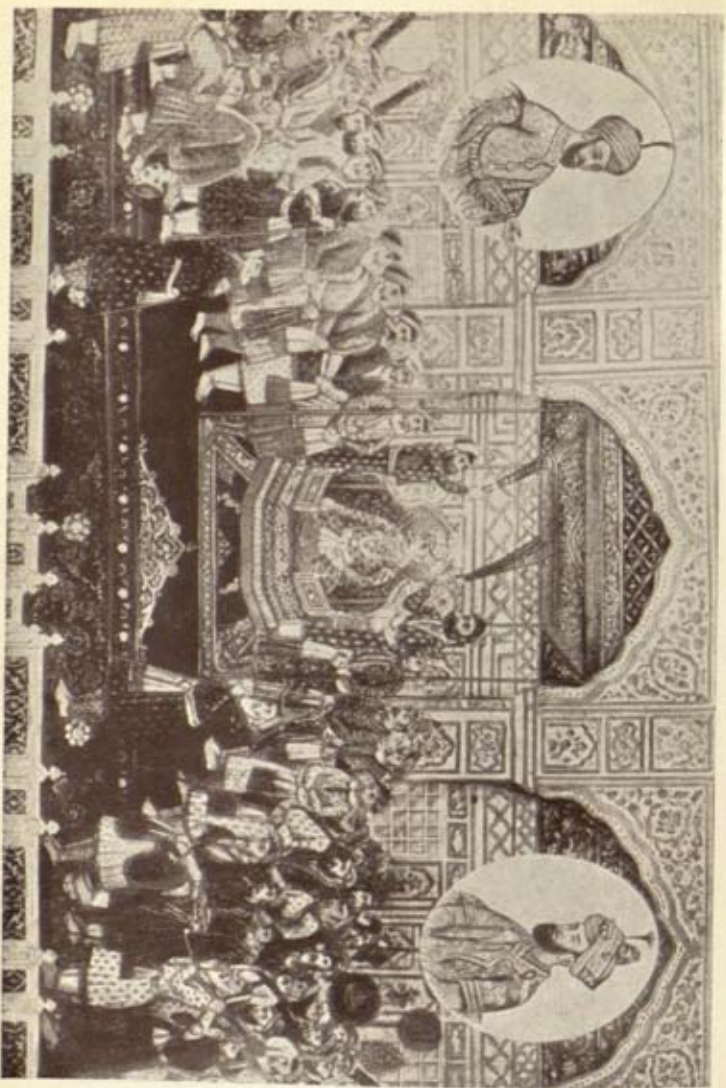
TURKISH SULTANA'S HOUSE.

The house of Turkish Sultana or Istamboli Begum, built by Akbar consists of a single chamber encircled by a verandah which was formerly divided into small chambers by means of screens of red sandstone. Although so small, the building is regarded as the gem of Fatehpur-Sikri. Fergusson, the greatest critic of Indian art, says that he could conceive of nothing so picturesque in outline, so elaborate in finish, and yet so restrained as the house of the Turkish Sultana. It is entirely built of red sandstone and every inch of both the exterior and interior is ornamented with exquisite carving, the facades being unrivalled in India for elaboration of detail. The interior part is depicted with sceneries, flowers and birds. The roof is chiselled in imitation of old Italian tiling, some of the carvings within the room were mutilated by puritanic Aurangzeb as they bore the figures of birds and animals prohibited by the Prophet.

This structure is regarded by some as built by Akbar for his first and chief wife Sultana Ruqaya Begum, daughter of Baber's son, Hindal. She died childless at Agra in 1626, aged 84 years. Some assign the house to Sultana Salim Begum a daughter of Baber's daughter, Gulrukh Begum who married Akbar in 1560-61 after the death of her first husband, Bairam Khan.



FINE CARVING ON THE HOUSE OF SULTANA
RUQUAIYA BEGAM,



AKBAR'S DARBAR.

TURKISH BATH.

The Hammam or Bath was accredited to the Turkish wife of Akbar. It stands in close proximity of her house. The exterior of the building is plain but its austerity inside is enlivened by plaster and coloured designs. It has an elaborate arrangement for the supply of hot and cold water. Near by is a stone tank below which is another set of baths—those used by the Emperor. There is a huge well near by, sunk in the hard rock, which supplied water to these baths. Formerly, the space between the Sultana's House and the bath was occupied by a garden and the surroundings were screened by high fretwork.

DAFTAH KHANA.

A little distance off the Khwabgah is situated the Daftah Khana or the Record Chamber. This is built on an elevated platform and consists of a single room enclosed on all sides by a verandah with a spacious court in front. This was Akbar's office where he used to remain till late in the night, attending to the affairs of the vast empire and issued orders.

THE HOSPITAL.

It is a low, single storeyed building, now in a ruined condition. A path behind the Hide and Seek house leads to the Hospital. Formerly, the roof was exquisitely carved, the interior walls coated with plaster, and the doorways and windows

brightly painted. Stone partitions divided the twelve wards, small apartments measuring 14 feet by 9 feet 6 inches. This building is evidence of the fact that such institutions did exist in Hindustan in the 16th Century although the remaining part of the building shows how unsuitable it was for the purpose of a Hospital.

PANCH MAHAL.

"Five Storeyed Palace"

Apart from the great mosque and the Victory Gate probably the most striking building in Fatehpur-Sikri from an external point of view is the Panch Mahal situated to the west of Khas Mahal. Ornamental parapets and ingeniously sculptured columns distinguish the Panch Mahal. It is built in the style of a Buddhist Vihara and the architecture is essentially Hindu. As its name implies, it is five storeyed, each storey being smaller than the one before and surmounted by a picturesque kiosk covered throughout with ornamental parapets. The whole structure assumes a tapering shape.

The ground floor measures 72 feet long and 58 feet wide and contains 84 sculptured columns, characteristic to note that no two are alike; while the first floor has 56 columns, the second twenty; the third, twelve, and the fourth only four. And the height of the first storey is 49 feet, that of the second, 62 feet; of the third, 20 feet; of the fourth,

12 feet; and on the fifth a dome is built with four pillars of stone. A story is told of Akbar that he employed Chinese artisans in the construction of this building would seem to bear out this suggestion.

There has been much interesting speculation as to its use. Very probably it was the pleasure retreat of the emperor and his wives where they would enjoy the evening air. This was formerly joined to the Khas Mahal and the Pachchisi court.

MARYAM'S HOUSE.

This elaborately and profusely carved building was built by Akbar for his wife, Maryam-uz-zaman who was the sister of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber and this title was conferred on her just after her marriage with the Grand Moghul in 1562. She gave birth to the heir of the throne, Jehangir. Originally the house was adorned with frescoes in gold and silver depicting scenes from the Shahnama of Firdausi, from Hindu Mythology and also from Christian stories. This was formerly entitled Golden House (Sonehra Makan) because of the gilding lavished upon its exterior and interior walls. The most interesting painting is that of a lady riding a parrot which may be seen in the west verandah.

The building stands on a raised platform just south of the Five Storeyed Palace, Panch Mahal and measures 59 ft. 10 inches by 48 feet 5 inches.

It will interest our readers to go through Mr. H. A. Newell's remarks, "In common with Akbar's buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri, Maryam's Kothi (House) is profusely carved. In this case the subjects depicted are markedly Hindu, and out of compliment, no doubt, to the Empress' solar descent, portray incidents in the life of Rama. In addition to its elaborate work the dwelling was further decorated with brilliantly coloured frescoes".

