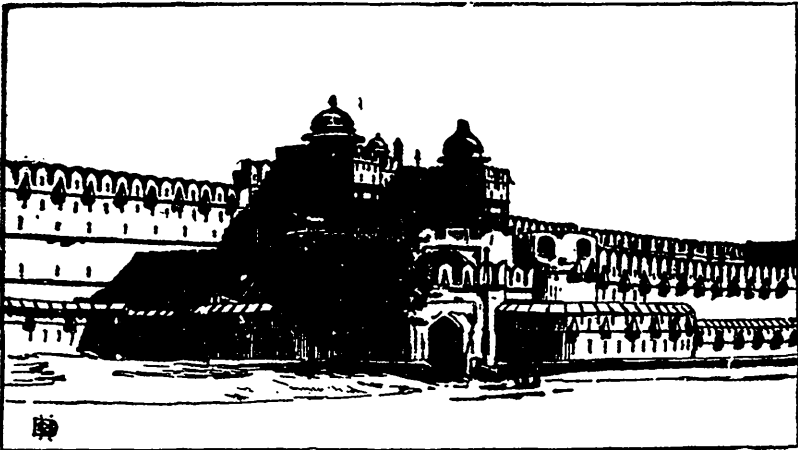


within the walls of its barracks and palaces the whole European and Christian population of Agra and the district round, over 5,000 in number. The only entrance to the Fort is by the Delhi Gate, a splendid building of red sandstone, reached by a draw-bridge which spans the wide moat.

From every window and terrace of the palace fortress at Agra, the view closes in with the shining domes and minarets of the sublimely beautiful tomb erected by Shah Jahan over the body of his beloved wife, Arjamand Banu, who died giving birth to her eighth child. It was completed A.D. 1648. The famous Taj Mahal is probably the most renowned building in the world. Like that other great tomb, the Pyramid of the Cheops, the enjoyment of its loveliness is marred by the recollection that it was



DELHI GATE, AGRA FORT.

built by force labour, and reared on the lives of hundreds of its makers. Twenty thousand workmen were employed for seventeen years in building and decorating the Taj Mahal. They were half starved, and their families wholly starved, producing great distress and mortality. The total cost is estimated at over £4,000,000 sterling.

I am so sensible of my own impotence to do any measure of justice to this wonderful "dream in marble," that I have obtained permission from the poet of India, Sir Edwin Arnold, to quote both a prose and verse description from his ever facile pen :

" . . . The wonder of Agra and the 'Crown of the World,' the Taj, the Peerless Tomb, built for the fair dead body of Arjamand Banu Begum, by her lord and lover, the emperor Shah Jahan. In truth, it is difficult to speak of what has been so often described, the charm of which