

## AKBAR'S TOMB AT SIKANDRA.

few hours afterwards the forlorn wanderers entered the fort of Amarkot, near Tatta, which is surrounded by a dreary waste of sand-hills. Here, under the shade of an *arka* tree, young Hamida gave birth to a prince, who afterwards became the most enlightened thinker, and the ablest administrator of his age. Akbar was born on the 14th of October 1542. Jauhar, by Humayun's order, brought a pod of musk, which the fugitive king broke and distributed among his followers, saying, "This is all the present I can afford to make you on the birth of my son, whose fame, I trust, will one day be expanded all over the world, as the perfume of the musk now fills this room."

The fugitives then fled up the Bolan Pass, and the little Akbar remained for some time in the hands of his turbulent uncles at Kandahar and Kabul, while his parents took refuge at the court of Persia. Then the wheel of fortune turned. Assisted by Bhairam Khan, a very able general and a native of Badakshan, Humayun fought his way back into military possession of Lahore and Delhi, and died in 1556, leaving his inheritance, such as it was, to his young son.

At the time of his father's death, Akbar was only in his fifteenth year. He was then in the Punjab, with Bhairam Khan, putting down the last efforts of the Afghan faction. Bhairam Khan became Regent, and remained in power until 1560, when the young King assumed the sovereignty.

In order to appreciate the full extent of Akbar's achievements, it must be considered that he had to conquer his dominions first, before he could even think of those great administrative improvements which signalized the latter part of his life and immortalized his name. In the first year he possessed the Punjab, and the country round Delhi and Agra; in the third year he acquired Ajmir; in the fourth, Gwalior and Oudh; and in 1572 he conquered Gujrat, Bengal, and Bihar; but it took several years before order could be established in those countries. Orissa was annexed to Akbar's empire in 1578, by Todar Mall, who made a revenue survey of the province in 1582. In 1581 Kabul submitted, and was placed under the rule of Akbar's brother, Mirza Hakim. Kashmir was annexed in 1586, Sind in 1592, and in 1594 Kandahar was recovered from the Persians. Kashmir was ruled by Hindu princes until the beginning of the fourteenth century, when it was conquered by the Muhammadans. Owing to distractions in the reigning family, Akbar sent an army into Kashmir in 1586. The king then submitted, and was enrolled among the Delhi nobles. In 1595 Akbar commenced a long war with the Muhammadan Kings of the Dakhin, ending in the acquisition of Berar. These wars, which were spread over nearly the whole of Akbar's reign, need not further engage our attention. But in contemplating the reforms of this admirable prince, it must be borne in mind that their merit is enhanced by the fact that most of them were effected during troublous times, and at periods when there must have been great pressure on his finances. He was a renowned warrior, skilled in all warlike exercises, and an able and successful general. But it is not these qualities which raise Akbar so far above the common herd of rulers. His greatness consists in his enlightened toleration, in his love of learning, in his justice and magnanimity, and in the success with which he administered a vast empire. The excellence of his instruments is one striking proof of his capacity and genius.

The commencement of Akbar's intellectual revolution dates from the introduction to him of Faizi and Abú-l Fazl, the illustrious sons of Mubarak. Their father, Shaikh Mubarak, traced his descent from an Arabian dervish, of Yemen, who settled in Sind. The Shaikh was a man of genius and great learning, and, having established himself at Agra, gave his two sons excellent educations. Faizi, the eldest, was born in 1545. He first went to court in 1568, at the age of twenty-three, and soon became the Emperor's constant companion and friend. In 1589 he was made Poet Laureate, and he was employed on several diplomatic missions. He was a man of profound learning and original genius. He was loved by the Emperor, who was thrown into the deepest grief at his death, which took place at the age of fifty, on October 5th, 1595. "Shaikh Jío," he exclaimed, "I have brought Hakim Ali with me, will you not speak to me?" Getting no answer, in his grief he threw his turban on the ground, and wept aloud.

Shaikh Abú-l Fazl, called Allami, the younger son of Mubarak, was born on January 14th, 1551, at Agra. He zealously studied under the care of his father; and in his seventeenth year, towards the end of 1574, he was presented to the Emperor Akbar by his brother Faizi.

Owing to the birth of his eldest surviving son Salim, at Sikri, in 1570, Akbar had made that place a royal abode. He built a palace and other splendid edifices there, and it became one of his favourite places of residence. It was called Fathpúr Sikri. Thither Akbar went after his campaign in Bihar in 1574, and there his intimacy with Abú-l Fazl commenced. It was at this time that the memorable Thursday evening discussions began. Akbar's resolution was to rule with even hand men of all creeds in his dominions, and he was annoyed by the intolerance and casuistry of the *Ulamas*, or learned men of the predominant religion. He himself said, "I have seen that God bestows the blessings of His gracious providence upon all His creatures without distinction.