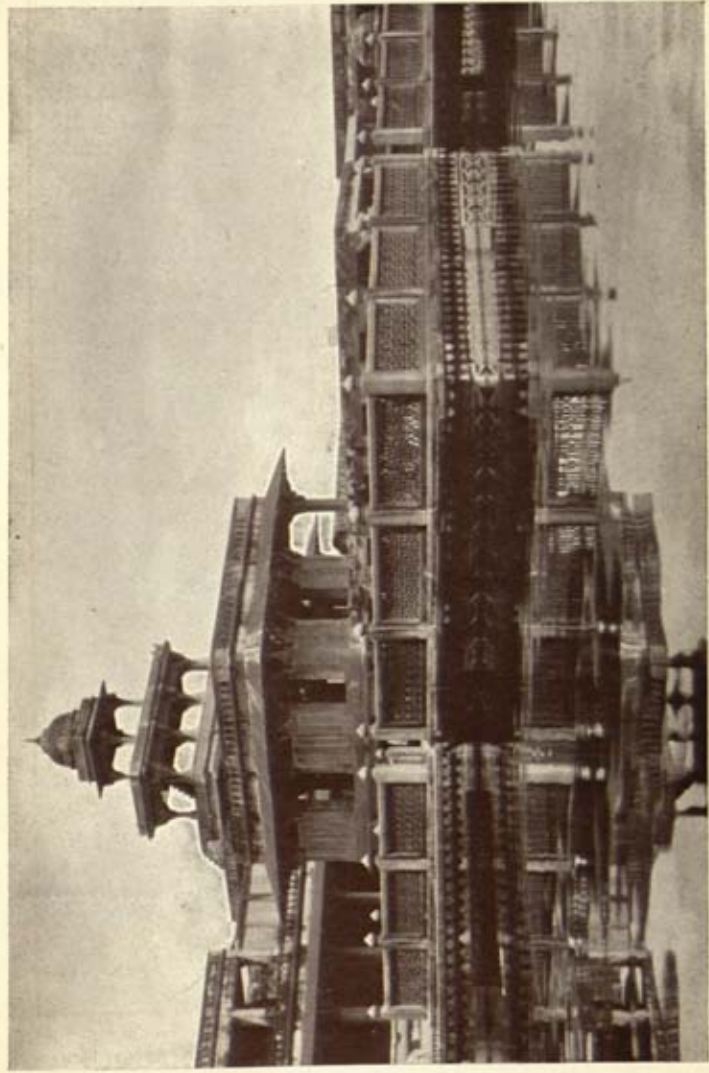
For many years, the building was reserved for the offices of the Public Works Department and was also used for residential purposes by the District Engineer but in 1905 it was evacuated to be preserved as a historical monument.

MARYAM'S GARDEN.

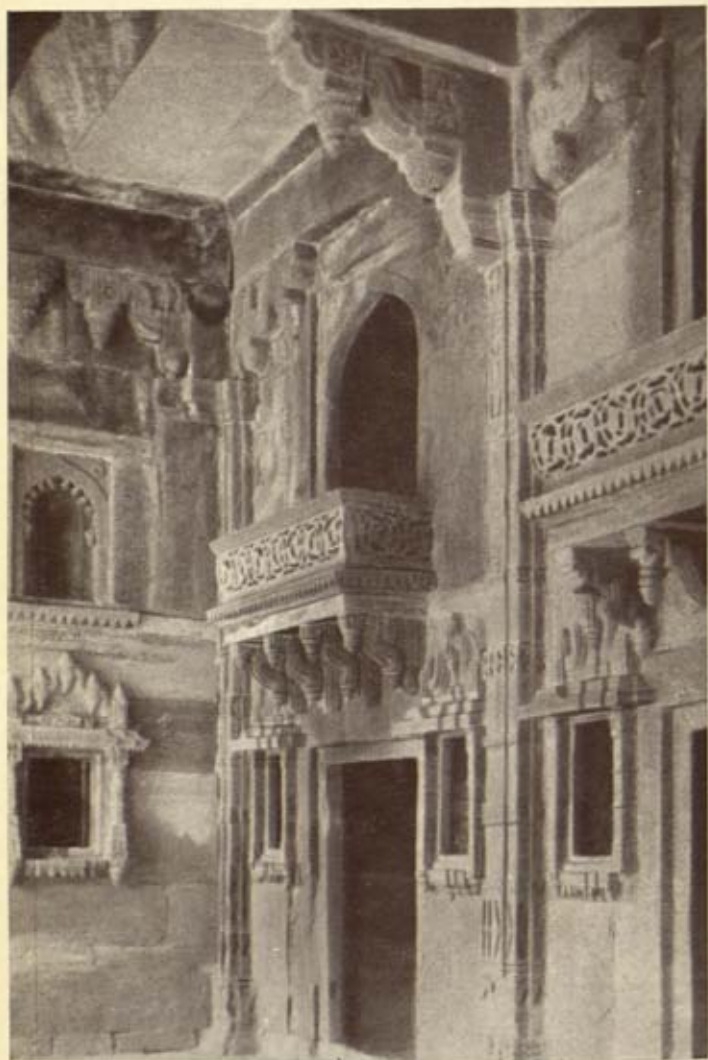
Adjoining Maryam's House, an open space is Maryam's Garden. Formerly it was enclosed by screened walls and was entered through a gateway flanked by a garden-house. The chief beauty of the garden lay in an aquarium sheltered by a pretty pavilion.

MARYAM'S BATH.

Attached to the garden on its south-east is Maryam's Bath, a square building with open sides. Screens were fitted into the walls and steps cut at each corner of the tank for those who did not care to plunge in from the bank. Water was supplied from the water-works near the Hiran



PUNCH MAHAL'S REFLECTION IN CHAR CHAMAN.
FATEHPUR-SIKRI.
I.S.R.



INTERIOR VIEW OF JODHBAI'S HOUSE.

Minar. The garden was screened by high walls and no one but authorized persons was permitted to pass. Defaulters were sentenced to death.

THE PALACE OF JODH BAI.

The Jodh Bai's Palace situated south west of Maryam's House, is remarkable for its skilful carving. Hindu influence is noticed both in architecture and in the ornamental carving—the bells and chains, one of the oldest forms of Hindu ornament are freely cut on the stone pieces. This palace is regarded as an unique example of a Moslem palace of the 16th century being entirely self-contained. It is said to have been built by Akbar in 1585 for his daughter-in-law, Jodh Bai, the daughter of Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur, wife of Jehangir and mother of Shah Jahan.

The palace is the largest building in Fatehpur-Sikri. It consists of a huge block, 331 feet 8 inches from north to south, and 215 feet east to west, built in the pavilion style imported from central Asia. The building is double storeyed. The roofs except on the central blocks to north and south where they are overlaid with brilliant tiling are flat. The court in the centre is paved and measures 179 feet by 162 feet. There is only one entrance to the palace through the main block on the east.

As Sikri was abandoned in 1585, it is probable that the building was never occupied by the

lady for whom it was built. Colour decorations were lavishly used in the palace. Newell remarks: "Colour decoration was lavished on the parapets, while the vivid turquoise encaustic tiling on the wagon shaped roofs, is further quoted as proving the early date of the work".

The intermediate floor, on the northern side of the building was originally used by Akbar as a dining room and after the marriage of Jehangir it came to have the name of Jodh Bai Mahal. Like the Turkish Bath attached to Maryam's House, here is also a ladies' bath immediately outside the south wall of the palace.

HAWA MAHAL.

"Air Palace"

This is a large apartment enclosed by pierced sandstone screens and actually forms part of Jodh Bai's palace as a doorway from the Emperor's dining room opens on to it. It was used as a pleasure resort during the hot summer days. Attached is a gallery which, it is said, was once connected with the Hiran Minar (Tower). From here, the ladies of the seraglio used to witness battles and feats below.

