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A VISIT TO
THE CITY OF THE TAJ
AGRA

Fully Illustrated Guide Book
With Guide Map

14067

By

A. C. JAIN

Author of

Delhi—The Capital of India

~~14067~~

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PREFACE

This book is issued as a Guide to deal with the Taj, 'poetic marble arrayed in eternal glory' and the neighbouring historic buildings of Agra. Although, not exhaustive, it will be found of considerable help to the general public in general and tourists as their companion from the distant lands visiting this historical city and its environs,

Readers are requested to kindly communicate to the compiler any omission and errors they may come across or any suggestions they may wish to offer for the improvement of the book.

2563, Dharampura,
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A. C. JAIN

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A VISIT TO The City of the Taj AGRA

The city of Agra is a well built and handsome town, stands on the right bank of the Jamuna. Formerly the whole city was enclosed by a wall which was erected by Raja Jai Singh II, the Governor of the palace and founder of the present city of Jaipur. The city had 16 gates, of which the most prominent was the Delhi Gate which is still in existence.

According to the historians Agra was a Hindu stronghold at the time of Raja Kansa about 3000 B.C. and was called Agraban. It was undoubtedly ruled by Asoka, about 250 B. C. as traces of some ancient buildings of that time were lately discover-

ed under the earth in the present fort. Later on, Agraban began to be called Agra by long usage. In 1475 A. D. at the time when King Edward IV of England invaded France & Michael Angelo was born, there was a fort of Badalgarh at Agra built by Raja Badal Singh which was pulled down, about a century late to make room for Akbar's magnificent Fort or the present Fort. Agra was captured by Baber after defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last Sultan of Lodi dynasty.

The present city of Agra was founded by Akbar in 1566 was the recognised Capital of the Moghul Kingdom for nearly one hundred years during which Agra was largely flourished and was one of the most populous and prosperous cities of the world. Foreigner travellers have recorded that in Jahangir's reign the population was as large as that of London on those days and the stone paved streets were lined with shops and was once the richest centre of wares of Asia and Europe.

Modern Agra is now a busy railway and commercial centre in India. Two main lines, the G. I. P. Rly. and the B. B.& C. I. Rly. joint it with Bombay. E.I. Rly. Connects it with Calcutta. An excellent aerodrome has come into existence. It contains a large number of established private resi-

dence as well as good hotels, Banks, Clubs, churches and libraries. It has its own university with several large and important educational institutions.

Agra is justifiably celebrated for its excellent and famous work for stone, both plain and ornamental, carving and inlaying in sandstone, marble and alabaster, Embroideries on silk, satin and velvet are exquisitely worked with silk, gold and silver threads, into an endless variety of gorgeous designs. Gold silver and tinsel wire used in such work is also produced here. Other prominent industries are carpet weaving and shoe making. Models of the Taj are faithfully executed in white marble.



AGRA

UNDER THE

GREAT MOGHULS

Mohammed Zahir-ud-Din, better known by his subriquet of Baber the Tiger, being the sixth descendent of Taimur who defeated Sultan Iqbal Khan at Delhi in 1398 A. D., regarded himself as the lawful sovereign of India, advanced towards India with small Army, and in a bloody battle on the plain of Panipat the last king of Lodi dynasty was killed and Delhi became subject to the Moghuls. Immediately after the battle Baber sent prince Humayun to capture Agra, upon arrival at Agra the prince was greeted by the widow of the Raja of Gwalior who had fallen at Panipat. He was presented by her with an offering of precious Jewels among which was the world famous diamond, Koh-i-Noor. Babar remained at Agra and made it the seat of his Government.

Babar was an Orthodox Sunni in his religious views, but his culture saved him from being a fanatic of ruthless conqueror. He ascribed all his success to His goodness and mercy and regarded sovereignty as a gift from him. His belief in the efficacy of prayer was immense as is illustrated by the manner in which he sacrificed himself to save the life of his son, Humayun. It is said that in the hot weather of 1530 Humayun fell seriously ill at his Jagir at Sambhal. Babar was much upset by this illness and offered to sacrifice his life in order to save that of his son. His nobles requested him to desist from such a course and suggested that the precious diamond seized at Agra might be given away, but he held it a poor compensation for the life of his son. He walked three times round the bed of Humayun & prayed to God to transfer the disease to him. Immediately he was heard to say, "I have borne it away ! I have borne it away! I have borne it away !" From that moment Humayun began to recover and Baber, whose health had suffered much during his stay in India, gradually sank. A Sudden disorder of the bowels completely prostrated him he felt certain approaching death. He called his chiefs together, asked them to acknowledge Humayun as his

successor and confided all of them to Humayun. He died at Agra in Dec. 1530. His remains lay in state in Chauburji near Itmad-ud-Daula, the garden residence which he had constructed over hanging the Jamuna. From thence they were transported to Kabul for burial.

Humayun

Humayun the son of Baber, who succeeded him, was crowned at the palace in Badalgarh. During the first ten years of his reign Agra was more often his capital than Delhi. He utterly failed in the attempt to consolidate the great Empire which his father had left him, and in 1540 was completely defeated at Kanauj by Sher Shah Surian afghan nobleman. Humayun had to fled from India and took refuge with the Shah of Persia. During his wandering, Humayun married a beautiful girl of 14 named Hamida Bano, who gave birth to a son at Amarkot, in 1542 named Jalal-ud-din Mohammad Akbar.

After a lapse of fifteen years, Humayun again came to India to regain his lost position and defeated the Afghans. He made his headquarter at Delhi, where he met his death in 1556 by falling down from a flight of stone steps in the old Fort.

Akbar

Akbar, at the time of his father's death, was only a boy of fourteen when he came to the throne of Delhi. The Afghans made a supreme effort to defeat Akbar but he, with the help of his Prime Minister & General Bairam Khan, defeated them in the battle of Panipat. In 1566 having transferred his capital to Agra, he commenced the erection of the Red sandstone Citadel that spreads its great shape along the bank of Jamuna. Three years later namely, 1569, he began to build Fatehpur Sikri, or city of Victory at Sikri a village some twenty four miles from Agra. This long continued his favourite residence.

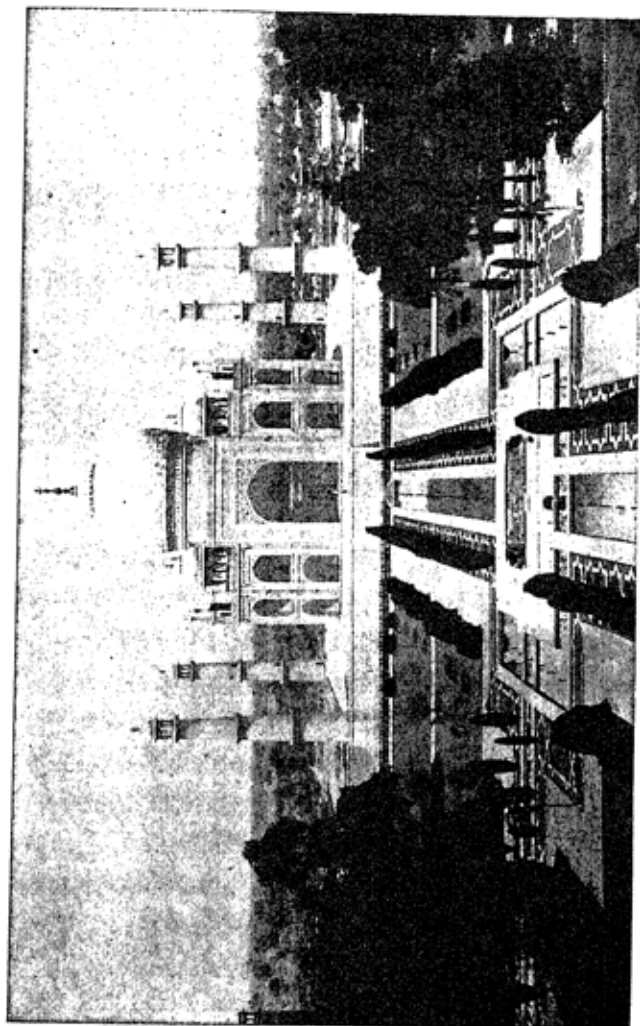
Akbar was not only a great conqueror, but he was also a capable ruler and a farsighted statesman. He built up his vast empire not so much by the force of his arms as by his artfulness, diplomacy, policy of religious toleration, policy of entering into matrimonial relations with the Rajput chiefs and his administrative efficiency which reached its high water mark for the first time under Mohammadan rule. During his reign the system of administration was considerably reformed.

With the advice of Todarmal, one of the Nine Gems. *Nava Ratan* of his court he put an end to

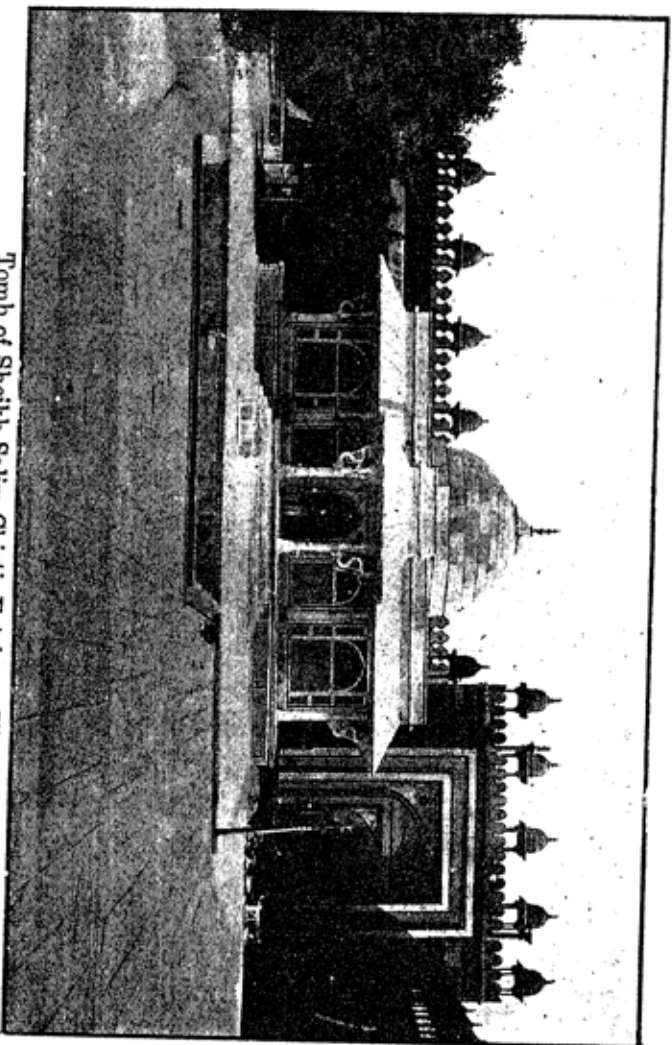
the evil of Jagir system. Imperial mint was thoroughly reorganized, and so also the revenue system. A number of social reforms were also introduced, the chief among them were the condemnation of the practice of *Sati* abolition of the enslavement of the conquered enemies.

Akbar introduced a new religion called *Din-I-Illahi* or " Divine Faith, " in which he recognised one God, the Maker of the Universe and himself as His Vicegerent on earth.

In 1602 Prince Salim brought a rebellion and got Abul Fazal, one of the Nine Gems, killed. This was a very sad and painful incident but out of his generosity the emperor pardoned his son's offence. But this kindness had no effect on Salim. He went to Allahabad again and set up his independent state. The unworth conduct of the prince greatly disturbed the emperor's peace of mind and after a glorious reign of fifty years, Akbar died in the fort of Agra at the age of sixty three. His body was buried in the mausoleum of Sikandra which was commenced by himself and completed by his son Jahangir, Prince Salim gathered up courage to wait on his father. He apologised for his misconduct and was readily excused by the Great man.



The Taj Mahal, Agra.



Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti, Fatehpur Sikri.

Jahangir

Jahangir, on his father's death in 1605 was crowned at Agra. He was very much addicted to pleasures, his consort, Nur Jahan, "The Light of the world", had captivated Jahangir's heart so strongly that it was Nur Jahan, all in all in state who ruled. The Imperial coinage too bore her name.

Nur Jahan was born to Mirza Ghias-ud-din, son of a Persian nobleman of Tehran, who, after his father's death fled with his wife and son to seek his fortune in India. While they were crossing the Great Desert, their provisions ran short and they were in danger of dying of hunger. In this extremity, his wife gave birth to a daughter, and the unhappy parents, in the hope of finding relief, pushed on, leaving the new-born baby under a solitary shrub. But before long the distress of the mother became so overwhelming that the Mirza was forced to retrace his steps to bring the child back to her mother. They reached Akbar's Court, and through the influence of his relatives attracted the Emperor's attention, and he was appointed to a high post.

The little girl who was named Maherunnusa grew up in a pretty, handsome less of charming

manners and attractive features. Prince Salim who happened to see her when she accompanied her mother to the Emperor's harem fell in love with her, but it was early discovered to Akbar. To get her out from his son's way, Akbar married Maherunnasa to Sher Afgan, a nobleman of Burdwan. But as soon as Jahangir succeeded to the throne, he contrived to have Sher Afgan murdered, and had her brought to the Royal Palace at Agra, under the care of her mother. For six long years she rejected the overtures of the Emperor, but was at last won over and the child that born under romantic circumstances, became the Empress of India. Her original name was Meherunnusa or "Sun of Women," on account of her great beauty, but was affectionately changed by Jahangir to Nurjahan.

A number of Englishmen came to India during Jahangir's reign. William Hawkins visited in 1609 and Sir Thomas Roe in 1615 both have left wonderful records of the time. Jahangir died at Lahore and was buried there.

Shahjahan

Prince Khurram was crowned in 1628 under the title of Shahjahan. In 1629, when Shahjahan left Agra, in the second year after his accession on

to the throne, to crush the rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi, the Governor of the Deccan, Mumtaz Mahal accompanied him and died at Burhanpur after giving birth to her fourteenth child. Her remains lay for six months. In a temporary grave in the garden of Zenabad in Burhanpur, where the Emperor was then encamped, and were transferred to Agra to the garden of Raja Man Singh where it remained for nine years till the tomb where it now rests was ready for its reception.

Shahjahan's grief was intense. For several weeks he refused to see any of his courtiers, or to transact any business of state. He and his court assumed the white habiliments of the deepest mourning. No music or festivities were allowed, the wearing of jewels, the use of perfumes and luxuries of all kinds were forbidden. He even contemplated resigning the throne and dividing the Empire among his sons. In two years his hair turned silver grey. Each Friday he visited her grave and had read over it the *fatiha* or prayer, prescribed for the benefit of the dead.

Mandelso who visited Agra had recorded that Agra was the most splendid city of India in Shahjahan'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.

What Akbar had begun was completed and beautified by Shahjahan under whose time Moghul architecture reached its zenith and began to give its first sign of decay. Shahjahan built most of the marble buildings inside Agra Fort and above all he built, the Taj Mahal. Holy and—profane men, prosers, poets and practical people all write of the Taj—"a house not made with hand!"—a monument indeed which is admitted by the whole world to be the most beautiful that the earth has ever held!"—"too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands!"—"the sign of a broken heart!"—"that dream in marble!"—"poetic marble arrayed in eternal glory!"—the inspiration is from heaven!"—"lovely beyond description!"—Incomparable in India and in the world!"

