

AKBAR'S TOMB AT SIKANDRA.

appear to have been assessed according to the value of the crops, the surveys of the land not being complete. Akbar took one-third of the estimated value, and he left the option of payment in kind to the farmers, except in the case of sugar-cane and other expensive crops.

The "Ain-i Akbari" of Abú-l Fazl is rendered valuable not only by the varied information it contains, but also by the trustworthiness of the author. Mr. Blochmann says that Abú-l Fazl has been too often accused by European writers of flattery, and of wilful concealment of facts damaging to the reputation of his master. He bears witness that a study of the "Akbar-namah" has convinced him that the charge is absolutely unfounded. Abú-l Fazl's love of truth, and his correctness of information are apparent on every page of his great work.

The last years of the reign of Akbar were clouded with sorrow. His eldest son, Salim, was dissipated, ungrateful, and rebellious, and bore special hatred against his father's noble minister. The two younger sons died early from the effects of drink. "Alas," exclaimed Abú-l Fazl, "that wine should be burdened with suffering, and that its sweet nectar should be a deadly poison!" Many Muhammadan princes died of *delirium tremens* before the introduction of tobacco, which took place towards the end of Akbar's reign. Asad Beg says that he first saw tobacco at Bijapur. He brought a pipe and a stock of tobacco to Agra, and presented it to the Emperor, who made a trial. The custom of smoking spread rapidly among the nobles, but Akbar never adopted it himself.

In 1597 Abú-l Fazl left the court, and went for the first time on active service in the Dakhin. He had been absent for more than four years, when the rebellious conduct of Salim, the heir apparent, induced Akbar to recall his trusty minister. His presence was urgently needed. Abú-l Fazl hurriedly set out for Agra, only accompanied by a few men. Salim thought this an excellent opportunity of getting rid of his father's faithful friend, and bribed Rajah Bir Singh, a Bundela chief of Urchah, through whose territory he would have to pass, to waylay him. On the 12th of August 1602, at a distance of a few miles from Narwar, Bir Singh's men came in sight. The minister thought it a disgrace to fly, which he might easily have done. He defended himself bravely, but, pierced by the lance of a trooper, he fell dead on the ground. The assassin sent the head of Abú-l Fazl to his employer; and Akbar, with all the diligence of his officers and troops, was never able to secure and punish the murderer. His own son was the greater criminal of the two, and in his memoirs Salim confesses his guilt with unblushing effrontery.

Mr. Blochmann thus sums up the career of Abú-l Fazl. "As a writer he is unrivalled. Everywhere in India he is known as the great Munshi. His letters are studied in all Madrasahs, and are perfect models. His influence on his age was immense. He led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered court the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result."

The great Emperor did not long survive his beloved and faithful minister. Akbar died on November 10th, 1605, in his sixty-third year, and was buried in the magnificent tomb at Sikandra, near Agra. There his bones still rest, and his tomb is treated with all honour and respect by the present rulers of the land. A new cloth to cover the actual tomb was presented by the Earl of Northbrook, after his visit to Sikandra in November 1873, when he was Viceroy of India.

His children were Hasan and Husain, who died in infancy; Salim, his successor; Murad and Danyal, who died of drink in the lifetime of their father, and three daughters. Akbar is described by his son Salim as a very tall man, with the strength of a lion, which was indicated by the great breadth of his chest. His complexion was rather fair (*color de trigo* is the description of a Spanish missionary who knew him), his eyes and eyebrows dark, his countenance handsome. His beard was close-shaved. His bearing was majestic, and "the qualities of his mind seemed to raise him above the denizens of this lower world." The Emperor Akbar combined the thoughtful philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, the toleration of Julian, the enterprise and daring of his own grandsire Baber, with the administrative genius of a Monro or a Thomason. We might search through the dynasties of the East and West for many centuries back, and fail to discover so grand and noble a character as that of Akbar. No sovereign has come nearer to the ideal of a father of his people.

Akbar was the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth. He began to reign two years before her, and outlived her for two years, but he was nine years younger than the great Queen. He was succeeded by his son Salim, under the name of Jahanghir, who reigned from 1605 to 1627.

The native sources whence the story of Akbar's glorious reign are derived, have already been indicated. To a considerable extent they are accessible in an English form. The translation of the "Ain-i Akbari," by Gladwin, was published in 1800, and that of the historian Ferishta, by General Briggs, in 1829. Elphinstone gives a brief account of Akbar's reign in his history of India. In 1873 Blochmann's admirable translation of the two first