BIRBAL'S HOUSE.

This beautiful palatial building stands near the north west corner of Jodh Bai's palace. Built in 1571 by Raja Birbal for his daughter, the house

is double storeyed. The flat roofs of the house are accessible by steep narrow staircases. The roofs were, formerly, enclosed by stone screens. There are two dome-crowned apartments on the two corners of the roof, fitted with cupboards so characteristic of Moghul domestic architecture. The ceilings are remarkably beautiful throughout.

Mr. H. A. Newell's observations are worth quoting here: "Not only is Birbal's House the best preserved in Fatehpur Sikri but it rivals that of the Turkish Sultana in the beauty and elaboration of its exterior and interior carving, which is in a harmonious blend of Hindu and Mohemadan style".

The building stands on a massive concrete platform which commands a fine view of the Hathi Pol gate, Hiran Minar, Karvan Sarai, the lake and the vast battle field. Both Hindu and Mohemadan styles of architecture are freely noticeable in this building. This is now open on all sides but was, formerly, provided with stone screens.

Birbal, originally Mahesh Das, was a poor Brahmin. His witty sayings coupled with the gift of Hindi verse raised him high in the imperial favour. He was the Poet Laureate and Prime Minister of Akbar. In the later part of his life, Akbar admitted him to his close personal friendship. He was killed in a campaign against the Yusufzai, a border tribe. Akbar was so much

shocked at his death that he went into public mourning and refused food for some time.

Although this building is assigned to Birbal's daughter and also identified by some with Birbal's Mahal built by Akbar in 1572, some are of opinion that this house was probably erected for the daughter of Raja Kalyan Mal of Bikaner who was married to the Emperor in 1570 and who gave birth to Prince Daniel in 1572.

Under British rule it was utilised for revenue offices and after the Mutiny of 1857 was reserved for the use of inspecting officers and distinguished guests. In 1905 it was evacuated and since then protected as a preserved monument.

HATHI POL.

Hathi Pol or Elephant Gate is 49 feet high and is so called from the gigantic stone figures of elephants 13 feet high that stood on pedestals flanking the outer archway. These were mutilated by the Emperor Aurangzeb. Their fragments lie on the ground below the gate to this day.

The gateway is traversed by a passage about 11 feet high and 17 feet 9 inches wide. At either side are guard chambers and staircases leading up to the roof. There is a third staircase which is connected with the Kabutar Khana and Sangin Burj.

The Kabutar Khana or pigeon house is rough rubble masonry plastered on the outside and was probably used as a powder magazine.

SANGIN BURJ.

Adjoining the Elephant Gate on the north-east, is the grand bastion of Sangin Burj. Newell's remarks will prove useful to quote here about this structure: "Like the Hathi Pol, the Sangin Burj is provided with hooded machioliations through which to pour stones, boiling lead etc., upon the enemy".

This tower was commenced to be extended by Akbar in a manner so as to enclose the Fatehpur-Sikri Palaces in the shape of a fortress, but this idea was soon abandoned when the Emperor came to know of the prophesy of Salim Chisti that his greatness would decline if the work of fortification were completed. The work of extension, commenced but not finished, can be witnessed here.

Near by can be seen the big water tank which once served as the water works of the Sikri Palaces.

NAGINA MASJID.

It is a small Mosque near to the north wall of the court containing Birbal's House and not very far from the Elephant Gate. This was built by Akbar for the use of the inmates of the royal harem.

The building consists of a small enclosure 24 feet 3 inches by 33 feet 6 inches, open on the south side.

STABLES.

Suggestive of the real pomp of the Emperor are the horse and camel stables, near Birbal's House not far from Hathi Pol.

The horse stable is oblong in shape measuring 298 feet 4 inches by 124 feet 6 inches with an open court 278 feet by 80 feet. Here the visitor finds endless rings in the universal sandstone to which the horses were tethered. Abul Fazal mentions 12,000 horses in the imperial stables but these stables have accommodation for 110 horses only.

Its close proximity to Birbal's house suggests that Birbal may have been Master of the Horse in addition to being the Prime Minister. Formerly, the imperial stables were separated from Birbal's House by a high wall.

Near the horse stables are the camel stables which measure 219 feet 8 inches long and 25 feet deep. Their flat roof is supported by plain stone pillars. These are said to provide accommodation for 51 camels. Some assign them to be built most probably for the grooms of the imperial horses in the adjoining stables.

Attached to these are the Hammam or Baths and latrines for the use of the servants, now in a ruinous condition.

KARVAN SARAI.

A road leads down from the Hathi Pol Gate to a vast quadrangle built round with small flat-roofed apartments, and a verandah to accomodate the travellers and their animals. The entrance is through a double storeyed portal of imposing aspect. The Sarai is in ruins but still amid the ruins one can notice the stone pegs and rings to which the heel ropes were secured.

HIRAN MINAR.

This grand tower was built by Akbar above the remains of his favourite elephant, Hiran. It rises to a height of 80 feet from the ground floor. It is curiously designed, being octagonal at the base, circular in the middle and tapering at the top with a dome-crowned capital. The outer walls are covered over with stone imitations of elephant tusks which look like projecting iron spikes from a distance. In the interior is a steep spiral staircase which leads to the summit of the tower. This gallery receives light through numerous small star-shaped openings pierced in the outer walls.

Formerly, the tower was connected with the palaces by means of a covered passage for the ladies. From the top of the tower, the ladies used

to watch the aquatic sports on the lake, wild beast fights, wrestling bouts and Imperial army manoeuvres on the plains. Akbar is also said to have shot deer and other game from here.

JAMA MASJID.

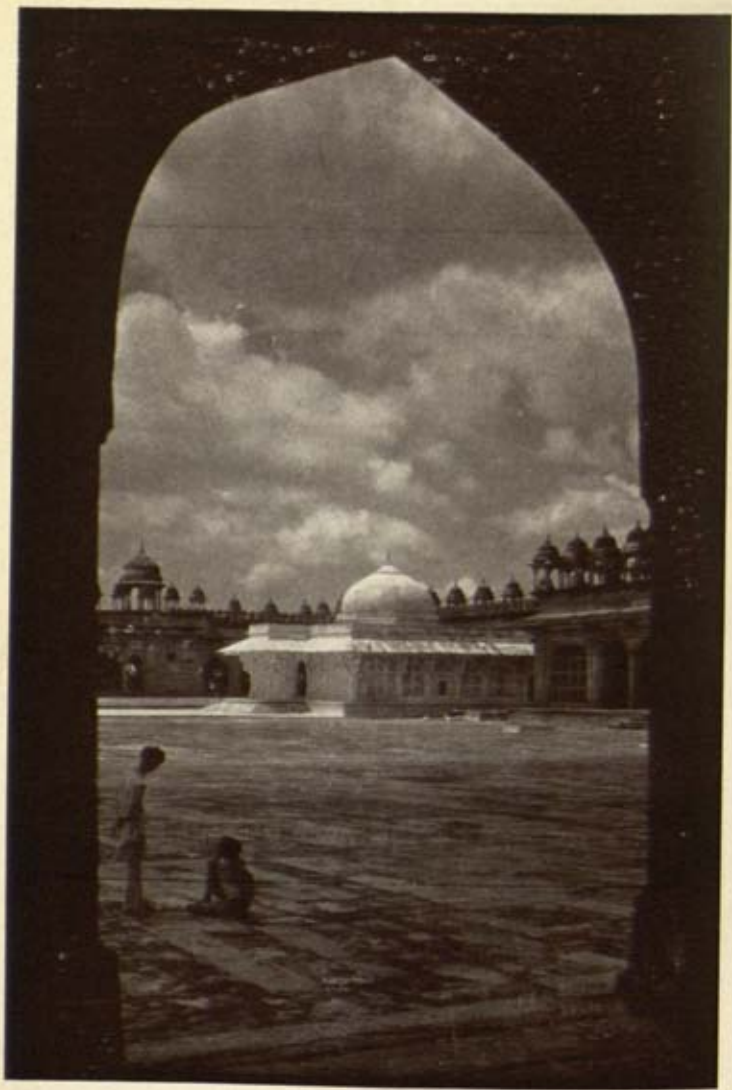
This mosque is a striking example of the blending of the Saracenic and Hindu styles of architecture. This is the largest and grandest building in Fatehpur Sikri. Some authorities, on account of its massive structure which is very impressive, pronounce it to be the finest example of its kind in India. No doubt, the shrine is richly ornamented and elaborately carved, yet it lacks the delicacy of design of the Jama Masjid at Delhi.