Shahjahan after the first eleven years of his reign at Agra decided to transfer his capital to Delhi owing to the excessive heat of Agra. In 1658 his son Aurangzeb usurped the throne and imprisoned his father and lived as such in the Agra Fort for the rest of his life. Jahanara, his favourite daughter, remained his constant companion till death overtook him in 1666. He was

buried by the side of his beloved wife in the Taj.
Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb proclaimed himself emperor in 1658 under the title of Alamgir or "conqueror of of the world" and put all his brothers to death, in order that there should not be any dispute for the throne. He removed the seat of the Moughul Government permanently to Delhi from Agra.

He destroyed a number of famous Hindu Temples at Benares, Muttra, and other places, and with their materials built several mosques. He also closed the schools for Hindus, burnt and destroyed libraries and ancient books, and revived the *Jaziya*—a most invidious poll-tax on non Mohammadans.

He died at Ahmadanagar in 1707 at the age of 90, and was buried in an ordinary mausoleum there.

After Aurangzeb's death Agra played little part in the History of the Moughuls. Farrukshiyar, who reigned from 1713 to 1719, occasionally lived at Agra. In 1739 when Nadir Shah invaded India Agra had to suffer a lot. 1758 the Marhattas took possession of this city. They followed by the Jats of Bharatpur. In 1774 Raja Surajmal captured the Agra. The Jats were soon replaced by the Marhattas who ruled over it till 1803 when

they were completely defeated by Lord Lake. It was the seat of the Government and High Court of these provinces till 1858.

In the mutiny of 1857, Agra did not take any prominent part. Only a few public offices were burnt and some Europeans were killed by the rioters.

Thus this ancient city founded by Akbar the Great Moughul in 1566 was the recognised capital of the Moghul Kingdom for nearly one hundred years during which Agra was largely flourished and was one of the most populous and prosperous cities of the world. Foreign travellers have recorded that in Jahangir's reign the population was as large as that of London in those days and the stone paved streets were lined with shops and was once the richest centre of ware of Asia and Europe.

THE FORT

PLACES OF INTEREST

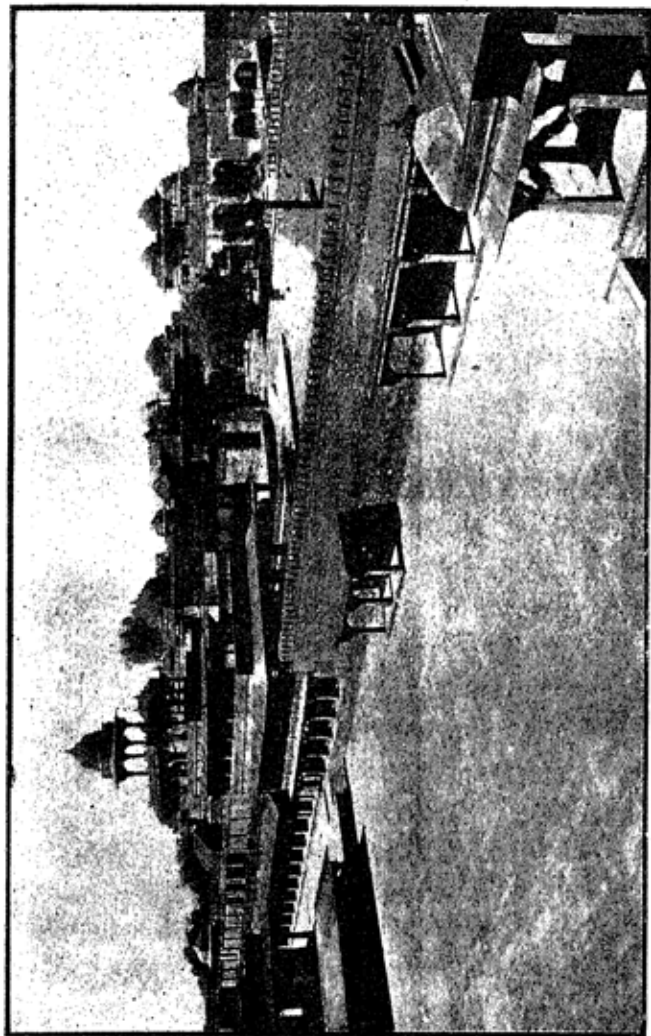
The massive fort rather a palatial stronghold designed in the shape of a crescent with its grant shape is situated on the right bank of the Jumna. Its vigorous and exuberant style of decorative architecture as well as delicate inlay and the low relief in white marble are marvellously beautiful. Though it stands today bereft of Imperial pomp and grandeur, untenanted and unfurnished, yet the remarkable palatial buildings, balconies, mosques and terraces that are enclosed within its walls makes it of unfailing interest of the vistsors.

The actual labour of building the fort lasted eight years and furnished constant employment for over a thousand measons under the supervision of Mohammad Kasim Khan. The citadel was begun 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 laks of rupees.

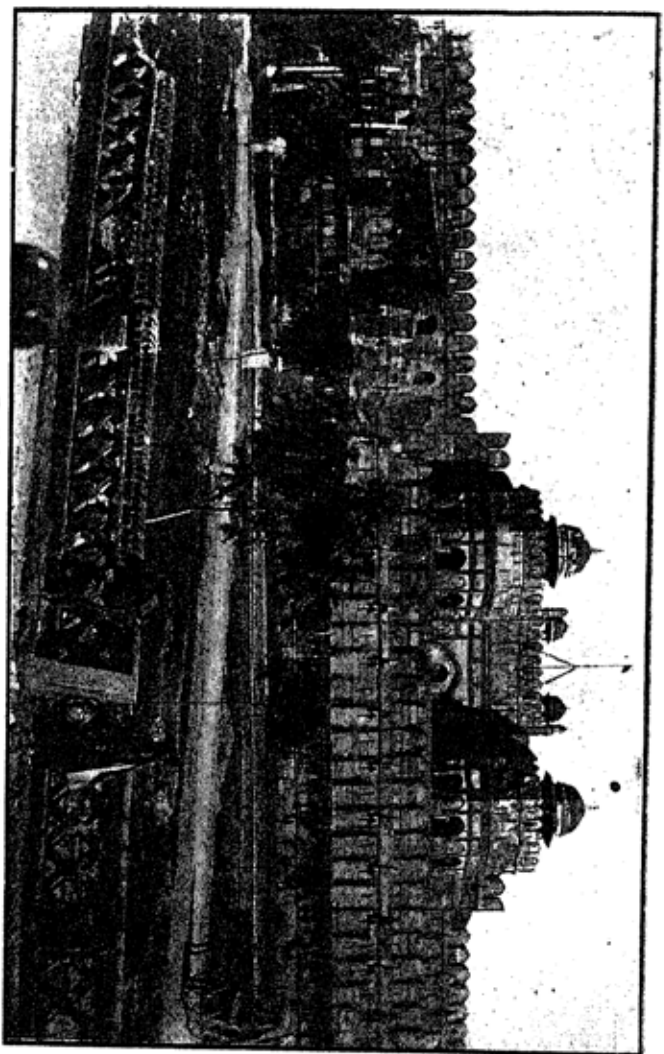
According to historians this fort marks the site of Badalgarh, a Hindu strong hold built by Raja Badal Singh which was pulled down to make room for the present fort. The excellance of the work is proved by the fact that the citadel is still in a perfect state of preservation.

As a matter of fact, the fort as it stands to-day is the combind effort of successive sovereigns. Designed and built by Akbar, it was added to by Jahangir and Shahjahan, while the white marble edifices, in particular, belong to Shahjahan.

In shape the fort is semi-circular or rather an irregular trianlge and the area of the whole circuit measures one and a half mile. The fort is surrounded by a double wall of sandstone being nearly 70 feet high, pierced with four imposing gateways, embettled ramparts and banquettes of the four gates, namely, the Delhi Gateway on the north, the Amar Singh Gateway on the south, the water gate on the east near Samman Burj and one on the northest near the Shah Burj, of which only Amar Singh Gaeway is now opend to the public. The fort was enclosed within two paved ditches; the outer one, 25 feet wide, has disappered while the inner one still extent! 5 feet deep and



Panch Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri.



Delhi Gate, Fort Agra.

30 feet wide, a work generally attributed to the Emperor Aurangzeb.

DELHI GATE

The Delhi Gate—or the Hathi Pol (Elephant Gateway) is so called from the two great stone elephants with their riders, which formerly stood outside the gate on the highest of the platforms on either side of it. The life size statues ridden by Jaimal the famous Raja of Chittor, and his brother Fatha, were placed by Akbar to commemorate his capture of the Fort of Chittor in 1568. These were mutilated by Aurangzeb probably soon after the death of Shahjahan in 1666 as savouring idolatry, and who had them buried closed to the Diwan-i-Am of the Dehli Fort, where they were found in 1863.

It is a massive structure flanked on either side by the two huge octagonal towers beautifully inlaid with white marble and surrounded by two domed cupolas, near which rises the Indian Union Flagstaff.

AMAR SINGH GATE

Amar Singh Gateway is a fine portal ornamented with glazed tile and commonly believed to have been built at a later date by Shahjahan and named after Amar Singh Rathor the Maharaja of Jodhpur, who was killed in the Emperor's

presence for violating the sanctity of the durbar by slaying Salabat Khan, the imperial treasurer and brother in law of Shahjahan when the Maharaja was insulted by him in 1644. It is said when Amar Singh Rathor was killed, his noble horse rushed widely from the fray and while leaping from the rampart across the moat prayed to be turned into stone to serve as a memorial of its grief for the murder of its master. This memorial is visible on the west of Amar Singh Gateway.

WATER GATEWAY

The water Gateway is situated in the centre of the base facing the river, is now entirely closed. In the Moghal period it was used as a passage for boats to and from the Taj.

The fourth Gateway just under the Jasmine Tower was walled up by Aurangzeb when he kept his father Shahjahan, a captive inside the fort. From here the Emperor used to see and be seen by the populace daily at dawn.

NAUBAT KHANA

The Naubat Khana, or Music Gallery was situated at the top of Delhi Gate. Here kettle drums announced the arrival and departure of the Emperor, during the state functions and on week day of the birth of the Emperor.

JAHANGIRI MAHAL

This two storeyed majestic edifice of red sandstone is frequently considered the finest and most significant building in the fort. Its quaint brackets roofs, projecting caves, carved panels, recesses and pillars of red sandstones exquisitely and intricately carved with birds, lotus and other designs are after the Hindu style of Jaipur and neighbouring Rajput States.

Some authorities are of opinion that being very similar in the design of this building with that at Fatehpur Sikri. Show that it, too, dates from the Moghul, Akbar who built it for his son's Hindu wife, Jodh Bai. Against this some think that much of Akbar's adjoining palace was demolished by Jahangir to make room for it.

The palace is occupying a space of about 260 ft. by 288 ft., the western facade between the corner tower being about 192 feet in length. It is entered by a gateway leading by a vestibule to an entrance hall, where a corridor goes to the principal hall. The inner quadrangle, 76 ft. square, is enclosed on all sides by two storeyed buildings of the greatest beauty. On the east side is the library with a room on either side of it and a beautiful porch; (The gilding and colour decoration of library is

remarkably beautiful) on the west, the Temple of Jodh Bai; on the north, Jodh Bai's boudour; on the south the drawing room. The Hindu Temple was subsequently demolished by Aurangzeb.

Under British rule, a military prison stood to the south of this palace. This was removed on the request of the late King George V who visited in 1905 as prince of wales.

The huge basin or cistern of Jahangir is cut out of single block of propyry, with steps cut both inner and outer sides. It is five feet high, 8 feet in diameter and about 25 feet in circumference.

Hindu tradition associates it with the five Pandavas and heroes of the Mahabharata and founder of the earliest Delhi about 3000 B. C. They claim it to be the Bhim Raja Bang Bowl But a much mutilated embossed inscription recording the name of Jahangir and the date 1019 A. H. (1611 A. D.). One leads to suppose that in 1611, Jahangir was married to Nurjahan and it was given as curious gift to her.

Soon after the Mutiny of 1857 it was found burried in front of the Jahangiri Mahal and removed to the Agra Contonment garden. It was brought back to the fort and placed before the

Diwan-i-Am whence it was again removed to its present position in 1907.

AKBARI MAHAL

Lies to the South east of Jahangiri Mahal and is now completely in ruins and only a few traces of its foundations are seen which show that it once consisted of spacious courts surrounded by a series of capacious chambers. They have been indentified as 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 days of the week on which the Emperor visited it. De Lact writes: "In addition, there is a fifth set of women's apartments, to which foreign women are brought up for the pleasure of the king. This is called the Bangali Mahal."

BAOLI

Just near the Akbari Mahal situated a big stepped well or Baoli built by Akbar. It is said to be some 105 feet deep and 10 feet in diameter, with rows of rooms round it and steps leading to the water. Formerly the subterranean chambers were probably highly adorned and richly gilt and painted. The well served as a cool retreat for the emperor during the hot weather.

The big baoli is attributed to Akbar. It may be of still earlier date. In his memories Baber records, "There was an empty space within the fort of Agra between the palace and the ramparts. I directed a large well to be constructed on 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 rains, but it fell in several times smothering the workmen. After my holy war against Rana Sanka, I gave orders for finishing it, and a very excellent wain was completed. Inside was an edifice of three storeys. The lowest has three halls, and you descend to it by the well by means of stairs. Passages connect the three halls, each of which is higher than the other by three steps. In the lowest of all, when the water subside, there is a flight that goes down to the well. In the middle storey is a hall of carved stone and closed by it is a dome for the oxen to turn in as they move the water wheel round. The upper most tier consists of a single hall from either side of which is a staircase. Straight opposite to the entrance is a stone engraved with the date of the building. By the side of the well, a shaft has been

sunk to half its depth. Water raised to it. A second wheel lifts the water to the level of the ramparts, whence it flows into the upper gardens."

SHAHJAHNI MAHAL

Shahjahani Mahal—as a matter of fact, is a part of Jahangiri Mahal and Shahjahan made subsequent alterations and additions in the building and adopted it to his particular tastes and requirements. The central hall about 16 ft. by 20 ft. is pointed out as Jahangir's bedroom. There are traces of floral decorations all over the roofs and walls. A beautiful palace toward the river is styled as '*Hawa Mahal*' or Wind Palace. The front corridor opens on to the marble-screened court to south of the Khas Mahal. Under British rule, several rooms of the palace were used as a museum, until 1875, when the Archaeological Society of Agra transferred their exhibits to Allahabad.

GHAZNI GATE

The Ghazni Gate are kept in a safe chamber near the Shahjahni Mahal, some twelve feet high by 9 feet wide. It is wrongly identified with sandalwood gates of Somnath Temple of Gujrat which were wrenched off by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025 A. D. These gates are purely of deodar wood and contains *Kufic* inscription involving the

Forgiveness of God and his blessings on Sultan Mahmud, to whose tomb they really belonged. They were brought to India by General Nott as spoils of war after the first Afghan expedition in 1842 and paraded through northern India on a triumphal car. For many years they remained in the Diwan-i-Am and later on removed in 1870 to its present position.

KHAS MAHAL

The Khas Mahal, entirely of white marble, is said to have been built by Shahjahan in 1636 on the site of building of red sand stone, demolished to make room for the marble palaces. It was used as drawing-room in which Shahjahan daily meet his daughters and chief ladies of the *Zenana*.

