

aperture of the staircase is so wide that elephants can ascend, and a person on whom I could rely, told me that when the minaret was a-building, he saw an elephant ascend to the very top with a load of stones." Also, in speaking of the incomplete minaret, which was commenced by one of the Sultans (I forget which) in rivalry of the Kutb Minar, he tells us that its staircase was so great that three elephants could mount abreast, and though only one-third of the altitude was completed, that fraction was already as high as the adjoining minaret (the Kutb)! These are gross exaggerations, though I am not provided with the actual dimensions of either staircase to compare with them.¹ This test I can offer, however, in reference to a third remarkable object in the court of the same mosque, the celebrated Iron *Láth*, or column: "In the centre of the mosque there is to be seen an enormous pillar, made of some unknown metal. One of the learned Hindus told

¹ The total diameter of the Kutb Minar at the base is 47 feet 3 inches, and at the top about 9 feet. The doorway is a small one, not larger at most I think than an ordinary London street-door, though I cannot give its dimensions. The uncompleted minaret is certainly not half the height of the Kutb; in diameter it is perhaps twice as great. Ibn Batuta was no doubt trying to communicate from memory the impression of vastness which these buildings had made upon his mind, and if he had not been so specific there would have been little fault to find.

In justice to him we may quote a much more exaggerated contemporary notice of the Kutb in the interesting book called *Masálak Al Absár*. The author mentions on the authority of Shaik Burhan-uddin Bursi that the minaret of Dehli was 600 cubits high! (*Notices et Extraits*, xiii, p. 180).

On the other hand, the account given by Abulfeda is apparently quite accurate. "Attached to the mosque (of Dehli) is a tower which has no equal in the whole world. It is built of red stone with about 360 steps. It is not square but has a great number of angles, is very massive at the base, and very lofty, equalling in height the Pharos of Alexandria" (*Gildemeister*, p. 190). I may add that Ibn Batuta was certainly misinformed as to the date and builder of the Kutb. He ascribes it to Sultan Muizzuddin (otherwise called Kaikobád), grandson of Balban (A.D. 1286-1290). But the real date is nearly a century older. It was begun by Kutb-uddin Eibék when governing for Shahab-uddin of Ghazni (otherwise Mahomed Bin Sam, A.D. 1193-1206), and completed by Altamsh (1207-1236). Ibn Batuta ascribes the rival structure to Kutb-uddin Khilji (Mubarik Shah, 1316-1320), and in this also I think he is wrong, though I cannot correct him.