The mosque stands in an enclosure measuring 438 feet from north to south by 542 feet from east to west. In the centre is a paved court open to the sky. Cloisters surround it on three sides pierced by two gateways to east and south. The former is entitled King's Gateway as the Emperor Akbar used to pass through this on his way from the royal palaces to the Jama Masjid. The latter is the famous Gate of Victory or Buland Darwaza.

The shrine occupies the western end of the quadrangle and is crowned by three massive domes. The large halls on either side of the central chamber with majestic pillars of Hindu style and the entire



ARCADE OF JAMA MOSQUE,
FATEHPUR-SIKRI.



SALIM CHISTI'S TOMB, FATEHPUR-SIKRI

western wall marked by arcaded *mehrabs* (arches) richly ornamented make the place most imposing.

This grand mosque was erected after the plan of a celebrated shrine at Mecca at the cost of five lakhs of rupees in 1571-72 by Akbar. It was here that Akbar after having proclaimed himself the religious head (Imam) of the age, performed the function of that office in 1579 by reciting on one Friday prayer (Khutba) composed for the occasion by Faizi. Akbar was overpowered with emotion at the sight of the congregation and was obliged to descend leaving the court chaplain to conclude the service.

The inscriptions in the mosque when translated, mean:—

“In the time of the King of the Dared Akbar, that from him the management to the continent came in; the Principal Shaikh adorned the mosque; that from purity, the chastity of kabba came out; it is the second to the chaste mosque (kabba); the date of the mosque (is) 979 A.H.”

SHEIK SALIM CHISTT'S TOMB.

The tomb is the most beautiful specimen of early Moghul architecture and has been described as a pearl set in a ring of sandstone. The portico is considered without rival in India as a specimen of white marble carving. The pillars are Mohe-madan reproductions of Dravidian columns be-

longing to the tenth century Mantapam of a Siva Temple in Chidambaram, Madras.

The mausoleum is a square building of pure white marble and measures 47 feet 11 inches each way. The platform on which the tomb stands as well as the floor inside is inlaid with marble mosaic. The screens which enclose the verandah are beautifully perforated in ornamental designs. The pillars supporting the beams of the porch in front are singularly made of marble of S shape. The cenotaph occupies the centre of the marble floor. Above the cenotaph is an artistic canopy of shisham wood exquisitely inlaid with mother-o-pearl. This baldachino inlaid with mother-o-pearl is very fine and was renovated in 1905 at a cost of Rs. 12,000. The actual grave is in the vault immediately below.

The saint, Sheikh Salim Chisti who is buried here, traced his descent from Sheikh Farid Shakarganj of Pakpatan (Persia) and was born in 1478. He blessed Akbar with several children and consequently was greatly revered by the Emperor. The saint also became, henceforth, a *persona grata* at court. His family enjoyed many exclusive privileges both under Akbar and his immediate successors. At his death, he was buried here at Fatehpur Sikri and not conveyed to Mecca according to his instructions. An inscription on the doorway of the shrine gives the date of his death as

1571. The date of the erection of the tomb is not known, but it was probably erected by the Emperor Akbar a few years after the death of Sheikh Salim.

It is asserted that Jehangir had this beautiful marble mausoleum constructed for his god-father, Salim Chisti in place of an earlier structure of red sandstone built by Akbar. This Shrine is held in great veneration by Indian Muslims.

On the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chisti, rhymes in Persian are carved which, when translated, mean:—

“The helper of religion, the leader of the way, Shaikh Salim Chisti; that in spiritual power and proximity, he is like Junaid and Tafoor and Iron Hein the candle of Chist is in illumination (Junaid and Tafoor were famous saints at Baghdad); do not remain two, self is in non-entity and is eternal with the Right (God); and so on.”

TOMB OF ISLAM KHAN.

In the neighbourhood of the shrine of Sheikh Salim Chisti within the mosque enclosure are other several tombs the most important, worthy of mention, is that of Islam Khan.

The tomb is surrounded by a wide verandah enclosed by fretted screens. Remarkable to note

is an elaborate wooden baldachino above the Islam's cenotaph.

Sheikh Islam Khan, entitled Nawab Islam Khan, was the grandson of Salim Chisti and husband of Abul Fazal's sister, Ladli Begum. He died in 1613 while Governor of Bengal, and his body was interred here in the reign of Jehangir. Around his tomb are many inscribed and un-inscribed graves of his descendants.

ZENANA RAUZA.

Near the Shrine of Sheikh Salim Chisti is the Zenana Rauza. As indicated by the name, the building contains the graves of the female descendants of Sheikh Salim. Here, almost all the sarcophagi are of stone or marble with one exception which is of wood.

BULAND DARWAZA.

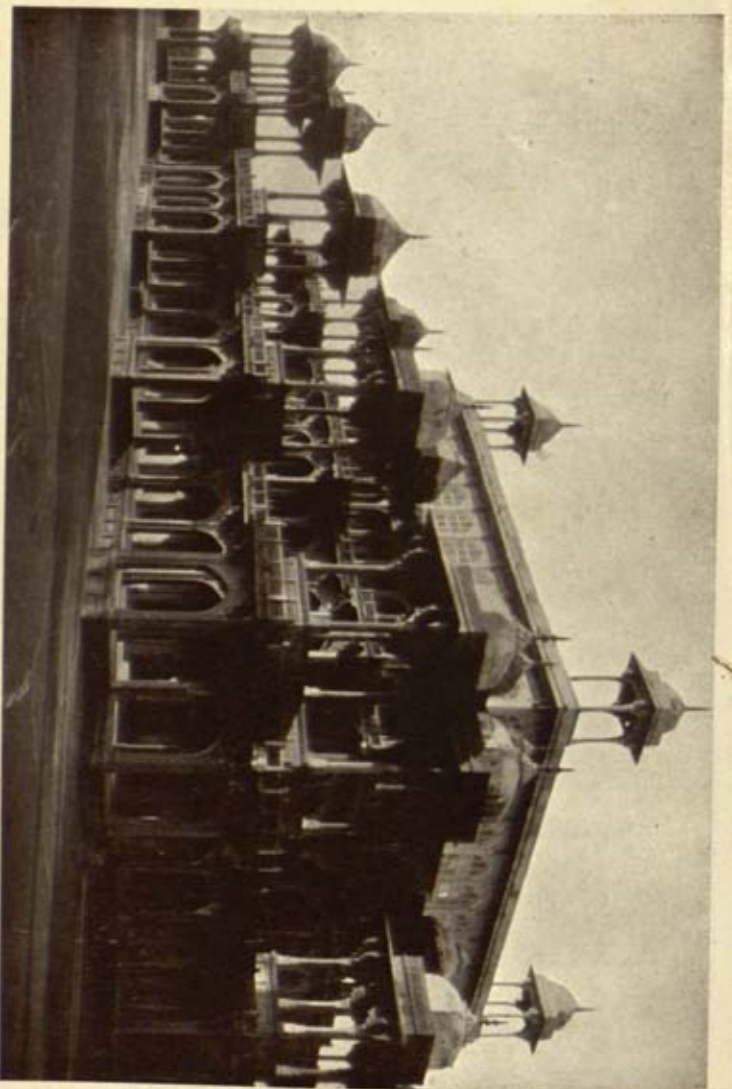
"The High Gateway of Victory"

The tremendous High Gateway of Victory is the largest, loftiest and most stately in the whole of India. It is one of the greatest in the world. Here, marble and sandstone have been used in effective combination in its decoration. They have been used such as only the masons of the Moghul times knew. The inlaid marble work in the arches and the Hindu style of architecture in the gallery above the entrance are worth visiting. The gate rises to a height of 176 feet above the pavement.