It consists of three white marble pavilions overlooking the Jumana stands on a terrace of white marble. The central pavilion measures 70 feet by 40 feet and overlooks a court measuring 96 feet, by 112 feet carved marble screens, some eighty feet high, divided it from side courts extending 88 feet by 62 feet to right and left. The pillars and arches are elaborately carved. The walls are very beautifully carved and adorned. The roof of the hall and gallerly were profusely decorated and painted in gold and colours originally which has now dis-

appeared. A portion of ceiling was restored by Lord Curzon to give an ideal what it was like. The escape channel of the tank in the chief court is worth noticing. The tank contains five fountains and 32 jets. This palace once contains the portraits of all Moghul Emperors; they were taken away as booty of the Jat Raja of Bharatpur.

The side pavilion to the north is built entirely of white marble and comprises two rooms. It was the residence of Shahjahan's eldest daughter, Jahan Ara whom he loved most. The roof of the pavilion is brightly gilt.

The south pavilion is also most similar to the north pavilion except that it is built of red sandstone lightly plastered and has arcaded facades, was the residence of Roshan Ara, the second of Shahjahan's daughters.

ANGURI BAGH

The Anguri Bagh or Grape garden stretches in front of the Khas Mahal. It was laid out by Akbar for the ladies of seraglio. Three sides are encircled by the usual arcaded cloisters, and were inhabited by the harem.

It comprises a court 220 ft. by 110 ft., divided by four marble foot paths are further encircled by red sandstone ones, forming four parterres of

beds further divided into numerous compartments by ridges of red sandstone curiously designed. It is remarkable to note that this layout provides us with a typical specimen of the old Moghul gardens lay out in beautiful geometrical designs.

The soil of the garden is extremely rich, and it is said that it was brought from Happy valley of Kashmir. H. A. Newell remarks about this beautiful garden thus "Stone posts and latticed screens supported the grape vines. The parterres were gay with blossoms, brightly coloured and fr. grant, as well as rare plants."

UNDERGROUND CHAMBERS

To the south of the Khas Mahal, steps lead to the underground chambers. Here it is said, that the fair damsels of the harem for the pleasures of the Emperor used to retire at noon to keep away from the fierce summer heat. Nearby there are dark dungrous designed for the confinement of misbehaving slave girls and such ladies as incurred the displeasure of the Emperor.

SHISH MAHAL

The Shish Mahal (Palace of Mirrors) so called from the tiny pieces of looking-glass set in plaster on its walls and ceilings, is situated at the north-east of the Anguri Bagh. Built by Shahjahan about

the year 1637, and served as Turkish Baths of the Khas Mahal for the use of the ladies. It comprises two halls each 38 ft. by 22 ft., with a margin-scrolled marble tank in the centre of each hall. Here was an arrangement for cold and hot waters.

Originally the stucco reliefs were painted artistically in golden and silvery, colours and the chambers paved with marble floors carved and inlaid with beautiful designs of fishes; which has been torn up. Here the Emperor enjoyed with his wives, while the innumerable tiny lamps hanging from the ceiling, reflected their beams all around, the fountains emitted fragrant water and an unceasing current of water rolled on the marble floor.

SAMMAN BURJ

The Samman Burj or Jasmine Tower is said to have been built by Jahangir for his most beloved Empress Nurjahan--the light of the world, who furnished her own design for inlay in precious stones. It was afterward occupied by Mumtaz Mahal--the lady of the Taj. However, the *pietradura* decoration used in the beautiful little fountain hollowed in the floor in front of the Octagonal Tower is the work of Shahjahan.

The Octagonal Tower consists of mainly a court, 44 ft. by 33 ft. faced by an entrance hall to

the south, flanked by two rooms and the hall measures 28 feet by 18 feet. The roof supports the famous Samman Burj, and octagonal pavilion surmounted by an open upper storey crowned by a gilt Cupola. All the walls, parts of pillars, capitals and architraves are richly inlaid with elaborate designs in jasper, jades, lapis, lazuli, cornelinagate, bloodstone and turquoise. The Saman Buraj is enclosed by highly artistic screen of marble and the tower above is delicately inlaid with patterns of Jasmine flower.

It was here that captive Shahjahan died in this octagonal room in December, 1666, with his favourite daughter Jahanara Begum by his side gazing stead-fastly on the tomb of his beloved consort, the lady buried in the peerless Taj. Really from here a fine view of the Taj Mahal like a "Hosue not made with hands" is very picturesque.

In front of the hall is a court measuring 44 ft. by 30 ft. which is provided with a board for the game of *Pachisi* or Indian backgammon played with living pieces. The Emperor used to sit in the centre and the women of the harem in gaily dressed were used as chess pieces. They moved from square under square as the game

proceeded, affording a fund of merriment and laughter to the Emperor.

DIWAN-I-KHAS

Diwan-i-Khas or hall of Private Audience was used by the Emperor where he received Kings, ambassadors and nobels in private audience and delt with the more important affairs of state by the help of counsel. The Ministers were compulsorily required to present themselves here every morning and evening. According to the Persian inscription along the frieze of the outer colonade it was built by Shahjahan in 1637 A. D.

The Audience Chamber stands on a plinth beautifully carved and consists of the outer and inner halls, 73 ft. by 33 ft. externally and 40 ft. by 26 ft. internally. In the days of Shahjahan the hall contained a small throne studded with jewels.

The twelve-sided pillars are equistely chiselled and inlaid with many coloured flowers in semi-precious stones displays artistic decoration of the Persian style. The inner chamber is remarkable for its marble window screens. The dadoes are carved and furnished wito mosaïc.

In front of the Diwan-i-Khas is a spacious courtyard some 116 ft. by 82 ft. and cosists of two

thrones, one of black slate and the other of white marble. It is said by traditions that this was roofed with a white marble pavilion and the floor was paved with marble. One of the arches towards the river side of the Diwan-i-Khas was struck by a shell from the cannon of Lord Lake in 1803 and was partly broken.

WHITE MARBLE THRONE

The white marble throne consists of rectangular slab raised upon four legs and was originally enclosed by a rail. It was the favourite seat of the Court Jester whence the Emperor amused himself by casting a fishing iron into the tank below.

BLACK THRONE

The black throne carved out of a single block of slate and measures 10 feet 7 inches by 9 feet 10 inches and 6 inches thick stands on a platform of white marble about 15 inches high with a low marble lattice rail on the east. The throne bears an inscriptions which lead one to conclude that it was used by Prince Salim the heir of the Great Akbar (afterwards Jahangir). He rebelled against his father and held his court at Allahabad in 1602. Shortly afterwards, he came to Agra, sued for pardon and was forgiven. From Allahabad the

throne was subsequently brought to Agra on his accession to the throne in 1605 and placed in its present position.

MACHHI BHAWAN

The Machhi Bhawan (Fish Palace) lies in front of the Diwan-i-Khas and at the back of Diwan-i-Am. It consists of a court 164 feet by 132 feet and is surmounted by a roofed gallery in the upper storey on the north, west and south; It is mainly a red sandstone structure and on the whole is a good specimen of pure saracenic art of Shah-Jahan's time.

In the splendid days of Shahjahan there were tanks and fountains of marble in the courtyard below in which gold and silver fishes were stored, for the sportive amusement of the Emperor and the ladies of the harem who took delight in ensnaring them. The water was conveyed by a artificial channel from the Jumna. The marble tanks were dug out and carried off by jats of Bharatpur.

NAGINA MASJID

Nagina Masjid (Gem Mosque) situated in the north east corner of the Machhi Bhawan is built entirely of pure white marble. The palace is certainly a secluded nook for devout worshippers

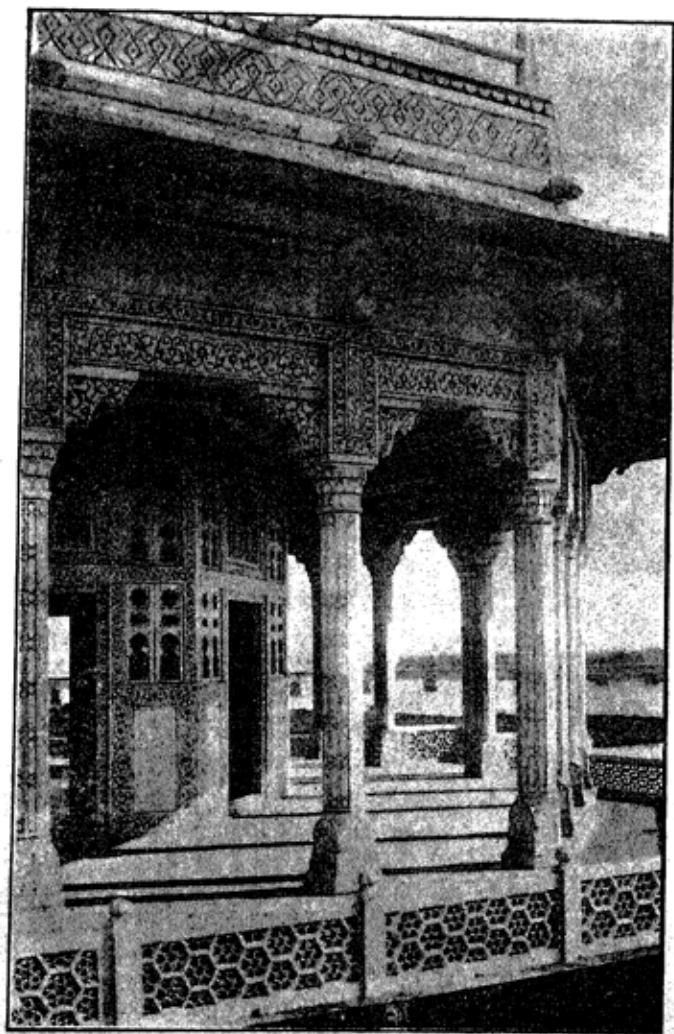
and rightly deserves the name of Gem from the artistic taste it reveals in small miniature. It is believed that this mosque have been originally connected by covered way.

According to the tradition it was built by Aurangzeb in about 1658, for his imprisoned father, Shahjahan who was not allowed to go to Moti Masjid. It comprises a marble-paved court, surrounded by walls on the north, south and east sides and a prayer chamber which is a three domed marble structure, with a marble paved court on the right and left.

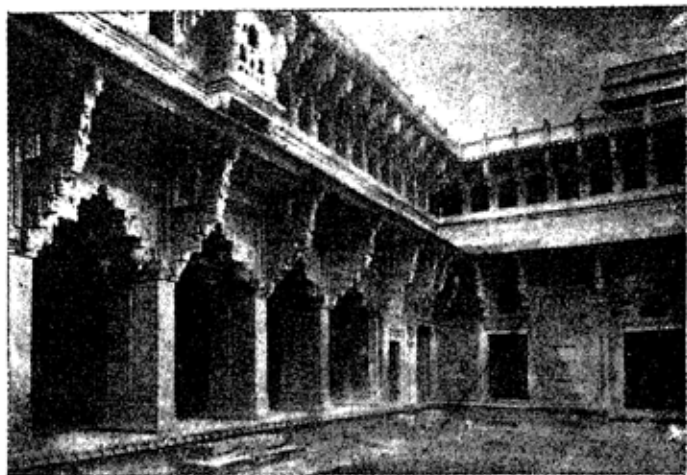
MINA BAZAR

Mina Bazar consists of an unassuming structure of red sandstone, the rows of open shops around it, lately used military stores, were once occupied by traders. It was built by Akbar to be used as a small market for the ladies of the harem. Some time the wives and the 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 palace. The market was held once a month and on *Nau Roz* or new yesterday.

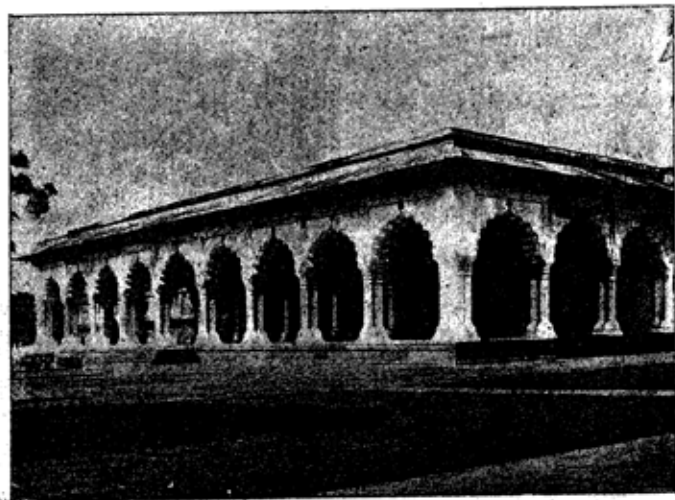
The quaint custom had degenerated, in the later part of Akbar's reign and brought about an evil reputation. It was related of Akbar that he



Samman Burj, Fort Agra.



Jahangiri Mahal, Fort Agra.



Diwan-I-Am, Fort Agra.

once forgot himself so far as to run after a beautiful consort of Prithviraj the court laureate, and younger brother of the Raja of Bikaner and a relative of Rana Partap Singh of Mewar. She managed to escape the dishonourable assault committed by Akbar. The incident created such a sensation that Emperor stopped the functioning of the Mina Bazar. No doubt, this event has left a blot on the attractive personality of Akbar the Great.

CHITTOR GATES

Towards the south east of the Mina Bazar stands the famous Chittor Gates, 11 feet wide are handsomely built of bronze and were brought to Agra by Akbar in 1568 from Chittoor, the celebrated stronghold of the Rajputs.

HINDU TEMPLE

To the east of Chittoor Gates and closed by is palace belived to be the site of the Residance of Raja Ratan, General of Maharaja Prithvi Indra built in 1768 during the Jat occupation of the Agra Fort. Mr. Havel indentifies it as a Hindu Temple, and an inscription over the south arcade of the chamber moves the fact.

MOTI MASJID

The Pearl mosque is a unique structure of its

form in India. Fergusson has described it as, "One of the purest and most elegant building of its class to be found anywhere". The building is a good specimen of pure Saracenic art and besides it serve simplicity, the graceful and well-proportioned domes and intersections of engrailed arches and groined vaults are particularly pleasant features.

The walls of the mosque measuring 234 feet from east to west, and 187 feet from north to south. Its court, measuring 158 feet by 154 feet, has a tank $37\frac{1}{2}$ ft. square with a marble fountain in its centre. There is also a sun-dial on a octagonal marble pillar 4 ft. high. The interior of the mosque proper, 159 ft. by 56 ft., is divided by three rows of massive pillars of square designs with a seating capacity of 570 worshippers. On either side are chambers have the seating capacity of 90 members. These side chambers are separated by screens of marble lattice work with an open doorway and most probably used for the ladies. The white floor of the mosque is delicately inlaid with yellow marble. There are three graceful domes of pure white marble rise above the mosque like silver bubbles from a distance 142 ft. long and 56 ft. deep.

A boldly written Persian inscription rises

across the facade. It states that the mosque was commenced by Shahjahan in 1648 and completed in 1655 at a cost of Rupees three lakhs. It was used as a hospital during the Mutiny of 1857.

DRASHANI DARWAZA

Drashani Darwaza, a little beyond the Moti Masjid is a old gateway known as Drashani Darwaza. According to Finch that was the spot where the Emperor used to come daily at morning to see and to be seen by the public. His subjects used to stand here with their eyes turned towards ground. He further states that the Emperor used to witness fights between wild beasts, notably elephants and tigers, lions and buffaloes specially trained for the purpose.

