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No. 9.

Mosque of Shaikh 'Abdu-n Nabī

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LIST OF PLATES.



- PLATE I.—Mosque of Shaikh Abdu-n-Nabi.
" II.—Ground plan of the Mosque of Shaikh Abdu-n-Nabi.
" III.—Inscription on the marble tablet.



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MOSQUE OF SHAIKH 'ABDU-N NABĪ.

AT a distance of about a mile from the Delhi gate of Shāhjahānābād on the Delhi Muttra road there lies a mosque built by Shaiikh 'Abdu-n Nabī, the Şadr-u-Şadūr or Chief Şadr of Akbar. The mosque belongs to the style of early Mughal architecture exhibited in the Khairu-l Manāzil,¹ and contains a central hemispherical dome without any flanking towers or *mīnārs* which "were considered nearly indispensable in the buildings of the Mughals very shortly afterwards."² It is constructed of rubble masonry rendered with plaster, and consists of an oblong hall measuring some 73' north and south by 33' east and west. The latter is divided into three compartments communicating with each other by archways. The eastern façade is relieved by three pointed arches, the central of them, which is the highest, being 28' 8" in height and 19' 1" in width. Recessed deeply from these are the actual entrances to the prayer chamber consisting of pointed arches each 15' 6" high and 11' 1" wide. The spandrels of all the arches were ornamented with circular bosses of plaster incised with the Muhammadan creed or geometrical patterns bordered with floral designs, but excepting a few which are extremely faded, they have all disappeared.

The central compartment, which is covered by a dome, is 24' 2" square. At the height of 25' 3" from the floor the square is brought to an octagon by the usual arched pendentives, the sides facing north, south and west being pierced with arched windows, and some 11' higher up the dome springs from a sixteen sided drum. It rises 15' above the drum and is crowned by a plaster lotus cresting. The inner west wall of the prayer chamber is provided with three prayer niches or *mīhrābs* corresponding to the three outer openings.

The soffits of the central dome as well as of the vaults which cover the side apartments, are ornamented with incised plaster, but the principal feature of ornamentation is the many-coloured tiles, set in pleasing designs which embellish the *mīhrābs*. Circular tile discs inscribed with the name of God or the Muhammadan creed are also to be found on the walls and the spandrels of the eastern arch inside the central apartment. These details of ornamentation are, however, fast disappearing, and to a certain extent have already vanished. The mosque is in an advanced stage of decay

¹ A mosque built by Māham Anagah, the wet nurse of Akbar and the mother of Adham Khān, in the year 1561 A.D. It lies between miles 2 and 3 from Delhi on the Muttra road (vide Carr Stephen, pp. 199-200).

² Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. (London 1910) part II, p. 920.

sent for, the former having been appointed chief of the caravan of pilgrims and entrusted with the money sent to the deserving people there. But the news of the insurrection of Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm, infused the two exiles with wild and undefined hopes, who forthwith, inspite of the admonitions of the Sherif of Mecca and in direct contravention to the injunctions of the Emperor, embarked for home and landed in Gujarat in 990 A.H. (1582 A.D.). The Makhdumu-l Mulk died at Ahmada-bad, but 'Abdu-n Nabī received orders to attend the royal presence.¹ On his arrival at Fathpur, an account of 70,000 rupees which the Emperor gave him when he set off for Mecca was demanded of him, and with a view to make him settle it, he was made over into the custody of Rāja Ṭoḍar Mal, and for some time was imprisoned like a defaulting tax gatherer in the counting-house of the office, where one night a mob strangled him.² Another historian³ says that 'Abdu-n Nabī was handed over to Abul Fazl who either strangled him owing to previous enmity, or let him suffer a natural death. His death occurred in the year 992 A.H. (1584 A.D.).

ZAFAR HASAN.

¹ *Maāthīru-l Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 563-4; Vol. III, p. 256.

² *Muntaḥhabu-l Tawāriḫ*, Vol. II, p. 311.

³ *Maāthīru-l Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 564.