THE GATE OF VICTORY.

FATEHPUR-SIKRI.



THE UPPER TERRACE OF AKBAR'S TOMB.

I.S.R

SIKANDRA.

The triumphal gateway was erected by Akbar in 1601 in commemoration of his victory over Khandesh and Ahamadnagar in Southern India. The gateway is surmounted by innumerable domes, both large and small, after the fashion characteristic of Moghul architecture.

On this gate are inscribed a few lines which on translation mean thus: "Said Jesus—on whom be peace. The world is a bridge, pass over it but build no house. He hopes for an hour hopes for an eternity. The world is but an hour, spend it in devotion. The rest is unseen".

THE GREAT STEP-WELL.

"Baoli"

It lies near the High Gateway of Victory on one side and measures 32 feet in diameter. Here, the visitor can enjoy the swimmer's jump on offering them a chip or a few annas. No doubt, the spectacle is much interesting.

HOUSES OF ABUL FAZAL & FAIZI.

These stand within a few paces from the Gate of Victory in an outside walled enclosure, a few yards separating the one from the other. Abul Fazal lived in the first. A long pillared verandah bearing traces of beautiful and elaborate carving denotes Abul Fazal's house. Abul Fazal was Akbar's dearly loved friend and favourite minister and the most famous historian of the age. He was

only 24 when introduced to Akbar. His works, *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Maktubat-i-Allama* are the noteworthy records of historical value. He was caused to be assassinated in 1602 by Jehangir against whom Jehangir thought he excited hatred in the heart of Akbar. Akbar was so much grieved at his death that for two days, he neither ate nor slept.

Faizi was the Poet Laureate and was like his brother, in constant attendance on the Emperor during his stay at Fatehpur Sikri. On his death in 1592 Akbar was sorely distressed and by the side of his dying head, the Alexander of the East flung his turban on the ground and wept aloud.

STONE-CUTTERS' MOSQUE.

Long before the fortress of Fatehpur Sikri was built, this was the mosque of worship for Sheikh Salim Chisti erected by the stone-cutters who lived nearby. It is said that the cave where the saint used to indulge in penance is here hidden. This mosque stands to the west of Jama Masjid.

RANG MAHAL.

Near the mosque is a ruined house which consists of a small room 9 feet 9 inches by 8 feet 4 inches supported by a plain pillar in the centre. It was the abode of Salim Chisti and his place of penance. It was also the place where Jehangir was born and it was originally entitled the Rang Mahal.

JAMA MASJID.

"The Cathedral Mosque"

This is a fine structure of rose red sandstone and stands just outside the Fort Station on the North-West. The whole building consists of three compartments and each is surmounted by domes built of white and red stone in oblique courses. There are five arch ways in the front, one large and two smaller ones on each side, all opening on a vast courtyard. There are octagonal domed cupolas on each corner of the building and a row of smaller square cupolas surmount the entire building. There are three gateways in the mosque and the one in the North is the largest.

The inscription on the main archway shows that this building was begun in 1644 A.D. by Jahan-Ara Begum, the eldest daughter of Shah Jahan at a cost of five lacs of rupees.

DAYAL BAGH.

It is a new colony started by Radha Swami and his followers at a distance of three miles and a half from Agra. One can see here the making of some of the industrial products. The dairy and the industrial show rooms are well equiped and excellent.

The cemetery of the founder in the Swami Bagh is under construction and is presumed that,

in due course, it will be one of the best places of interest in Agra. The place is worth a visit if time permits.

KOH-I-NUR.

"The Mountain of Light"

This is the well-known and most precious gem the world possesses. It is the original product of the world famous Golconda Mines, India. Its history is very old. It is held that this was firstly with Kama, a hero who was slain in the Pandava war of Mahabharat (3000 B.C.). It has passed through many hands. From the last Hindu King, the Raja of Ujjain, Bikramaditya, it passed into the hands of the invading Muslims. It was again taken by the Gwalior Raja. But when he fell at Panipat, Humayun, the Moghul, was greeted by the widow of the Gwalior King, deceased, who presented the precious diamond along with other jewels.

Baber writes in his memoirs thus, "It (Koh-i-Noor) is so valuable that a judge of diamonds valued it at half of the daily expenses of the world. It weighs eight miskals (320 rattis). On my arrival here, Humayun presented it to me as a Peshkash, and I gave it back to him as a present". This remained with the Moghul Emperors until the last King of the line, Mohamad Shah was defeated by Nadir Shah (1739). Mohamad Shah wore it in his turban and went to meet the con-

queror. Nadir Shah's attention was soon directed to the glitter of the unparalleled jewel; he said, "we will be friends and change our turbans in pledge of friendship". His son, Shah Rukh lost it, with all besides, to Ahmad Shah Durrani. The last king of the line, Shah Shuja was made a captive by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to whom he handed over the jewel. On the conquest of the Punjab by the British and the abdication of Maharaja Dalip Singh in 1849, the gem passed into the hands of the British. For some time it remained with Lord Lawrence who kept it carelessly in his pocket. In 1850, the Governor General, the Marquis of Dalhousie sent the diamond to the Board of Directors in England; and on July 3, 1850, it was presented to Her Majesty the Queen. It was exhibited at the first great exhibition in London in 1851. It was recut in London at a cost of £8,000 by Messrs. Garrad. The actual cutting lasted 38 days and reduced the diamond to 106 1/16 carats and it adorns the British Crown.

The glass model of the matchless diamond is seen in India in the Lahore Museum which was presented by the makers to the Punjab Exhibition.

CHAPTER VII.

A SHORT HISTORY OF AGRA.

THE history of Agra prior to the Muslims is somewhat obscured and hidden. But no doubt, prior to the Mohemmadans, there have been periods of pre-eminent greatness in the history of India. The records of the brilliant Mauryan Dynasty and the magnificent days of the Gupta Kings which covered centuries of India's history are known to the people. Some light is thrown on the city of Agra by the Persian poet, Salman. He died in 1131 and tells how the fortress of Agra was wrested from Jaipal by Mahmud after a desperate assault. In 1212, Chingiz Khan began his overwhelming drive across Asia and into Europe and about 1362, Timur led his Moghuls over the Hindu Kush, swept the Punjab and broke down the defences of Delhi. In 1492, Agra was besieged by Sikander Lodi and in those days the defensive fortress was Badalgarh built by Badal Singh in 1475 where now the present fort erected by Akbar stands to-day.