DIWAN-I-AM

Diwan-i-Am or Hall of Public Audience built entirely of red sandstone, but the white polished stucco which covers its pillars, arches and ceilings, give them the appearance of marble, while the rich gilding on their salient lines helps to strengthen the deception. It was probably built by Akbar and the coating of stucco was added by Shahjahan. The court in front of the hall measures 500 ft. by 70 ft. 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.

A flight of six steps leads to the Diwan-i-Am, which is a pillared hall open on three sides and standing on a plinth of some four feet high. The court measures 201 feet from north to south and 67 feet west-ward. The roof is supported by three aisles of nine bays each. There is a triple row of colonnades, the outer ones, two on each side and eight in front, being double while those at each corner quadruple.

IMPERIAL BALCONY

The hall is backed on the east by a wall and in the middle of which is the Imperial Balcony or the Judgement Seat. Its walls are of pure white marble inlaid with mosaic flowers in highly ornate facade. The balcony is protected by a carved railing and triple arches of white marble. On either side of the throne are chambers with perforated marble windows, whence the ladies of the Royal family are said to have witnessed State and other function held in Diwan-i-Am. Below the Imperial Balcony is a large four legged marble dais built of white marble once fenced with silver railings, it is said to have been used by Prime Minister.

Terry, who visited Agra during Jahangir's reign, describes the throne as ascended by steps plated with silver and ornamented with silver lions, "spangled with Jewels," which supported a canopy of pure gold.

It was here in Diwan-i-Am that Moghul Emperor used to sit for couple of hours in the public Durbar and hear the petitions and grievances of his subjects. Finch's remark will be interesting to the readers about a royal durbar as held by Emperor Jahangir, "A little further you enter a rail into a inner court with in which none but the king's Addis, and men of position were admittedMen are placed by officers. There are others to keep order. In the midst, in front of the king, stands an officer with his master hangmen, 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.

J. R. COLVIN'S TOMB

Outside the Diwan-i-Am is the tomb of the Hon. J. R. Colvin, the then Lient. Governor of these provinces, who died on the 9th September, 1857 in the central room of the Shahjahani Mahal.

THE TAJ

The Taj Mahal, or briefly the, Taj, the glory of Agra, stands on the right bank of the Jumna about a mile below the Fort. The vast mausoleum, rightly regarded as one of the wonders of the world, represents the most highly elaborate stage of ornamentation, the stage at which the architect ends and the jeweller begin. The 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 mausoleum erected by Catharine de Medicine in France, that of Augustas and Hadrian, or that erected at Halicarnassus by Artimisia do not surpass the unique mausoleum of Mumtaz in elegance and splendour. Its wonderful workmanship is peculiar. It is rather a fairy palace raised by some gence of the Arabian Nights' Tales—The Taj which means in the literal sense of the term, the Crown of Architecture.

Opinions of some early European visitors, expressing their admiration about the Taj run as follow:—

Bernier, observes:—"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 an other, while within, there is little that is creditable either to human skill or human invention."

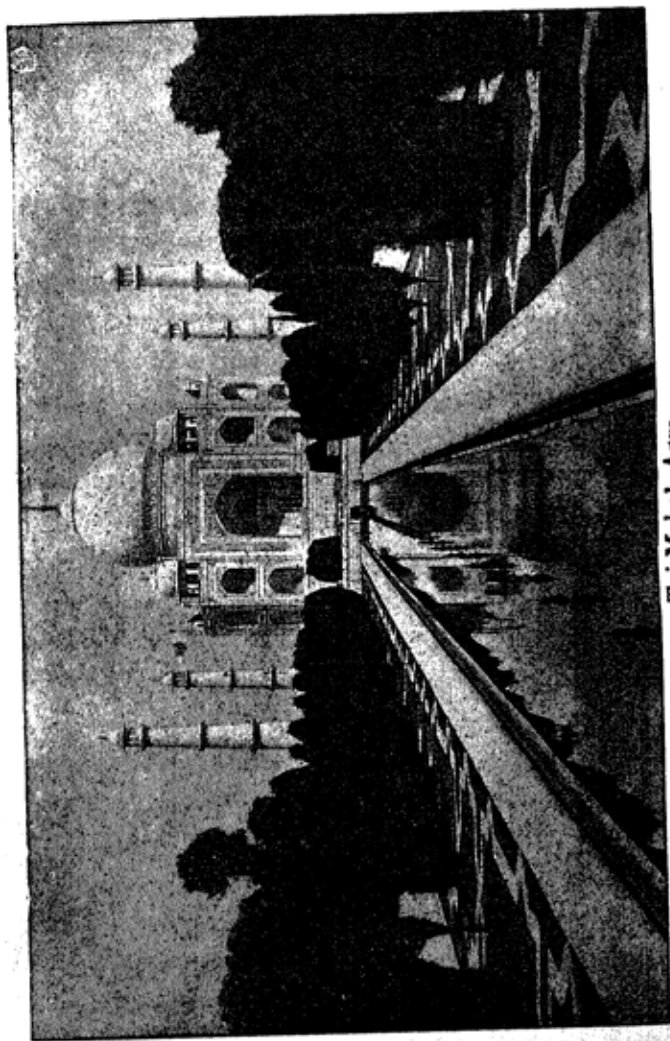
James Fergusson concludes: "with its purity of material and grace of form, the Taj may challenge comparison with any erection of the same sort in the World. Its beauty may not be of the

highest class but in its class it is unsurpassed".

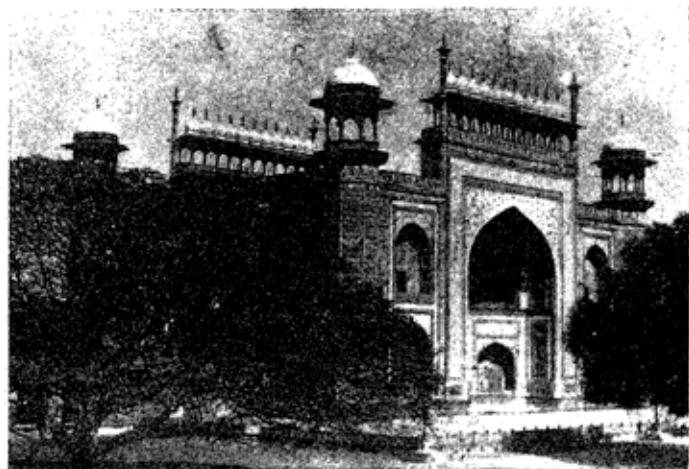
Lord Roberts in his "Forty one Years in India" says : "Neither words nor pencil could give to the most imaginative reader the slightest idea of the all-satisfying beauty and purity of this glorious conception. To those who have not already seen it, I would say—Go India. The Taj alone is well worth the journey."

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

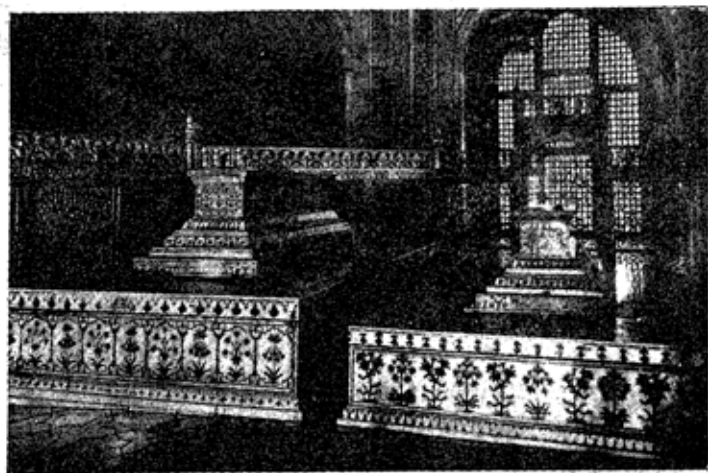
A well known writer states, "It is too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands. Angels must have brought it from heaven and a glass case should be thrown over it to preserve it from each breath of air." Another writer says. "The



Taj Mahal, Agra,



Gateway-Taj Mahal, Agra.



Tombs-Taj Mahal, Agra.

truth is that the Taj is not, as an architectural group, altogether satisfactory. No doubt in parts of the Taj genius is brought into jeohardy by unskillfulness; 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."

Mr. Oscar Browning, Camdrige 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 worldSee 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 Giatts and arise across the lagoon beside the Doge's palace at St. Mark's."

The first impression of Samuel Smith, member of the Parliament of England in his book as follow

"we stood spell----bound for a few minutes as 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 Colonge Cathedrals; they are all majestic, but this is enchantment itself. So perfect is 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 distant 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.

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"

"I asked my wife," says Sleeman in his *Rambles and Recollections*, "when she had gone over it, what she thought of the building. 'I cannot' said she, tell you what I think, for I know not how to criticise such a building, but I can tell you what I feel. I would die to-morrow to have such another over me. This is what many a lady has felt no doubt."

An extract from Bayard Taylor's introductory remarks:—"If there was nothing else in India, this alone would replay the journey. The distant view of this matchless edifice satisfied me that its fame is well deserved. So pure, so gloriously perfect did it appear, that I almost feared to approach it lest the charm should be broken". Further 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".

A writer says "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 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”.

His Royal Highness, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales observes: “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 idea” of it.

The Taj was commenced in the year 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 a native of Turkey which was approved. From this a wooden model was constructed in 1630, the very year of Mumtaz Mahal's death.

It was raised by Shahjahan at the cost of so much labour and money simply in compliance with the last wishes of his Queen—to the effect that a buliding of unrivalled magnificence should be erected over her grave. For the construction of this miracle of architecture, Shahjahan invited

to his court all the eminent architects, masons and artists in his own territories as well as from foreign countries such as Persia, Arabia and Turkey. Mohamad Isa Afandi a native 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 Tughrawriter (salary Rs. 1,000). Mohammad Khan of Shiraz and Wahib Khan of Baghdad were the calligraphers (pay Rs. 600 each). Ismail Khan of Turkey was the domemaker (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 Mohammad of Bukhara was the sculptor; Amir Ali, Raushan Khan and Baldeo Das of Multan were flower sculptors. Abdullah of Delhi, Moh. Sajjan of Balkh and Shukrullah of Multan were masons. Mukramat Khan and Mir Abdul Kasim were the Inspectors General of the several branches. 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, for whose accomodation a small town, named after the deceased Empress, Mumtazabad—now known as Tajganj—was built adjacent to it.

Mystery enshrouds the name of the designer of the plan of the Taj. The perfect symmetry of its exterior, the arial grace of its dome and minarets the beautiful floral design, wonderful ornamentation and decoration, the charming mosaic work, the exhuberant style and extremely beautiful design, has led many a European historian to belive that the designer of the Taj was an Italian. This misconception has arisen on account of a statement of Father Manrique, a spanish monk of Spain who was at Agra in 1641, gives the credit to an Italian, Gernimo Veroneo.

The well known travellers, Bernier, Tavernier and Thevnot who visited the Taj in Shahjahan's reign are quite silent on the subject and have not mentioned Geronimo Veroneo in their historical records of great value, but on other hand they have declared it to be monument of purely oriental conception which is sufficient to show that Indians were not ignorent of architecture. The information on which Father Marique got

was not first hand for Veroneo had died before he arrived in India.

Peter Munday, who was here at Agra, received a visit from Geronimo Veroneo in the first week of January 1631. He mentions him as a goldsmith in Shahjahan's service. 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. The details are of special interest, as we have no other account of the Taj by an English Traveller at this date."

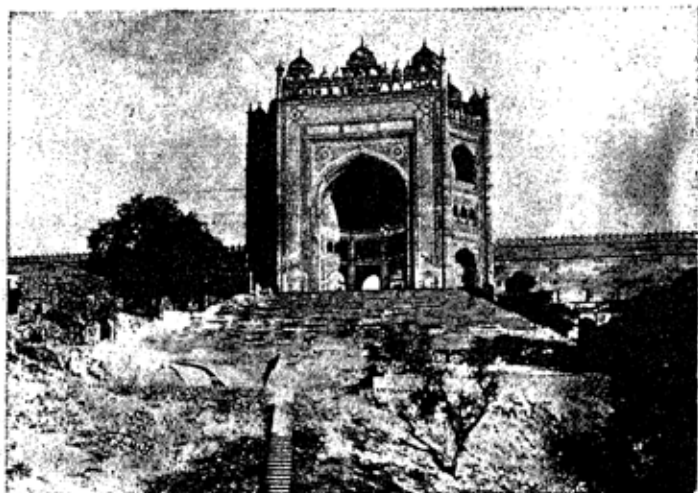
Havell, the well known historian, writes, "It is even belived that one Geronimo Veroneo, an Italian, who was then in Moghul service, submitted designs for Shahjahan's inspection, a fact which has led many writers into the error of supposing that the Taj as completed was actually designed by him. The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

And in above all the *Badshahnama* the authoritative record of the time makes no mention of this Italian.

The other belief namely that Austin de Bordeaux, a French Jeweller was employed in the mosaic work of the Taj. It may be true that he was employed by Shahjahan in preparing the Peacock Throne and some other metal decoration in the Taj and other palaces. But how can he made responsible for the stone work which though similar in technique is totally different in design from Florentine *pietra dura*. Mr. J. F. Fanthom says, "There is no foundation whatever for the allegation that a Venetian or Frenchman had a hand in designing or the construction of the Taj. This is a pure fabrication of the European brain".

As regards materials for the building, the white Makrana marble was brought from Jaipur, the red sandstone from the neighbourhood of Fetehpur Sikri, diamond from Panna, turquoise from Tibet, lapis and lazuli from Ceylon, jasper



Buland Gate, Fatehpur Sikri.



Diwan-i-Khas, Fatehpur Sikri.



Empress Mumtaz Mahal.



Emperor Shahjahan.

from Combay, malachite from Russia, cornelian from Baghdad, chrysolite from the Nile and various other precious stone and jewels from various parts of the world. Some of these were presented to the emperor by the rulers of other countries or by the nobles of his own kingdom.

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 creeds and nations was the beloved consort of Shahjahan. Her name was Arjumand Banu Begum, better known by title Mumtaz Mahal. She was born in 1592, and was the daughter of the shrewd minister, Yamin-ud-daula Asaf Khan (son of Itmad-ud-daula and brother of the celebrated Empress Nurjahan). In 1612, at the age of nineteen years, she was married to Prince Khurram, afterwards the Emperor Shahjahan, when Jahangir conferred upon her the title of Mumtaz Mahal or "Exalted of the Palace".

Mumtaz Mahal was noted for her beauty, accomplishment and tender-hearted sympathy for the poor and distressed. She was the keeper of the Royal Seal and was consulted in all important affairs of state. Her intercession saved the lives of many condemned to death. She remained with

her consort like his shadow throughout her life, and accompanied him in his campaigns. Their love for each other was strong and true during the seventeen years of their married life.

In 1629, when Shahjahan left Agra, in the second year after his accession to the throne, to crush the rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi, the Governor of Deccan, Mumtaz Mahal accompanied him and closed her eyes in death looking despairingly at her Lord at the age of 39, after giving birth to her fourteenth child, a daughter. Her remains were temporarily deposited in the garden of Zenabad at Burhanpur for six months, where the Emperor was then encamped, and were transferred to Agra to the garden of Raja Man Singh, which was selected for her permanent interment and which was then owned by Raja Jai Singh, who compensated by the gift of another property from the Emperor's private estate. On reaching its destination, the coffin was deposited in the opening area of the Taj garden, where it remained for nine years till the tomb where it now rests was ready for its reception,

Shahjahan's grief was intense. For several weeks he refused to see any of his courtiers, or to transact any business of state. He and his court

assumed the white habilments of the deepest mourning. No music or festivities were allowed, the wearing of Jewels, the use of perfumes and luxuries of all kinds were forbidden. He even contemplated resigning the throne and dividing the Empire among his sons. In two years his hair turned silver grey. Each Friday he visited her grave and had read over it the *fatihah* or prayers prescribed for the benefit of the dead.