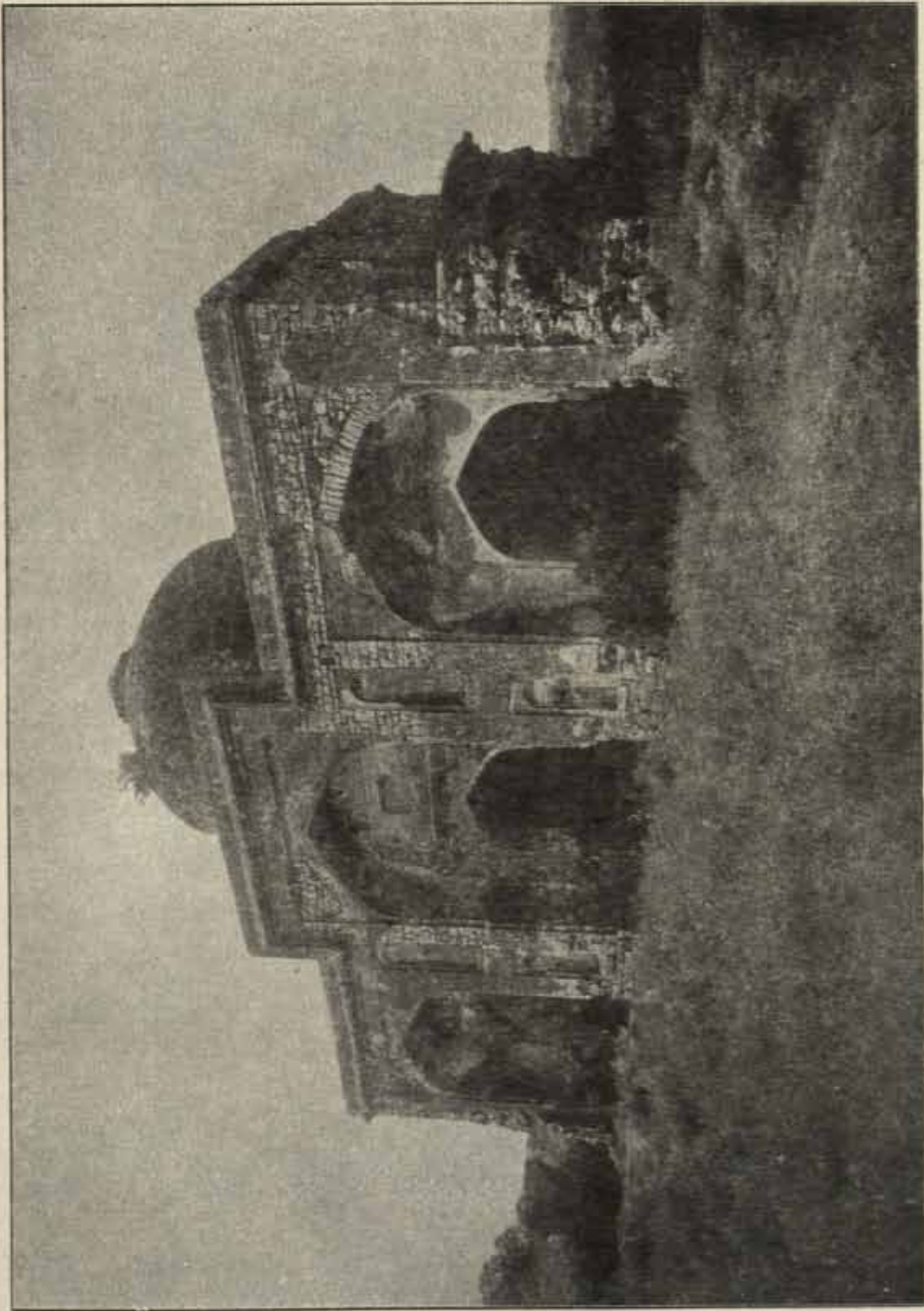
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INDEX.