Sikander Lodi took Agra and settled his headquarters at Agra and some authorities are of opinion that in 1493, Sikandra, 5 miles from Agra, was recognised as the capital because the

name of the town as well as a pavilion, still preserved, prove the conception. However, Agra became the definite seat of government thenceforth. On the death of Sikandar Lodi in 1517 at Agra, Ibrahim Lodi came to the throne.

By 1526, Baber, the descendent of Chingiz Khan, the first of the Moghul conquerors defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat and Delhi and Agra fell into the hands of Baber. His son, Humayun went to Agra to seize the treasury. The widow of the Gwalior Raja who had fallen at Panipat presented many precious jewels to him. Among them was the world-famed diamond, Koh-i-Nur (Mountain of Light) which passing from hand to hand rests to-day in the Tower of London. Baber had now to face the Rajputs. A dashing battle was fought against Rana Sanka of Chittore, the greatest and noblest chief in India, who had defeated the Lodi Kings in eighteen pitched battles. Baber secured victory over him by strategy and the help of a traitorous ally. He died at Agra on 12th December 1530 and was buried at Kabul. By 1510 the Portuguese built a port at Cochin and seized Goa and Diu. Thus the reign of the Moghuls and the influence of the western power had begun.

Humayun succeeded Baber in 1530. He spent the ten years of his reign on the battlefield and was made to fly in 1540 by Sher Shah Suri. Henceforth, he remained in exile in Persia at the

court of King Tahmasp. While retreating through the desert of Sind, on his way to Persia, Akbar the Great Moghul, was born in the small fort of Amarkot in 1542. After the death of Sher Shah, Humayun again captured Agra and Delhi in 1555. But he could not enjoy his regained possessions as he expired just after a few months in 1556 by falling off the flat roof of his library in the Purana Kila at Delhi. Humayun's tomb at Delhi was the first great Moghul building in India and is said that the Taj was built on its model. It was designed by Akbar some years hence after his father's death.

Akbar was but a lad approaching his fourteenth birthday when he came to the throne (1556). He founded the Moghul Empire and built it sincerely in fact to the result that his dynasty lasted through the days of Jehangir and Shah Jahan to those of that fanatical bigot Aurangzeb. Akbar two years after the battle of Panipat in 1556 against Hemu, established the seat of government at Agra and next transferred his capital to the newly founded fortress of Fatehpur Sikri, 23 miles from Agra. His remains lie buried at Sikandra.

By this time, Ralph Finch, a London merchant came to the Grand Moghul's court with a letter from Queen Elizabeth and thus was founded "The Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies".

Jehangir, on his father Akbar's death at Agra in 1605 was crowned at Agra. He was very much addicted to pleasures. His consort, "The Light of the world", Nurjahan, had captivated Jehangir's heart so strongly that after his marriage to her it was Nur Jahan, all in all in the State who ruled. William Hawkins visited Jehangir's court in 1609 and Sir Thomas Roe in 1615 both have left wonderful records of the time. Jehangir died at Lahore and was buried there by the side of his beloved wife.

Shah Jahan was crowned at Agra after his father Jehangir in 1628. He was liberal towards the Hindus and tolerant towards the Christians. Mandelso who visited Agra had recorded that Agra was the most splendid city of India in Shah Jahan's reign. He spent prodigally the wealth of the empire in erecting wonderful monuments which are the glory of that period when Mohemadan architecture had reached its climax. He built most of the marble buildings inside the Agra Fort and Jama Masjid and Red Fort at Delhi but he built above all the Taj Mahal. He was made a captive by his son, Aurangzeb and lived as such in the Agra Fort for nearly 8 years where he died in 1666 and was buried in the Taj by the side of his consort.

Aurangzeb arrived at Agra in February 1666. He was too thrifty to spend much money over buildings. All that Aurangzeb did was to cons-

tract the marble screen which encloses his dead parents in the Taj. His zealous religious bigotry plunged his kingdom into perpetual war. Aurazzeb died in 1707. After him, there was no king who could hold such a vast empire. His empire crumbled beneath the irresistible advance of the new power from the South, the Marathas under Shivaji. As well as the Jats of Bharatpur became supreme at Agra during 1761-74 when they carried off the famous pall of pearls laid over the cenotaph of the Emperor Akbar; scraped off the valuables from the Taj, Fort, Itmad-ud-Daula, Sikandra etc.

The city of Agra was constantly changing hands till captured by Lord Lake in 1803. It was made the capital of the North West Provinces (now U.P.) under British rule. It was after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 that the seat of government of the province was transferred to Allahabad.



APPENDIX.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

1. Guides licensed by the Archaeological Department are available at the Agra Fort and Fatehpur-Sikri. American and European visitors are recommended to employ guides of the 1st class as they have an adequate knowledge of English.

2. The uniformed servants (Khadims & Chaprasis) at the Taj, Fort, Itmat-ud-Daula, Sikandra and Sikri are all paid servants of government. They are forbidden to solicit fees or gratuities.

3. Any complaint of incivility or extortion on the part of guides and servants should be reported to the Collector and Magistrate.

CHARGES.

1. Visitors are admitted free of charge to the Taj, Itmad-ud-Daula, Sikandra, Chini-ka-Rauza, Ram Bagh and Chhatris and buildings at Fatehpur Sikri. But a fee of two annas is charged for admission to the Fort. No charge is made for children under three years of age, a fee of an anna is charged for children between the ages of three and twelve years. *Bona fide* students who apply to the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Northern Circle, Agra, ten (10) days prior to the intended visit are charged at the half rate.

2. At the Taj Mahal, the wicket of the main gate usually remains open until 12 midnight and visitors seeking admission after 10 p.m. must sign their names in the Visitors Book kept at the gate with the gate-

keeper on duty. The superintendent has power to close the garden after 10 p.m. if he finds that this rule is not complied with.

3. The Taj Museum remains open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Fort:—

In Winter—9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

3 p.m. to Sunset.

In Summer—7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

4-30 p.m. to 6-30 p.m.

HOTELS AT AGRA.

Under European management:—

1. Cecil, Mall Road, Agra Cantt.
2. Empress, Partabpura, Agra Cantt.
3. Imperial, Drummond Road, Agra.
4. Lawrie, Partabpura Road, Agra Cantt.

Under Indian management:—

1. Agra Hotel, Metcalfe Road, Agra.
2. Bengal Lodge, Chhipitola, Agra.
3. Maharaja Hotel, Rawatpara.

Distances from Cantt. Station.

SITES	Miles	SITES	Miles
Agra Club ..	2	Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb	4½
Agra Fort ..	3½	Jama Masjid & City ..	3½
City Station ..	4	Ram Bagh ..	6
Fatehpur Sikri ..	24	P. & Tele. Office ..	2
Fort Station ..	3½	Sikandra ..	5
Hotels (European) ..	2	Taj Mahal ..	5

Distances from Pertabpura (Cecil or Lawrie).

SITES	Miles	SITES	Miles
Agra St. John's College	2	Lady Lyall Hospital ..	1½
Air Observatory ..	3	Mental Hospital ..	4
Cantt. (Sadar) Market	¼	Parade Ground ..	1½
Chini-ka-Rauza ..	4¼	P. & Tele Office ..	¾
City Market ..	2	University (Agra) ..	3½
Dyal Bagh ..	3½	Ram Bagh ..	5¼
Fatehpur-Sikri ..	24	Sikandra ..	5½
Fort ..	2	Station Fort ..	2
Hewet Park ..	3½	Station Cantt. ..	2
Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb	4	Station City ..	3
Jama Masjid ..	2	Taj ..	2½

Distances from the Taj.

SITES	Miles	SITES	Miles
Agra Club ..	2½	Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb	3½
Circuit House ..	¾	Jama Masjid ..	2½
City & Hospital ..	2½	Ram Bagh ..	4½
Fort ..	2	Sikandra ..	6

Distances from Fort Station.