The foundation were laid deep in the heart of an Emperor for whom a suddenly darkened universe held but one ambition, one object in life, namely to build a tomb for his wife, that should surpass anything the world had ever seen before, or ever would again.

Between the fine gate of red sandstone and the grand portal of the Taj, lies a spacious quadrangle enclosed by rooms, which was known by the name of Jilo Khana, measurement are given as 412 feet north and south, by 471 feet east and west was completed about 1653. Most of these rooms have now disappeared. Here a bazar was also held in great pomp and splendour.

The usual approach to the Taj is by the west, handsomely built of red sandstone. Outside this gate on the left side is a mausoleum of red sand-

stone. It stands on an elevated square measuring 156 feet eachway and contain two uninscribed marble tombs in the central chamber. It is said that it was erected in memory of the Maids of Honour in the service of Mumtaz Mahal. It is difficult to find as to who lies buried in it. But as the tradition goes the above belief seems to be true.

Outside the western gate, on the right a few steps lead to a high platform over which stands a dome-crowned Mausoleum measuring 137 feet eachside. Here sleeps Sati-un-Nisa who was the favourite lady-in-waiting to Mumtaz Mahal. She was a childless widow and the sister of Jahangir's poet laureate, Talib Amli. After the death of the Lady of the Taj she stayed wathing by her grave for six months at Burhanpur, there after she accompanied the coffin to Agra. She was a highly accomplished lady and a skilled linguist and was appointed governess to Jahanara Begum eldest and favourite daughter of Shahjahan.

The neighbouring mosque known as Fatehpur Mosque was erected, in order that prayer might constantly be offered up for the repose of the soul. The court is paved and measures 103 ft. by 55 ft.

Outside the east gateway, stands another Mausoleum of one of Shahjahan's wives Sirhindi

Begum. The building is eight sided with twenty four arches with an octagonal hall and a verandah. The dome of the tomb is highly ornamented with mosaics and is a piece of admirable workmanship.

THE MAIN GATE OF THE TAJ

The Main Gateway, 151 feet by 117 feet rising to a height of 100 feet, stands on a red sandstone platform 211 feet square. The three-storied gateway of red sandstone has externally a central apsed entrance at front and back, framed with marble bands, inscribed in black slate with texts from *Koran*, in the Tughra character, inviting the Pure of Heart to enter the Gardens of Paradise. The most notable feature to be particularly studied are the inscriptions which look uniform in size from top to bottom. They do not look bigger at the bottom than they are at the top—80 feet high. The caligrapher was surely a perfect master of practical optics.

Entering the gateway from the south, the first objects of interest is its two fold-gate, 10½ feet wide made of an alloy composed of eight different metals. It is said that there was originally two silver gates which cost Rs. 1,27,000 and which were studded with 1,100 brass nails, each with a head made of a Souat rupee. These are said

to have been melted down by the Jats when they sacked Agra.

The four smaller sides of the hall have each a staircase leading up to a storey above. Of the four staircases on the third storey, two go down to the first floor and the other two are closed in the middle. Want of acquaintance with this cause puzzle, and the visitor keeps going up and down from one room to the other, without finding a clue to the starting place. It will be useful to know that the stairs in the north—eastern rooms are interrupted midway. Under the vaulted roof in the octagonal chamber hangs 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.

The garden is reached from the Main Gateway by steps before its north (inner) entrance. It is a square of 971 feet bounded by a Great Basement on the north; by the platform before the cloisters on the south; and by high walls with embattled parapets on the east and west. The east wall is pierced by a gateway at its south end, and the west wall by one at its north end. At the

centre of each wall is a three storied *Baradari*, each 73 feet 9 inches by 22 feet 9 inches, and at its south end a two-storied octagonal tower bearing a pavilion. The garden is divided into four *parterres* by four footpaths paved with slabs of red sandstone and masonry channels. These four *great parterres* are also sub-divided by footpaths to form sixteen *paterres*. 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 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".

The Marble Tank, 43 feet 3 inches internally, has five single—jet fountains. The tank, always kept full of water, stands in the centre of a marble cased platform, 74 feet 6 inches square externally by five feet high. Fishes of different colours can be seen in its water. It is 412 feet from the platform of the main gate and the distance from this to the basement of the Mausoleum is 438 feet.

The mausoleum stands on a double platform; the first one of red sandstone, is 995 feet by 365 feet and 4 ft. higher than the garden foot path and in the centre stands the second marble platform 18 feet 6 inches higher than the first platform and 22 ft. 6 inches above the ground and measures 313 feet square.

At each corner of the marble platform, stands a lofty marble minaret, like grave and kindly sentinels keeping guard over beauty, rising to a height of 162 feet 6 inches above the ground and possesses three galleries profusely decorated with flowers of various patterns and inlaid with beautiful ornamental designs in various colours, no structure of the kind can compare with this in beauty and shape. It has a flight of 154 steps in the interior, leading to the pavilion at the top.

The mausoleum proper is in the centre of the

marble basement measuring 185 feet square with a central archway at each of the four sides 66 feet 6 inches high. 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. The walls and arches are inscribed in Tughra character with texts from the Holy Koran in black slate.

In conformity with Mohammadan custom the real graves are in the crypt immediately under the central chamber and a flight of stairs from the marble platform descends into the underground vaulted chamber where the remains of the Lady of the Taj, "Mumtaz" and Shahjahan be deposited.

Above this vaulted chamber, is an octagonal room, in the centre is the cenotaph of the Empress, and about six inches apart and a little higher is the cenotaph of her Lord, Shahjahan. In Shahjahan's time a gold railing profusely studded with gems was fixed to protect the tomb, erected at a cost of 6 lakhs of rupees, but it was removed in 1642 for fear of theft and was subsequently replaced by this marble screen, in the days of Aurangzeb which took 10 years to construct at a cost of Rs. 50,000. A pall of pearls which used to cover the tomb of Mumtaz at the time of Shahjahan's reign, disappeared long ago, together with the silver doors of the mausoleum, believed to have been carried off by plunders.

This marble screen or rather encloser or Muhajjar round the cenotaph is a net work in marble most elegantly executed gazing at it makes it almost seem as though a spider had been at work in marble. The indescribably lovely screen displays a flower border in coloured mosaic, so minutely worked that no less than sixty-one tiny pieces of many shaded gems are united in one rose. It is 6 feet 2 inches high, and is eight-sided, each being 12 feet 2 inches in length. To the south, facing the entrance gate, the enclosure is open for the

passage of people. The surface is smooth and velvety. Really, the eye of Jean Goujon, a German Bilon 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 superfine arabesques, super-excellent mosaics, 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 described on the earth another mansion so splendid, so graceful, and so elegant".

Both graves are of white marble exquisitely and elaborately inlaid with mosaic in semi-precious stons, and bear the names of the Empress and Emperor with the year and date when they expired. Mumtaz Mahal died in 1629 and Shahjahan in 1666 A.D. The tomb of Mumtaz Mahal bears the ninety-nine names of the God very beautifully inscribed together with some passage from the Holy Koran, meaning "Do not make us, O Lord to bear what we have not strength to bear. He is God, besides whome there is no God, who knowth both the future and the present" and so on. The tomb of Shahjahan also bears similar

inscriptions' Despair not of the mercy of God : He forgiveth all sins". Again "we shall have your rewards on the day of judgement..... . The present life is delusive and perperatory."

The epitaph of Mumtaz Mahal's tomb is inscribed and the inscription when translated, means this :—"The illumined tomb of Arjumand Banu Begum, called Mumtaz Mahal who died in the year 1040 A. H, (1630 A. D.); as Mumtaz from this world pass away, the hurs (faïries) 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 Shahjahan's tomb also bears an inscirtption which, when translated means:—The sacred scpulchre of his most Exalted Majesty, dweller of paradise, the second lord of constellation, the king Shahjahan, may his mausoleum ever flourish, 1076 A. H. (1666 A. D.)".

The dome crowned by a floral cap and gilt spike with a crescented end, stands in the centre of the roof. It is 50 feet in diameter and coverd with floral ornamentation, rises to a height of 243 feet and 6 inches above the garden level and is 270 feet from the level of the river and is 5 feet more than Kutab Minar at Delhi.

Shahjahan had the intention of building another mausoleum for himself on the other side of the Jamna, a fit counterpart of the Taj, and of connecting the two by a marble bridge. The foundation had already been laid, when the scrambling for power amongst his sons and the emperor's captivity put an end to the scheme. After Shahjahan's death, Aurangzeb had the remains of his father interred by the side of Mumtaz, said he "The remains of my parents, should lie buried side by side, as they loved each other so strongly". Aurangzeb had no eye for architectural beauty. His watchword was economy. To build another mausoleum like the Taj, thought he, would be "wasteful and ridiculous excess".

"To see the outside of Taj Mahal, moonlight; to see the inside daylight".

Visit it by moonlight and later by daylight if you must. By moonlight its seduction is irresistible. Sit on the steps by the entrance gate and watch the moon-drift above the trees and the ring of silver light stealing round the base of the dome. A dalabaster is to evoke ideas too rough for this intimate revelation of beauties withheld from the indiscreet and prying day. The shadow of the Taj are not black but something between umber and violet;

and the marble itself, glimmering under the dusky velvet of the sky, hints at the warmth and soft texture of life. You note the tender half tones growing upon the smooth and rounded surfaces as a young lover, sitting with his mistress by a moonlight window, might watch the faint shadows hovering over the warm whiteness of satin throat and wory shoulder.

If you must visit it in the broad light of noon-day then forget the first view from the gateway and wonder a while about the gardens where you will find exquisite glimpses of snowy setructures so light and graceful that they seem to rest on air; of bouyant cupola and climbing campanile. There is grandeur as well as beauty. Enter the central shrine and in the subdued light that penetrates through the double set of marble lattice screens in the day time, you will appreciate the mysterious depths and the jewelled sprays and garlands and touches of coloured marble with which the unerring judgment of the artist has been value to the balance of the scheme.

MOSQUE

To the west of the Mausoleum of the Taj stands the magnificent building of the mosque, meashures 186 feet by 52 feet and has an accomo-

dation of 539 people. The minars of triple storeyed of red sand stone, pierced with stone windows, screens and balustrades. The Domes are of white marble and the pinnacles gilt. The walls and ceilings are adorned with beautified floral designs.

BASSAI BURJ

There is a tower to the north of the Mosque called the Bassai Burj, and one of its south end, which has a *baoli* within it. From the north wing a staircase descends to the river and by its reached a passage said to be part of a tunnel between the Fort and the Taj.

JAMAIT KHANA

The Jamait Khana, standing to the east of the mausoleum, being a counterpart of the Masjid on the opposite side, was intended for persons to collect in who joined in the celebration or ceremonies on the anniversary of Mumtaz Mahal's death.

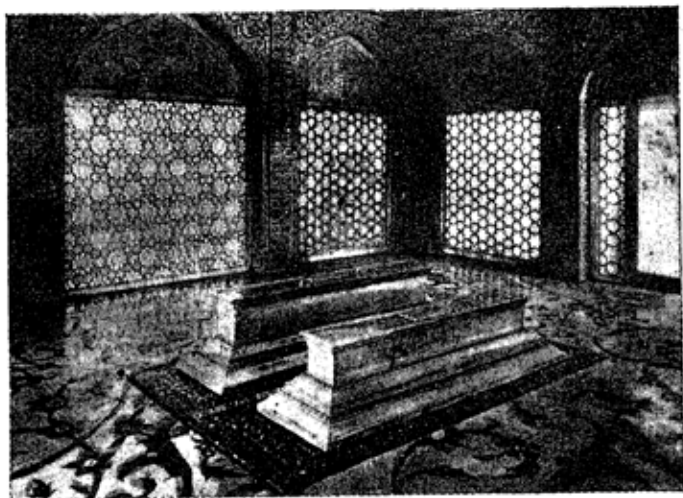
It is certainly an act of a appreciation and foresightedness that Emperor Shahjahan, had assigned the incom of thirty villages, amounting to a lakh of rupees for its unkeep and maintenance.



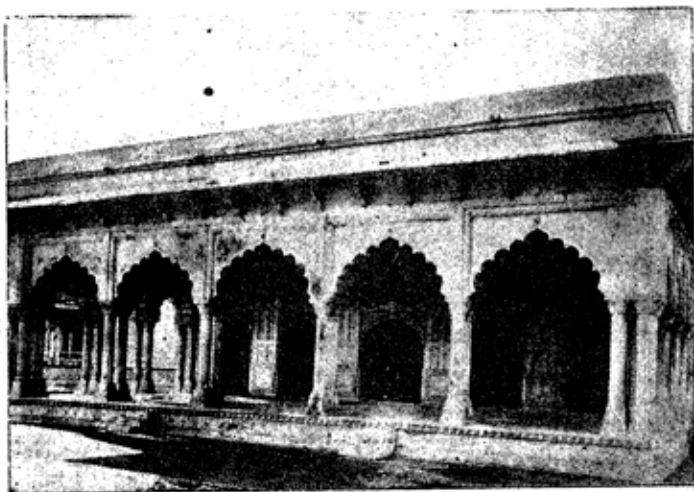
ITMAD-UD-DAULA'S TOMB

This famous mausoleum of Mirza Ghias Beg otherwise called Itma-ud-Daula, the Prime Minister of Jahangir is one of the finest examples in India of inlaid work in a style derived from Persian mosaic. It was built by Nurjahan in memory of her father who lies buried here with his wife. Nurjahan wished to erect the masoleum regardless of cost and so had first intended to construct it of silver throughout, but was soon persuaded that a structure of such material would be more liable to spoilation than one of stone. It took 6 years to complete it and was commenced in the year 1622.

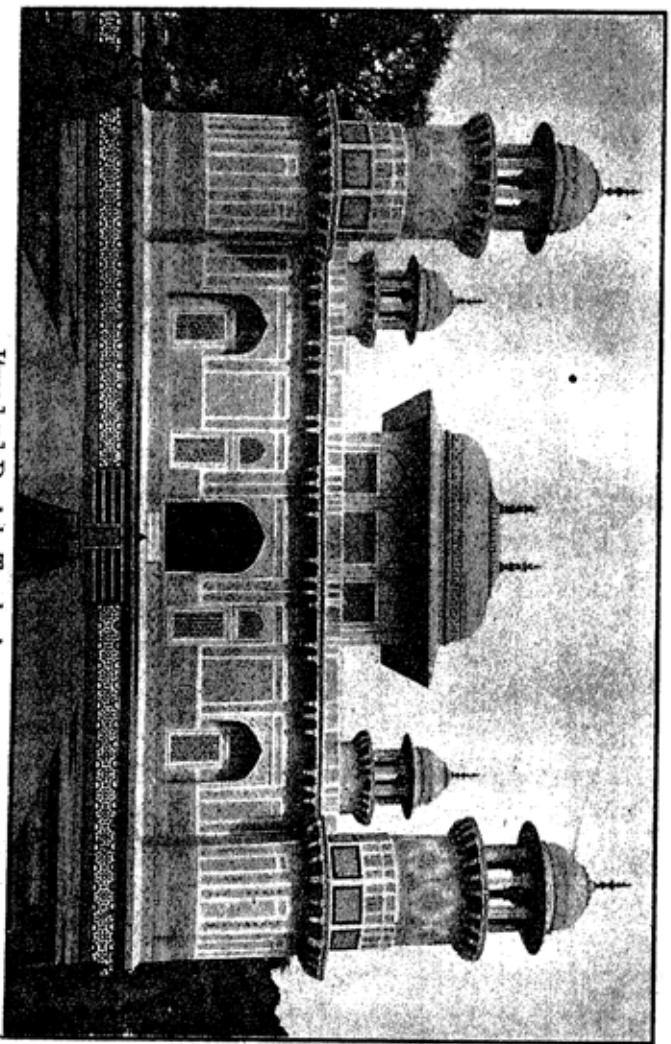
It is situated in a vast and spacious garden 540 feet each way. The garden itself is surrounded on three sides by high walls, on the fourth side is the river which adds to the charm of this little gem of



Tombs-Itmad-ud-Daula, Agra.



