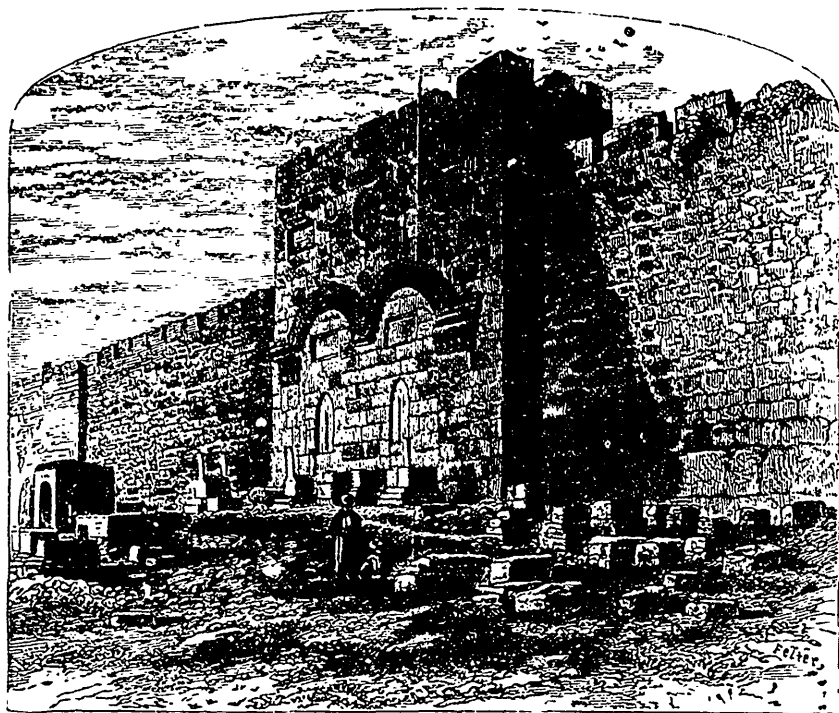


Isaac, and where Melchizedek also offered sacrifice. Traces of steps by which it was ascended can still be seen.

Beneath the rock is a large cavern to which we descend by eleven steps. The rough walls are illumined by hanging lamps, and the guide points out the small altars where Abraham and Elijah, David and Solomon and Mohammed were in the habit of praying. A number of Moslems were devoutly prostrating themselves on their prayer carpets.



EXTERIOR OF THE GOLDEN GATE, JERUSALEM.

The Moslems affirm that beneath this cave is the well of souls. Others affirm that these are the gates of hell, that here will resound the blast of the last trump which shall announce the Judgment, and that God's throne will be planted on this spot. Mohammed declared that one prayer here was better than a thousand elsewhere, and from this place, according to Moslem legend, he was translated to heaven on the back of El-Barak, his miraculous steed. It is even claimed that this was the original tomb of Christ. It was probably a cistern for water. If the Jewish altar of sacrifice were on this rock the round hole in its surface may have been for conveying away the blood of the sacrifices.