

remains, nevertheless, quite indescribable. As a matter of course, our first hours in Agra were devoted to contemplation of that tender elegy in marble, which by its beauty, has made immortal the loveliness that it commemorates.

"In all the world no queen had ever such a monument. You determine to judge it dispassionately, not carried away by the remembrance that twenty thousand workmen were employed for twenty-two years in its construction, that it cost hard upon two million pounds sterling, and that gems and precious stones came in camel-loads from all parts of the earth to furnish the inlayers with their material. Then you pass beneath the stately portal—in itself sufficient to commemorate the proudest of princesses—and as the white cupola of the Taj rises before the gaze and reveals



TOMB OF ITMAD-UD-DAULAT.

its beauty—grace by grace—as you pace along the paved avenue, the mind refuses to criticize what enchants the eye and fills the heart with a sentiment of reverence for the royal love which could thus translate itself into alabaster. If it be time of sunlight, the day is softened to perpetual afternoon; the shadows cast from the palms and peepuls, the thuja trees, and the pomegranates, while the hot wind is cooled by the scent of roses and jasmine. If it be moonlight, the dark avenue leads the gaze mysteriously to the soft and lofty splendour of that dome. In either case, when the first platform is reached, and the full glory of the snow-white wonder comes into sight, one can no more stay to criticize its details than to analyze a beautiful face suddenly seen. Admiration, delight, astonishment, blend in the absorbed thought with a feeling that human affection never struggled more ardently, passionately, and triumphantly against the oblivion of