Diwan-I-Khas, Fort Agra.



Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb, Agra.

Moghul architecture. The garden is reached by a door to the east. This door is made of red sandstone, marble is used in inlay work which is Persian in style. The north and the south walls too have a false gate each in the centre just in front of the eastern gate there is a two storied pavilion on the river side whence the view of the city and the river appears very interesting. The rooms in the first storey of the pavilion were once decorated with fresco painting in gold and bright hues. It is said that in summer these rooms were provided with Khas tattis and were used as cool retreat from the scorching heat of the city, of which Baber complains in his memories. On the south of the pavilion is a staircase which leads to the underground chambers which were once used by the ladies of the Zenana as bath rooms.

The mausoleum proper stands in the centre of the garden on a raised platform of red sandstone and is entirely built of pure white marble. Extensive inlay work has been done on all sides to decorate the building. The coloured stones and beautiful tiles used in the ornamentation attract the eyes of the visitor, draw his attention and make him forget himself for a while. This building marks the transition from the style of architecture

in the days of Akbar to that of Shahjhan. The Hindu feeling common to Akbar's buildings is completely absent here but for the roof of the chamber which is not dome shaped as it found in mausoleum in purely sarasenic architecture.

The central hall of the building contains the bodies of the Mirza and his wife. The cenotaphs are of the Khattu stone. The floor of the hall is of white marble and is richly decorated with mosaic work. On the walls there are inscription in Tughra form, from the verses of the Holy Koran. The lower portions of the walls are inlaid with mosaic and the ceiling of the hall was formerly decorated with gold and silver paintings which were scraped off and destroyed by the Jats. The government has restored a part of this painting which enables us to form an idea of the original one. The pavilion on the roof contains only replicas of the real tombs beneath. The roof of the pavilion is canopy shaped and rests on twelve marble pillars with marble screens of exquisite workmanship. The floor of the pavilion is ornamented with extremely beautiful mosaic work. The four corner rooms contain the bodies of the brothers, sisters and other members of the Mirza's family. On the four corners of the building are two storeyed minarets which are reached

at the top by staircases within them.

Of Itmad-ud-Daula's tomb, Fergusson says, "We have both systems (mosaic and inlay work) in great perfection."

Itmad-ud-Daula, a persian adventure from Tehran was the father of the celebrated, Nurjahan and maternal grand father of the illustrious Lady of the Taj. After his daughter Nurjahan's marriage to the Emperor Jahangir in 1611, he was soon made Lord High Treasurer and afterwards Prime Minister under Jahangir, who conferred on him the title of Itmad-ud-Daula or "Reliance of the State." He retained his office till his death, ten years later in 1622 at Kangra.

CHAUBURJI

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 no worth a visit but is important from an historical point of view.

CHINI-KA-RAWZA

Two furlongs off the Itmad-ud-Daula's tomb lies the Chini-ka-Rauza so called, is coated externally with thousands of small pieces of mosaic tiles, resembling procelain, in a variety of colours and

delicate shades, carefully embedded in the face of the plaster covering the brickworks. The superstructure is, 80 feet square surmounted by a great bulbous dome. It is said to be the mausoleum of Afzal Khan, a poet of Shiraz, who entered the service of Jahangir in 1617, and afterwards became Dewan (Financial Minister) to Shahjahan. He died in 1639 at Lahore. The second tomb is that of his wife.

RAM BAGH

Nearly a mile to the north from Itmad-ud-daula's Tomb there is an old garden palace on the left bank of the river which is known by the name Ram Bagh. Who was the builder of this garden palace is very doubtful and disputable question. Some writers indentify it with Babar's Aram Bagh and consider it to be the place where Babar's body was interred temporarily before it was sent to Kabul. While others consider that it is one of the many elegant and regularly planned pleasure-grounds which Baber laid out and planted with fruit trees and flower plants as has been described by him in his memories. Where as there are some who are of opinion that this pleasure ground was found by Jahangir for his favourite wife Nurjahan and named Bagh-i-Nur-Afshan (Light spangled garden)

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 in to Ram Bagh in due to the calamitous campaign against Agra led by the Jats of the neighbouring State of Bharatpur. Mr. H. A. Newell remarks that the garden was planned by Baber and served as the temporary repository of Babar's coffin." As a matter of fact, the chauburji lying a little distance in front of Itmad-ud-Daula, is the palace which was actually the temporary place of Baber's remains.

The garden is sufficiently large and spacious and this much is certain that the garden however was the favourite resort of Moghul Prince and Princess for many generation.

AKBAR'S TOMB

The mausoleum of Akbar, being pyramidal in form of 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 the garden called Bahistabad extends to 150 acres and is enclosed by battled walls 25 feet high. On the four corners stand 4 beautiful octagonal bastions, 43 feet high and crowned with domes excepting the one in the north-west corner. There is a beautiful sandstone gateway in the middle of each wall. The one on the west side was used as a Mosque. The main gateway is to the south. It is the largest and is 74 feet high. It is a beautiful building by itself and is square in plan. At the four corners above

the gateway stands 4 minarets of white marble which are 86 feet 6 inches high from the roof. The minarets are three storyed and circular in shape. They are reached to their summits by the staircases within. The exterior portion of the building is profusely decorated with the marble inlay work which though beautiful indicates that the designers were unaccustomed to this method of decoration. The interior of the central arch is also beautifully inlaid with marble in the style which became the chief characteristic of the later Moghul buildings. There are a number of apartments in the building. The big arched chamber above the portion is known as Naubat Khana or musicgallery. Here kettle drums were beaten in honour of the dead at dawn and again one watch after sunrise. Formerly the doors of the maingate were of sandal wood which were either carried off by the Jats during their short occupation of Agra or destroyed during the Mutiny of 1857

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

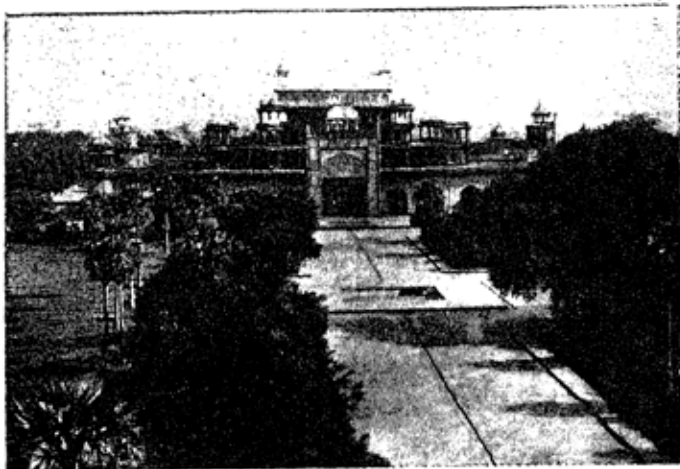
"O ! what a pleasant air it is ; better than that of the garden of heaven ; (2) O ! what better foundation it is ; better than that of heaven ; (3) There are thousands of slaves

for him in the heaven ; (4) There are thousand 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 your rest for ever." And so on.

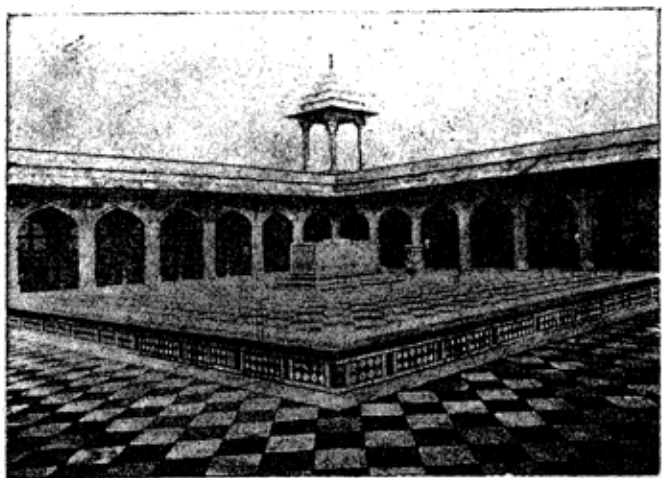
Some rhymes are carved on the arches of the four walls of the portal of the Main Gate, a few after translation are given below:—

"By the order of God, who is the high and dignity ; That his kingdom is unchangeable ; he (Akbar) becomes 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 Almighty power and so on."

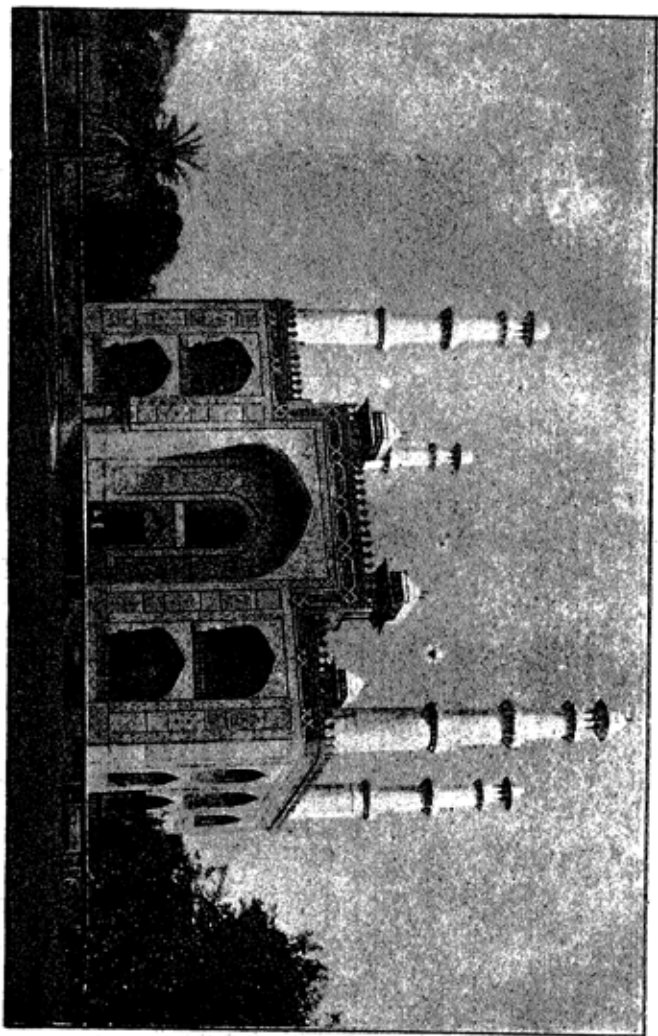
The tomb proper is situated in centre of the garden and is connected with all the four gates by raised and broad pathways. The marble platform on which the tomb is erected covers an area of 400 feet square. The building is a five storeyed. The storeys above the ground floor becoming smaller and smaller, as the tomb ascends higher and higher. Thus the whole assumes 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 sovast



Tomb-Akbar's Tomb, Agra.



Akbar's Masjid, Agra.



Gate Akbar's Tomb, Agra.

that a British dragoon, once quartered there occupied only a fraction of the available space.

The interior of the mausoleum is reached through an arched porch on the south decorated with marble mosaic. The hall into which the archway open was once decorated with raised stucco work coloured in gold and blue, which was scraped off by Jats but were partially restored at great cost by the order of Lord Curzon before the visit of Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905, just to convey an idea of the original.

A sloping passage leads to the mortuary chamber where sleeps beneath the simple tomb stone of marble the great Moghul Emperor, Akbar, the Great. The grave is simple according to the wish of the emperor. Formerly rich rugs were spread on the floor, a canopy of gold and silver brocade was used to cover the tomb, and beside the tomb were placed the great emperor's sword, shield, turban, gilded books and shoes which are said to have been carried away by the Jats. The entire chamber was once decorated with painted over in gold. It is remarkable to note that dome above the hall is 74 feet high, while that of the Taj is 84 feet.

William Finch who visited Agra, six years after the death of Akbar, 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 ho'd 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 sword and shield, and on a small pillow his turban and thereby two or three fair gilded balls. At his feet stand the shoes and a rich basin and ever. Every one approaching make his reverence and puts off his shoes, bringing in his hand sweet smelling flowers to scatter on the carpet".

The second, third and the fourth storeys are of the same design as in the first. The upper most storey is the most interesting. It was built by Emperor Jahangir. It is built entirely of pure white marble. The fretted marble trellised walls, tessellated marble pavement and the cenotaph hewn out of 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, traditions says that it supported the great diamond Koh-i-Noor.

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 in wrought".

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, 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 Jalahu," (Magnificent is His Glory) and round about the cenotaph, the ninety nine names of the Almighty are carved in alto relievo in a remarkably fine Arabic tracery.

The mausoleum was designed and commenced by Akbar and completed by his son Jahangir.

Akbar died in 1605 and in the third year of his reign, Jahangir 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.

On the level of the platform the mortuary chamber is surrounded by smaller chambers which contain the tombs of two of Akbar's daughters, Shakrum-Nisa and Aram Bano Begum and Mirza Sulaiman a son of the emperor Shah Alam II

Numerous other buildings and remains lie between Agra and Sikandara but they are purely of historical interest. Delhi Gate, The tombs of Ladli Begum, her brother Faizi and her father Sheikh Mubarak. Kandhri Bagh where is buried the first wife of Shahjahan; a curious statue of a horse in red sandstone which is said to have been built by a rich man whose favourite horse and Sais were killed at the spot; Mausoleum of Saha-dat Khan, Chief Treasurer of Shahjahan and of Sadiq Khan, one of the spiritual guides of Akbar.

Sikandra is now a village, 5 miles from Agra. After capturing Agra, Sikandar Lodi laid out the town of Sikandara in 1492. The many ruins of the buildings lying about the road from Agra to

Sikandra formed a part of the city of Agra in those days. In 1495 he built the famous Baradari which in 1623 was adopted by Jahangir as the tomb for his mother, Marium-uz-Zamani, the Hindu wife of Akbar. The tomb, to-day, is in a perfect state of preservation although the other neighbouring mosques and tombs are in ruins.

JAMA MASJID

This splendid mosque was built by Jahanara, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan, who remained unmarried all her life and was the nurse and constant compainont of her father during the days of his captivity within the Fort at Agra. She was a saintly woman and a good connoitseur of art and architecture. It is said that most of the marble edifices erected by Shahjahan were inspired by her. She was the only individual whome Aurangzeb respected and feared.