SITES	Miles	SITES	Miles
Hotels (Cantt.) ..	3	Sadar & Pertabpura ..	3
Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb	2	Sikandra ..	5
Jama Masjid ..	1/6	Taj ..	2

Distances from City Station.

SITES	Miles	SITES	Miles
Agra Club (Cantt.) ..	3	Pertabpura & Mall ..	2½
Fort ..	2½	Sadar ..	3
Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb	2½	Sikandra ..	4½
Jama Masjid ..	2	Taj ..	4½

FARES.

The charges of a taxi-cab in a round tour to Sikandra, Fatehpur-Sikri, Fort, Taj, Itmad-ud-Daula, Chini-ka-Rauza, Rambagh, Jama Masjid and the City (Kinari Bazar) vary from Rs. 12 to Rs. 25.

No rates are fixed, mutual agreements will settle the fare.

TONGA.

	1st hour.	Subsequent hour.
Ist class	0 10 0	0 6 0
IInd class	0 8 0	0 4 0
IIIrd class	0 6 0	0 4 0

The rates are applicable within the Agra Municipality limits and outside the boundary limits, mutual agreements will settle the fare.

SIKANDRA & FATEHPUR-SIKRI.

Sikandra is a flag railway station. Akbar's Mausoleum is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs from here. One can go Sikandra in the morning and come back in the evening.

Fatehpur-Sikri is a railway station and the ruins of Fatehpur-Sikri are about four furlongs from the station. Return-Tickets are daily available.

Where to Stay at Agra ?