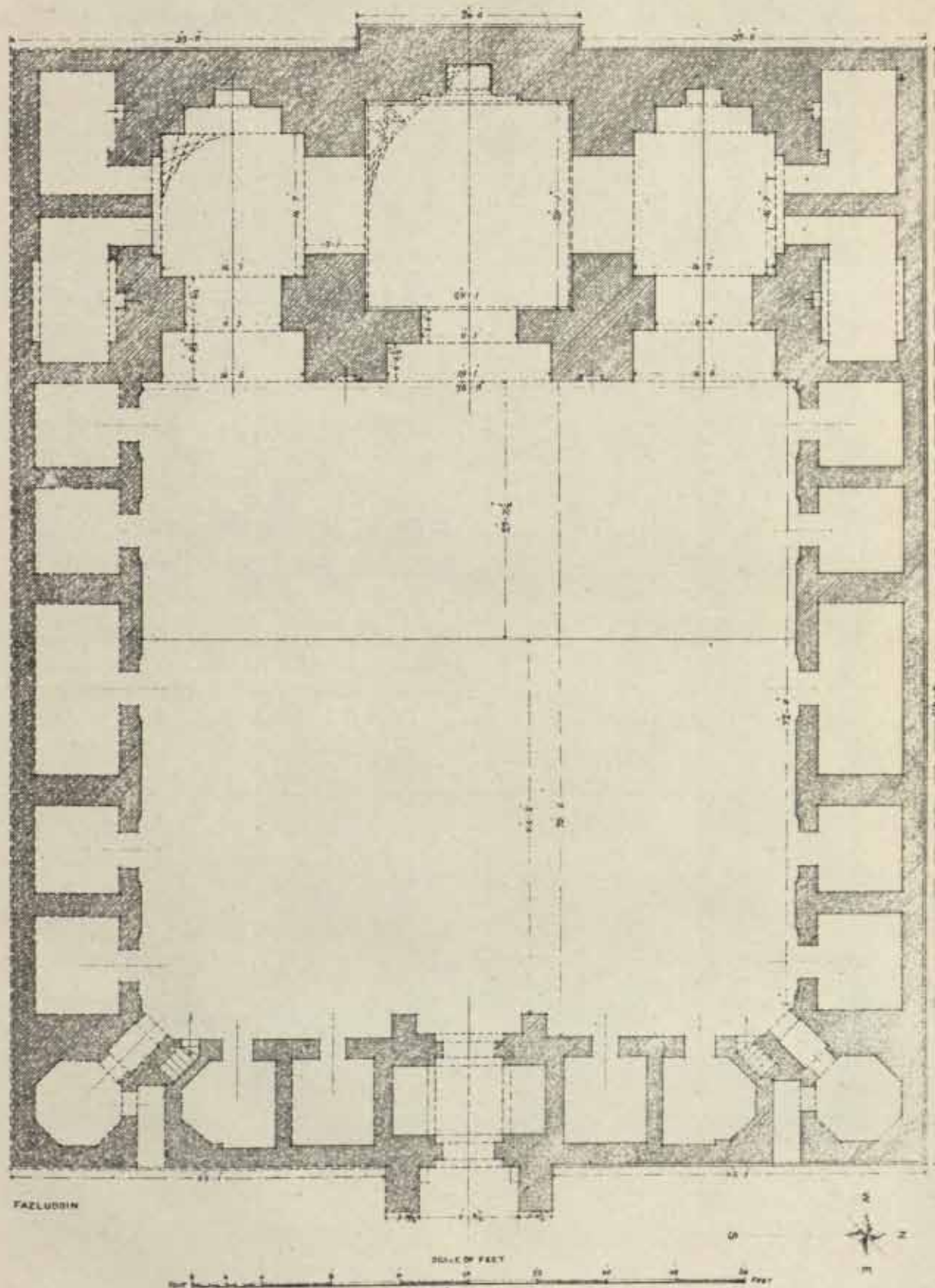


Abdullah Anṣārī, Maulānā	9, 3, 4.
Abdu-l Quddūs of Gangoh, <u>Shaikh</u> , grandfather of <u>Shaikh</u> Abdu-n Nabi	9, 3.
Abdu-n Nabi, <u>Shaikh</u>	9, 3, 4.
Abul Fazl	9, 4.
Aḥmad, <u>Shaikh</u> , father of <u>Shaikh</u> Abdu-n Nabi	9, 3.
Akbar	9, 3.
Faizī, Akbar's poet laureate	9, 2.
Jahāngīr	9, 3.
Maḥdūmu-l Mulk, <i>see</i> Abdullah Anṣārī.	
Mosque of <u>Shaikh</u> Abdu-n Nabi	9, 1.
Muḥammad Ḥakīm Mirzā	9, 4.
Toḍar Mal, Rāja	9, 4.



Mosque of Sheikh 'Abdu'n-Nabi.

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