The mosque stands opposite the Agra Fort station and was erected at a cost of five lakhs of rupees. It was commenced in 1644, completed in 1649, a year after the completion of the Taj.

The central arch is more than 40 feet high, and there are minor arches on either side. The building is made of rose sandstone. The three domes on the roof being inlaid with thin lines of marble.

FATEHPUR SIKRI

No relic of Indias historic past can make a more lasting impression upon the mind of the visitor from overseas than the deserted city of Fatepur Sikri, an enduring monuments to the greatest Mohamadan Emperor of India has ever known, Akbar. Twenty four miles from Agra in a great plain unrelived by the smallest hill stands the dead city defying the ravages of time; where once the Great Moghul held his court, there now slink at night howling Jackals, their weird cries echoing through the silent courtyardst empty buildings and silence only surrounds its stately beauty. The story of the buildings of this red sandstone city is one of the most romm-antic in Indian history. Moreover a modern mind can only marved at the despotic power which caused a second imposing citadel to be erected within a few miles of the original capital at Agra merely to fulfil a sudden whim.

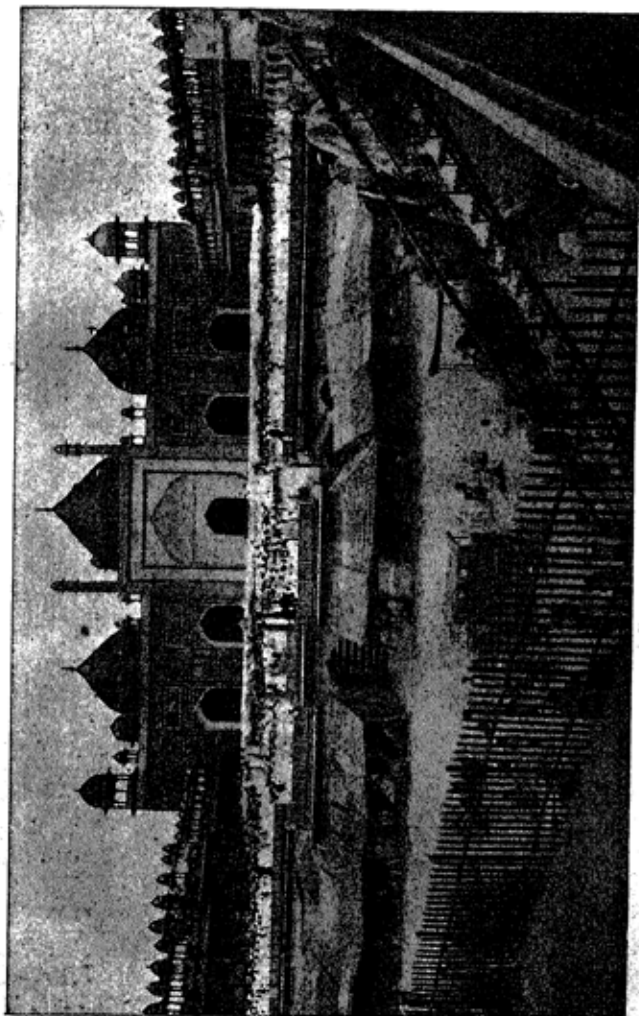
Akber had one great sorrow, that he had no issue up to the age of twenty seven and all his children had died in infancy, and it was his chief ambition to have a son. At the village of Sikri, which was a home of stone-cutters worked in the neighbouring quarries, dwelt a Mohamedan saint Shaik Salim Chisti. 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 Chishti in honour of his father, a holy man from chist in Persia. Wonderful stories of his godliness miraculous powers reached the Great Mogul. While returning from a campaign against rebellions. Uzbek nobles, Akbar halted at Sikri and on meeting the saint, fell at his feet. The holy man was telling his beads even before he had heard Akbar, told him that his desire would be grant and advised to sent his Hindu wife to reside at Sikri.

It was not long before Akbar came to know that his Hindu wife, Marium-Uz-Zamani, the sister of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber, was pregnant. Akbar built a palace near the mosque which came to be known by the name of Rang Mahal, and he sent his pregnant wife to reside at Sikri. Within a year a child was born to the emperor in 1570.

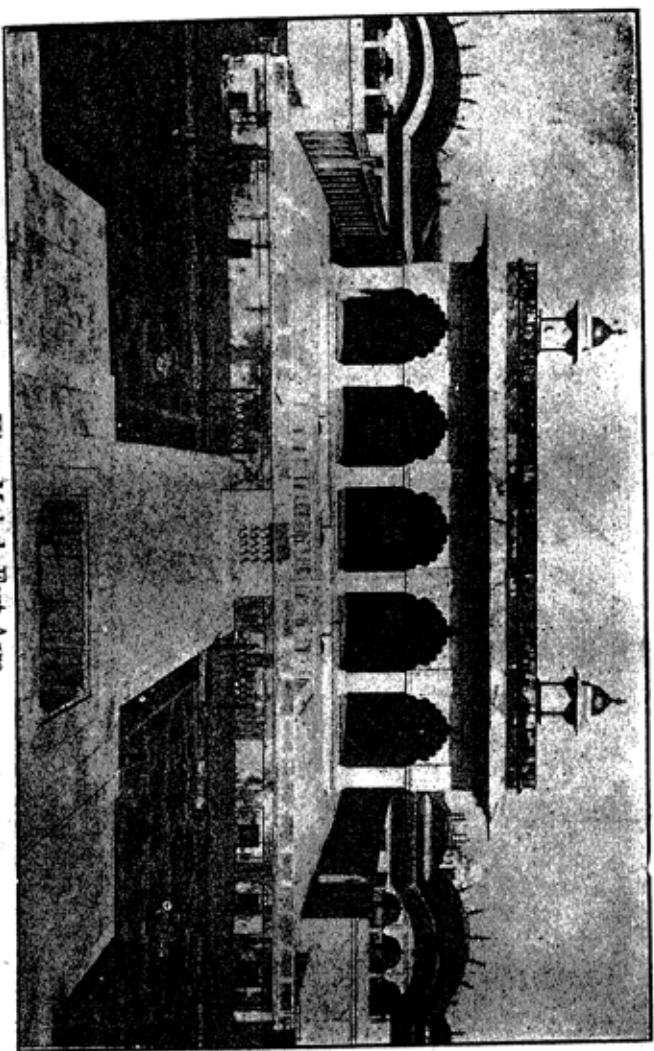
Akbar's joy knew no bound, and he named his son, Salim after the holy saint, enormous sums of money were given in charity and all the state prisoners were released. In gratitude for the divine favour accorded to him. Akbar determined to erect a city and make his capital in the place where his prayer had met with such ready response.

In the year 1569 on a lonely eminence, Akbar founded the city and began to rise the new citadel which was completed 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 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



Jama Masjid, Agra.



Khas Mahal, Fort Agra.

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 muslim tunic tied at one side, and a little cloth on his head coloured red and yellow".

The Royal but deserted Fatehpur Sikri was the Emperor's residence till 1585, after which toward the latter part of his long reign political reasons caused Akbar to shift his seat of Government to Lahore. He returned to Agra in 1600 and remained in his Agra Fort till his death in October 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 when Mohamad Shah was made Emperor and crowned on Peacock throne in 1719 held his first court there on april 14th. The court made but a short stay. Fatehpur Sikri was deserted within fifty years of its foundation, the palaces and towers relapsed in to silence which lasts to this day.

The deserted capital is six miles in circumference enclosing the city on three sides by high battled walls built of stone and on the fourth side being protected by an artificial lake. The lake have been drained off as it rendered the neighbourhood unhealthy. The walls are about 11 inches thick at the top including the ramparts and about 32 feet high, were pierced by 11 gateways namely Delhi Gate, Agra Gate, Ajmere Gate, Gwalior Gate, Chandra Gate, Phool Gate, Muttra Gate, Lal Gate, Birpol Gate, Tehra Gate and Chor Gate with small doors.

The journey from Agra, is 24 miles, can be readily reached by Road or train. A train leaves Agra Fort station early in the morning at about 7 and returns from Fatehpur Sikri in the evening, of course there are no hotel but an excellent Dak Bungalow has recently been erected at a great cost.

NAUBAT KHANA

Naubat Khana is situated about 50 yards to the east of the Dak Bungalow. Over the Naubat Khana runs a gallery facing the palace area along the whole length of which is provided a stone seat from which the court musicians played to announce the arrival or departure of Akbar and various other state functions. It has four gateways. The

northern and southern gates have Mohammadan arches, while those on the east and west have Hindu brackets.

IMPERIAL MINT

The first of the palace buildings on the summit of the hill is the Imperial Mint where coins were struck during the time of Akbar.

TREASURY

Almost a complete ruin the Treasury stands on the opposite side of the road. It consists of a quadrangle measuring 62 feet by 66½ feet. Rooms still enclose it to the east and south, those to the north and west having long since disappeared.

DIWAN-I-AM

Passing on a little further up the road comes the courtyard of the Diwan-i-Am, or Public Audience. The great court measures some 365½ ft. by 181 ft. and surrounded on all sides by covered walls, the floor of which was originally paved with stone slabs. In the middle of the west side of the open court. This consists of a raised pavilion 23½ ft. by 15 ft., protected by a ten feet wide verandah. In the centre is the elevated recess in the wall or Imperial balcony which was the Emperor's seat between two screens of sandstone the ladies of the harem viewed the Diwan-i-Am ceremonials. Here Akbar used to

take his seat daily within sight of his subjects assembled in the court below, hearing petitions and dispensing Justice.

DIWAN-I-KHAS

Diwan-I-Khas, or Hall of Special Audience is a red sandstone edifice of unique interior arrangement and it seems possible that the building represents the celebrated **Ibadat Khana** where men of learning, and opposing religious assembled for debate.

On the outside it would appear to be a two-storied building, but on entering, it is seen to contain only a single-vaulted chamber, surrounded by a gallery. There is a massive octagonal pillar in the centre, profusely decorated with beautiful carving. It is surmounted by a gigantic capital of the brackets carved in Hindu style and supports four narrow passage which meet the gallery at the four corners. The top of the pillar and the four passages are enclosed by stone screens. It is said that the emperor took his seat on the throne in the centre at the top of the pillar while his ministers occupied the four corners. Other persons admitted to the hall seated themselves in the gallery or occupied the floor below according to their rank.

The gallery is approached by two staircases

which are constructed in the thick walls, and which also lead up to the roof.

ASTROLOGER'S SEAT

This beautiful pavilion with fine artistic pillars is in proximity to the Diwan-i-Khas. It is distinguished by the elaborate struts that support the flat roof, while the raised floor appears to have originally been enclosed by a stone railing. The style is that usual to join architecture of the eleventh century. Here Akbar who had a great reverence for a Hindu astrologer, is said to have spent many hours after dark in deep and secret conversation with the wise man whose astrological knowledge was the marvel of the age. There is no doubt that following the Hindu tradition the Moghul Emperor did nothing important without consulting the astrologers till the custom was set aside by Aurangzeb as awaking distrust of God.

ANKH MICHAULI

A few steps to west of the Diwan-i-Khas is a three roomed house built over extensive vaults, called the Ankh Michauli, or the blind-man's buff House, and it is said that Akbar used to play at "Hide and seek" with the ladies of the court in this building. It is doubtful wheather this game was ever played in this particular building as it stands out-

side the harem limits. For easier of credence is the suggestion that this was the specail office to store state documents regalia of the crown; the narrow passage round each of the rooms being intended for the sentinels who used to guard it. The stone safes were probably the place for coins.

PACHCHISI COURT

To the south of Diwan-i-Khas and just facing astrologer's seat is a vast courtyard measuring 756 feet by 272 feet, on which is a Pachchisi (or Indian Backgammon) board in the form of a cross with a low red sandstone stool in the middle upon which, as is generally, through erroneously, believed, Akbar used to take his seat surrounded by a few chosen retainer whilst the game played with fair-looking girls attred in gay clothes of various colours, the girls acting as the living chess pieces. The court was formerly screened off from the surrounding edifices.

KHAS MAHAL

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 consists of three main por-

tions Khwabgah or Akbar's private apartments or House of Dreams; Turkish Sultana's House and Girl's school. These three are connected by a collonnade and surrounded by the so-called Khwabgah 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.

HAUZ-I-KHAS

In the centre of the court is a large tank known as Hauz-i-Khas measuring about 95 ft. 6 in. square with steps leading down to the water. The tank, now dependent on the rains for its supply, was originally filled direct from the water-works near the Elephant Gate and kept clean by means of an overflow the outlet of which is on the north side. It is mentioned by Jahangir in his memories, that under the Imperial order about 1579 the tank was filled with coins which were distributed among Akbar's subject.

KHWABGAH

The Khwabgah or Drository, said to have been the bed room of the Emperor Akbar. The walls were originally embellished with artistic frescoes in the persian style, traces still showing of poppies, peonies, tulips, roses and almond blossom. A huge

figure probably an angle 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 (Jahangir) said to have been brought about intercession of Sheikh Salim Chisti.

Behind is a chamber 20 feet 9 inches wide and 42 feet 7 in. long said to have been the residence of a learned Brahmin (Hindu Priest) attached to the court who performed his devotions daily on the raised platform projecting from the south wall. The Khwabgah appears to have been originally connected with the Turkish Sultan's house, Maryam's house and Jodh Bai's palace by a closed passage since pulled down. A part of viaduct, however still exists and lead to the Panch Mahal.

GIRL'S SCHOOL

This is a low unpretentious building to the north of Khas Mahal raised above the level of the pavement on stone piers, consisting of a room and a verandah on its north side. It is traditionally known as the girls school of Akbar's harem. Some regard this buildings to have originally extended to-wards the house of Turkish Sultana and separated the Khas Mahal from the building to its north

TURKISH SULTAN HOUSE

The House of Turkish Sultana or Istamboli

Begum, was built by Akbar. This house is one of the most highly ornamented buildings in Fatehpur Sikri. It consists of a single small chamber surrounded by a verandah. Additional rooms were obtained however by dividing up the verandah with stone screens since removed. Fergusson, the greatest critic of Indian art, says "It is one of the richest, the most beautiful and the most characteristic of all Akbar's buildings. It is impossible to conceive any thing so picturesque in outline or any building carved and ornamented to such an extent without the smallest approach to being overdone or in bad taste". The interior of this "gigantic Jewel casket", as the house has been aptly called, is as richly carved as the exterior and hardly a square inch of space has been allowed to remain unornamented. 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 figure of birds animals prohibited by the Prophet.

The Hammam or Bath was accredited to the Turkish wife of Akbar, was separated from her house by a small garden. The outer rubble walls are unadorned by moulding of decorations of any kind but the inside is enlivened by plaster and

coloured designs. There is only one entrance to the building and that is perfectly plain. It leads into a domed vestibule with small chambers on the south and east and a large dressing room on the north. 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. The baths were supplied with water from a small tank formed in the thickness of the wall fed from the outside from a through supported on stone corbels.

DAFTAH KHANA

Daftah Khana or Record Chamber is situated at a little distance off the Khwabgah. 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. It is quite close to Akbar's bedroom and was his office where he used to remain till late in the night, listening to statements regarding affairs in various parts of the empire, giving orders and personally looking into accounts.

