

Photographs and Drawings of Historical Buildings in India.

AKBAR'S TOMB AT SIKANDRA.

The accompanying plates are illustrative of the fresco paintings on the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra, a place about five miles from Agra. The mausoleum is described as one of the most characteristic of modern buildings. It was commenced by that monarch, and finished by his son Jahângir in 1613.

Like that of Itmad-ud-daulah and other Indian mausoleums, it is placed in the middle of a splendid garden, enclosed by walls, and approached through grand and massive gate entrances. On the frieze round the main gateway are poetical inscriptions in the Persian language, setting forth the praises of the monarch and mausoleum. It is built of red sandstone, and is five storeys high, each floor being smaller than that below it. Like the Panch Mahal at Fathpur Sikri, the key-note of the design appears to have been taken from a Buddhist *vihara*, or monastery. The uppermost storey is open to the sky, and is of marble, and enclosed by lovely perforated screens of the same material. The inscriptions upon the architrave of the interior are from a Persian poem supposed to have been composed by Shekh Faizi, the brother of Abdul Fazl, on the virtues of his old patron the Emperor Akbar. In the centre is the cenotaph, the head and foot of which contain the salutations of the Emperor's faith or school—"Allaho Akbar! Iilli Jalalihu!" Ninety-nine titles of the Creator are said to be inscribed about it. At one end is a pedestal on which it is said the famous *Koh-i-Nur* was placed. The genuine tomb containing the remains of the great Akbar is in a vaulted crypt beneath the centre of the building, to which access is gained from the ground level through a vestibule and passage. The ceiling of the former is elaborately groined in stucco, and is richly ornamented in colour decoration.

The plates represent some of the paintings. The mortuary hall is nearly 38 feet square, and is surrounded by other chambers of smaller size, containing tombs of less distinguished members of the Imperial family. Round the sepulchre were originally placed the armour, raiment and books of the great Emperor, ready to his hand if he should rise. But the Jâts are said to have carried them off in the last century to Bharatpur, where it is possible that some relics of Akbar still survive in oblivion or concealment. The tomb has been lately provided with a sumptuous covering at the expense of Lord Northbrook.

*The epoch of Akbar is the one of greatest importance to English students of the history of India, for two reasons. It is the period when administration under native rule was best and most efficient, and it is, consequently, the one with which a comparison with British rule should be made. It is also the period of which the most detailed and exact accounts have been written and preserved; so that such a comparison will be reliable and useful.

Akbar was the third Indian sovereign of the House of Timur. Hindustan had been ruled by Afghans for two centuries and a half when Baber crossed the Indus and founded the Mughal Empire in 1525. Mahmud of Ghazni, the first Muhammadan invader of India, reigned from A.D. 997 to A.D. 1030. His dynasty lasted until 1183. The Ghorî dynasty lasted from A.D. 1192 to 1289. The Khilzi dynasty, from 1289 to 1321. The dynasty founded by Tuglak Shah, from 1321 to 1393. Then followed the inroad of Timur and subsequent anarchy; and the Afghan Lodi dynasty lasted from 1450 to the invasion of Baber in 1526. Baber died in the Charbagh at Agra, on December 26th, 1530, and his son and successor, Humayun, was defeated and driven out of India by the able and determined Afghan chief, Shir Shah, in 1540. Shir Shah died on the throne, and was succeeded by a son and grandson, while Humayun took refuge with Tahmasp, the Shah of Persia. The restored Afghans kept their power for fifteen years.

The story of Humayun's flight is told by his faithful ewer bearer, named Jauhar, who accompanied him in his exile. Jauhar tells us that, in October 1542, a little party of seven or eight horsemen and a few camels was wearily journeying over the sandy wastes of Sind, worn out with fatigue, and famished with thirst. The fugitive Prince Humayun, his wife the youthful Hamida (Humayun met this young lady, when on a visit to his brother Hindal's mother; she was a daughter of a Seyyid, a native of Jami in Khurasan), the ewer bearer Jauhar, an officer named Rushen Beg, and a few others, formed the party. Extreme misery had destroyed alike the differences of rank and the power of concealing the true character. When Rushen's horse was worn out, he insisted upon taking one which he had lent to the Queen, a young girl of fifteen within a few days of her confinement. Humayun gave his own horse to his wife, walked some distance, and then got on a baggage camel. A