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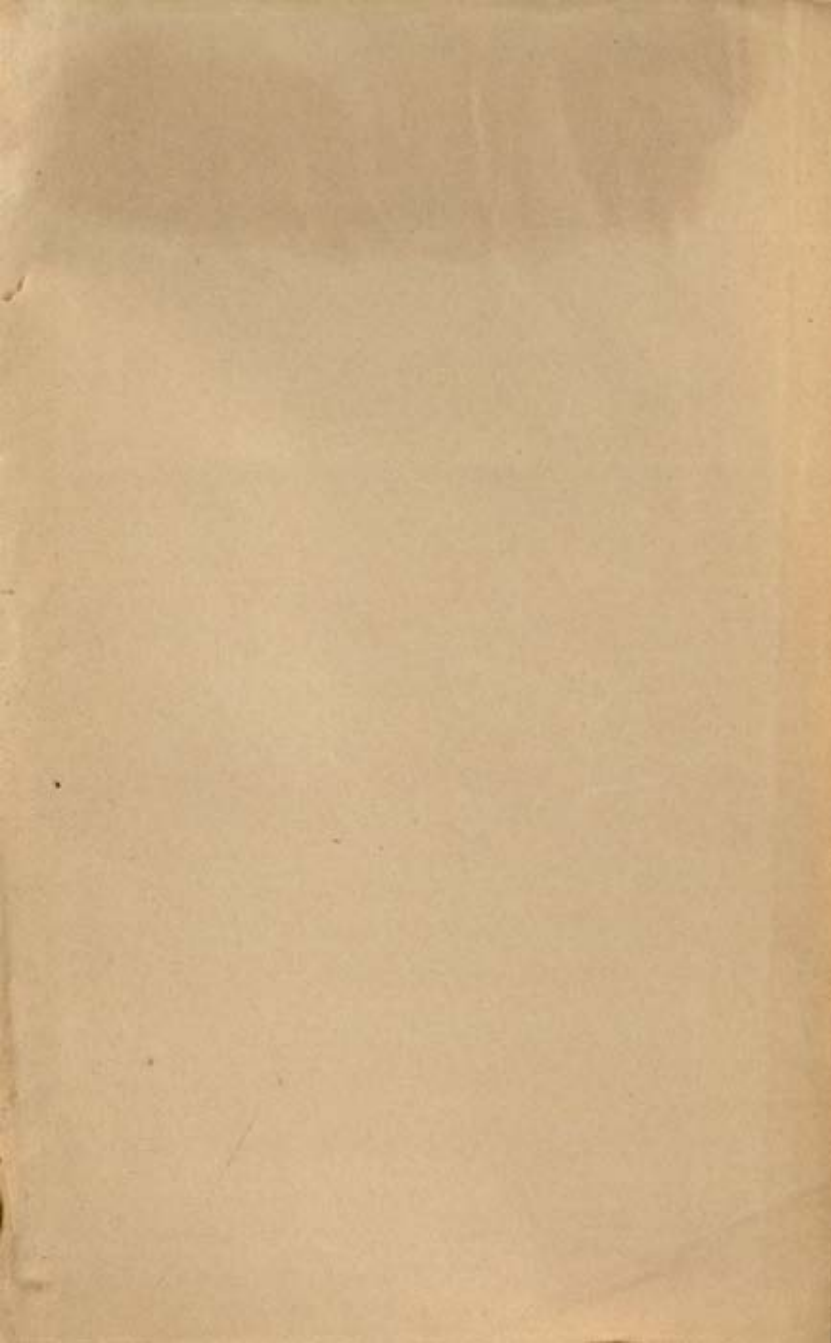
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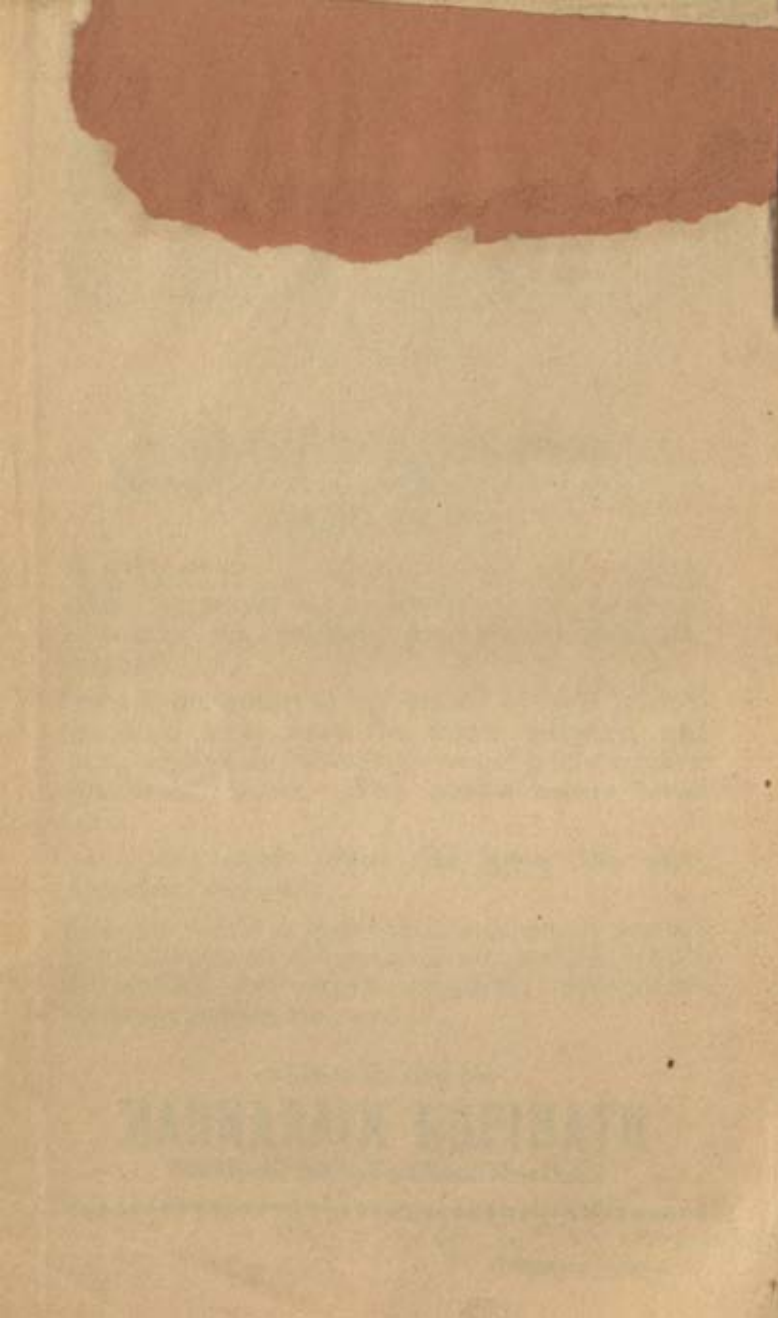
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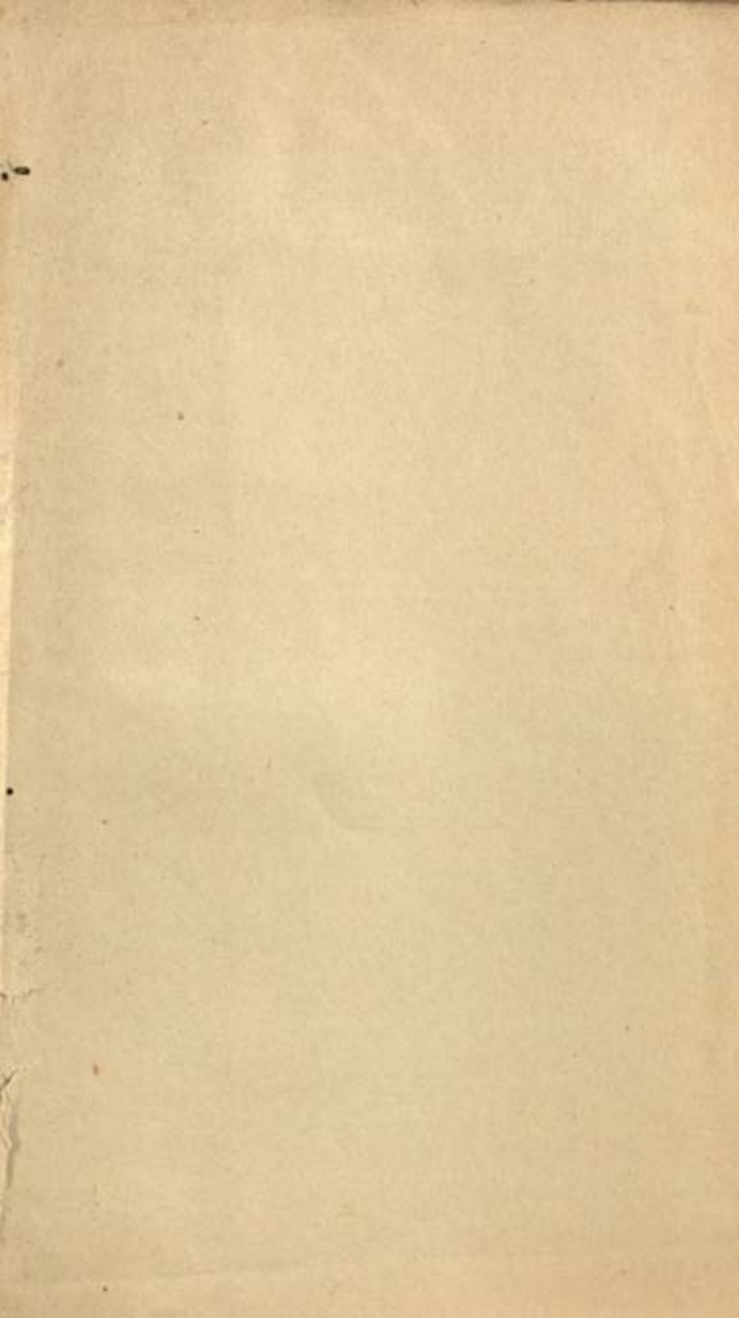
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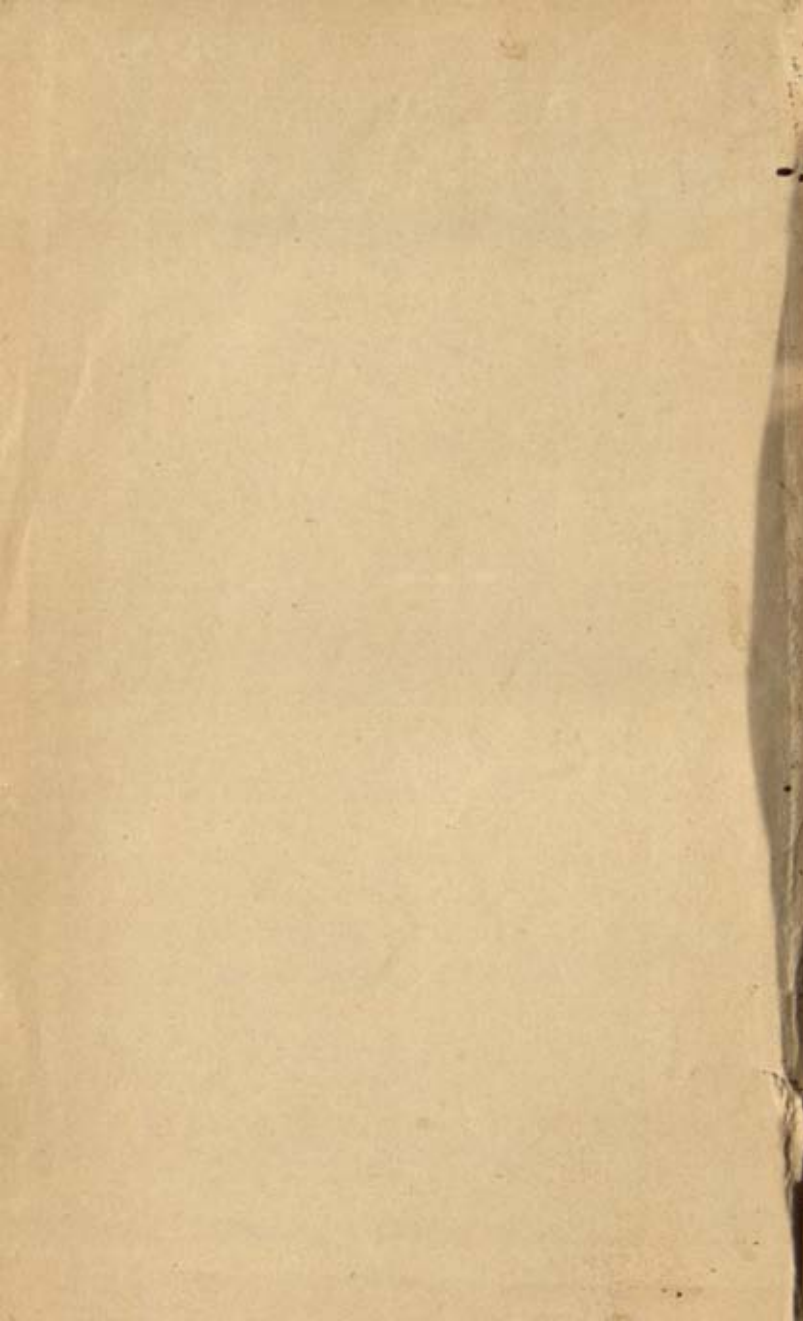
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