HOSPITAL

The building is very low and in now ruined condition. The dividing wall is pierced by several doorways, one near the Ankh Michauli leads to the hospital. Formerly the roof was exquisitely

carved, the interior walls coated with plaster, and the doorways and windows brightly painted. Some partitions divided the twelve wards, small apartments measuring 14 feet by 9 feet 6 inches. This building is interesting because it affords the evidence 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

The Panch Mahal, so called from the five storied structure, each storey being a pillard hall smaller than that below it, stands south-west of the Diwan-i-Khas. It is built in the style of a Buddhist Vihara and the architecture is essentially Hindu. The whole structure assumes a tapering shape. Each storey was originally enclsed by slab-stone rails. All the pillars are carved from top to bottom, and those supporting the roof of the first floor have many representations, including that of a man plucking fruits from a tree and that of two elephants with interlaced trunks. It is characteristic to note that columns no two are alike.

The ground floor measures 72 feet by 58 feet and contains 85 sculptured columns; while the first floor has 56 columns; the second, twenty; the third,

twelve; and the fourth only four. The height of the first storey is 49 feet, that of the second, 62 ft. of the third, 20 feet; of the fourth, 12 feet; and on the fifth a dome is built with four pillars of stone.

There has been much interesting speculation as to its use. As it commands view of the zenana enclosures, it was the pleasure retreat of the emperor and his wives where they would enjoy the fresh air of the evening and the moon night during summer nights.

MARYAM'S HOUSE

The elaborately and profusely carved building stands on the south of Panch Mahal. It was built by Akbar for his Hindu wife, Mariyam-uz-zaman who was the sister of Raja Bhagwan Dass of Ambar and this title was conferred on her just after marriage with the Grand Moghul in 1562 and she was the mother of the heir of the throne, Jahangir. Every part of the building was so well adorned with frescoes in gold and colours that it came to be known as the Sunhera Mahal or "Golden House." The frescoes are supposed to illustrate Firdausi's great epic, from Hindu Mythology and also from christian stories. The most interesting painting is that of a lady riding a parrot which may be seen in the west verandah

It is externally 60 feet, by 48½ feet and on the ground floor are four rooms, an oblong one running north to south and three smaller one running at right angles to it at the south end. Over these latter ones are three others from which a stair-case leads to the flat roof surmounted by an open pavilion carried on 8 square columns used for sleeping in summer nights.

Lt. Colonel H. A. Newell's remarks, will interest to my readers "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 Work Department and was also used for residential purposes by the District Engineer and the public has no free access to this place ; but in 1905 it was evacuated to be preserved as a historical monument.

MARYAM'S GARDEN

Adjoining Maryam's House, is an open space once Maryam's Garden. Formerly it was en-

closed by screened walls and it was entered through a gateway flanked by a guard house. The chief glory of the garden was the fish tank sheltered by a little Chattri or pavilion. The garden was screened by high walls and no one but authorized persons was permitted to pass. Defaulters were sentenced to death. The water was supplies from the water works near the Hiran Minar.

At the south east corner of Maryam's Garden is a square building with open sides measuring 26 feet each way and 12 feet 6 inches high. Screens were fitted into the walls, while steps were cut at each corner of the high tank for those who did not care to plunge from the bank and probably used by the ladies of the royal harem in summer.

JODH BAI'S PALACE

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 form of Hindu ornament are freely cut on the stone pieces. The palace is regarded as an unique example of a Moslem palace of the 16 th. century being entirely self-contained. It is said to have been built by Akbar for his daughter inlaw, Jodh Bai, the daughter of

Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur; wife of Jahangir and mother of Shahjahan and was completed in 1585, a little before the emperor transferred his court to Agra and hence it is probable that it was never used by the lady for whom it was meant. Some writers are of opinion that it is one of the first buildings built at Fatehpur by Akbar and was used by one of his queens, most probably a Rajput princess for the architecture used is pronouncedly of Hindu style.

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 around an open quadrangle measuring 179 feet by 161 feet 9 inches with flour. 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."

HAWA MAHAL

Hawa Mahal (wind Palace) a pavilion enclosed by pierced stone-screem. It was used by the ladies of the harem so that they could enjoy the cool breezes and view the lake, etc., without being exposed to the vulgar goze. It also connects with the

Virdukt, a side-enclosed passage leading to the Hiran Minar for the purpose of carrying the inmates of the harem to view animal fights and other functions held there.

BIRBAL'S HOUSE

Birbal's House stands to the north-west of Jodh Bai's palace, is one of the most noted palace of Fetehpur Sikri and splendidly carved both inside and out.

Raja Birbal, originally Mahesh Das, was a poor Brahmin and soon after Akbar's accession presented himself at the Royal court where his ready wit soon made him a personal favourite of the Empeor. His Hindu verses were much appreciated and he was made the Poet Laureate and Prime Minister. In the later part of his life. Akbar admitted him to his close personal friendship. He killed in a campaign against Yusufzai in Bijor, a border tribe. Akbar held a regular mourning when the news reached him and his grief was for a long time in consolable.

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, originally, 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 exquisitely carved. On the exterior of the building the Hindu bracket and the Mohammadan arch are combined with pleasing effect. This is now open on all sides but was, formerly provided with stone screens.

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 1510 and who gave birth to Prince Danial in 1572.

HATHI POL

Hathi Pol or Elephant Gate is 49 feet high, derives its name from the circumstance that two colossal elephants of stone originally stood on high pedestals outside the gate. These were mutilated.

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

The **Kabutar Khana** or pigeon house is a simple square tower-like building and was probably used as a powder Magazine.

Adjoining the Hathi Pol is the Sangin Burj or stone tower. It is a grand bastion said to have been the commencement of the fortifications, but

this idea was soon abandoned when the Emperor came to know of the prophesy of Salim Chisti that this greatness would decline if the work of fortification were completed. The work of extension, commenced but not finished can be witnessed.

Newell's remarks quote about this structure thus : "Like the Hathi Pol, the Sangia Burj is provided with hooded machicolations through which to pour stones, boiling lead etc. upon the enemy".

BAOLI

On the north of the road can be seen the big water tank or Baoli which once served as the water works of the Sikri Palaces.

SARAI AND IMPERIAL STABLES

Continuing down the road from Hathi Pol Gate the visitor will note on his left a vast quadrangle measuring 276 feet by 246 feet built round with small flat roofed apartments; and a verandah to accomodate the trevellers, merchants and their animals. The Sarai is in ruins but still amid the ruins one can notice the stone pegs and rings to which the had ropes were secured.

Akbar was very fond of horses, and Abul Fazal mentions 12,000 horses in the Imperial stables, but the stables to the south of Birbal's house accommodated 110 horses and meant for the choicest horses favoured by the Emperor. Here the visitor finds endless rings in the universal sandstone to which the horses were tethered. Formerly the open spaces between the piers were closed with stone screens with two doorways.

Camel Stables lies on the east side of the horse stables are a series of cavernous rooms which measuring 219 ft. 8 in long and 25 ft. deep. Their flat roof is supported by plain stone. These are said to provide accommodation for 51 camels. Some assign them to be built most probably for the grooves of the imperial horses in the adjoining stables.

HIRAN MINAR

The grand tower was erected by Akbar in memory of his favourite elephant Hiran, buried at this spot, and was also used by him for shooting game. It rises to a height of 80 feet from the ground and is curiously shaped, being octagonal at the base, circular in the middle and tapering at the top. A spiral staircase in the interior leads to the gallery at the summit. The whole of the middle portion of the tower is covered over with imitation stonework of elephant, which look like projecting iron spikes from a distance.

Formerly, the tower was connected with the palaces by means of a covered passage for the ladies. From the top the ladies used to witness the aquatic sports on the lake and animal fights etc.

JAMA MASJID

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 gateway—one to the east, commonly known as the King's Gateway as the Emperor Akbar

used to pass through this daily on his way from the royal palace to the Jama Masjid and the other, the famous Gate of Victory or Buland Darwaza.

This mosque is the largest and grandest of the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, was built by Akbar at a cost of five lakhs of rupees in 1571-72. The massive structure which is very impressive, pronounce it to be the finest example of its kind in India. 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 inscription in the mosque when translated means:- "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."

SHAIKH SALIM CHISTI'S TOMB

The Tomb of Shaikh Salim Chisti, standing within the quadrangle of the Jama Masjid, is a most remarkable building and the only marble edifice in Akbar's palace at Fatehpur Sikri. This portico is considered without rival in India as specimen of white marble carving.

The mausoleum is a square building 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, being always kept covered by a richly worked cloth pall, is protected by a large wooden canopy or *balda chino* inlaid with mother-of-pearl in beautiful geometrical designs. It has lately been renewed at a cost of Rs. 11,980. The real tomb is in the crypt below, the entrance of which was closed some years ago.

The Saint Sheikh Salim Chisti who is buried here, traced his descent from Sheikh Farid Shakar-ganj of Pakpatan (Persia) and was born in 1478. He blessed Akbar with several children and consequently was greatly revered by the Emperor. The Saint died in 1571 and the shrine was completed in 1581 by Akbar. There is held a big fair every year on the 28th. day of Ramzan.

On the tomb, reymes in Persian are carved which, when translated means thus:-

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

TOMB OF ISLAM KHAN

The tomb stands on a raised platform and is surrounded by a wide verandah enclosed by fretted screens. It has series of kiosks on each facade which impart a picturesqueness to the building. Nawab Islam Khan, was the grandson of Sheikh Salim Chisti and husband of Abul Fazal's sister, Ladli Begum. He was made Governor of Bengal by the Emperor Jahangir. He died in 1613 A. D. and his body was interred here. Around his tomb are many graves of his descendants.

Just near about the shrine is the Zanana Rauza. The building contains the grave of the female descendants of Sheikh Salim Chisti.

BULAND DARWAZA

The Buland Darwaza or Lofty Gateway is really an building in itself. It is 176 feet high from the roadway and 134 feet from the pavement in front of the entrance. It is the highest and greatest gateway in India, and ranks among the biggest in the world. The gate, however, was not a part of the original design, but was added many years after the completion of the Jama Masjid to commemorate Akbar's victorious campaign in the Deccan (1602 A.D.). This is also known as the "Gate of Victory".

On this gate are inscribed a few lines which on translation means. "Said Jesus—on whome 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

It lies near the Gateway of Victory on one side and measures 32 feet in diameter. Here the local divers jump into the large well from the parapet of the Mosque, about 80 feet high. A chip or a few annas is generally offered and accepted.

ABUL FAZAL AND FAIZI'S HOUSE

These two houses stands within a few paces from the Buland Darwaza in an outside enclosure, and in close proximity to each other. Abul Fazal lived in the first. A long pillared verandah bearing traces of beautiful and elaborate carving denotes Abul Fazal's house. These two brothers were among the nine Jewels of Akbar's court.

Abul Fazal was Akbar's dearly loved friend, he was for a long time the Prime Minister of Akbar and took a prominent part in the religious discussions inaugurated by Akbar. He is the author of the celebrated *Akbar Nama*, *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Mak-tubat-i-Alama* which are noteworthy records of historical value. He was caused to be assassinated

in 1602 by Jahangir against whom Jahangir thought he excited hatred in the heart of Akbar. Akbar was deeply afflicted by the news of his murder.

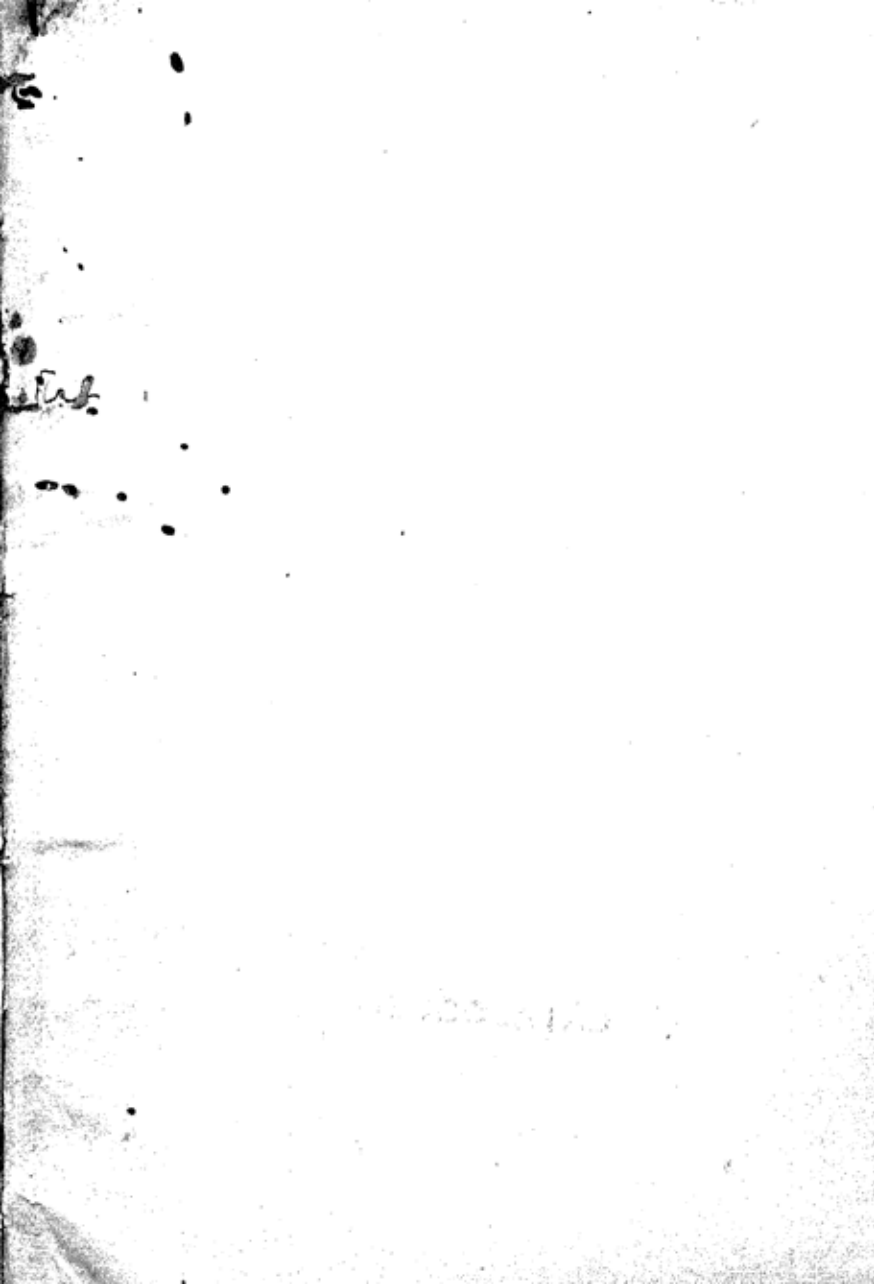
Faizi was the Persian Poet Laureate at the court of Akbar and tutor of the Princes and was also employed on several political missions. On his death in 1592 Akbar was sorely distressed and by the side of his dying head, he flung his turban on the ground and wept aloud.

STONE CUTTERS MOSQUE

The stone cutters Mosque stands to the west of Jama Masjid is a small unpretentious building, was erected, according to a tradition, by the poor stone cutters of Sikri for their patron saint, Sheikh Salim Chisthi. It is said that the cave where the saint used to indulge in penance is here hidden.

RANG MAHAL

The Rang Mahal was built by Akbar for his Rajput wife, Maryam Zamani, who being pregnant with prince Salim was sent from Agra to live near the saint whose prayer were solicited by the childless Emperor in order that he might have an heir to the throne. It was in this palace that Prince Salim was born.



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