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THE SAINTS OF PANDHARPUR : The Dawn of the Maratha Power

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All communications for the Society should be addressed to the Secretary, John Street, Adelphi, W.C.

NOTICE.

NEXT WEEK.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8th, 4.30 p.m. (Ordinary Meeting.) CHARLES R. DARLING, A.R.C.Sc.I., F.I.C., "Optical Appliances in Warfare." RICHARD T. GLAZEBROOK, C.B., M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., Director of the National Physical Laboratory, will preside.

Further particulars of the Society's meetings will be found at the end of this number.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

INDIAN SECTION.

A meeting of the Indian Section was held on Thursday, February 17th, 1916; LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR DAVID BARR, K.C.S.I., in the chair.

The paper read was—

THE SAINTS OF PANDHARPUR : THE DAWN OF THE MARATHA POWER.

By C. A. KINCAID, C.V.O., I.C.S.,
Author of "Deccan Nursery Tales," "The Indian Heroes," "The Tale of a Tulsi Plant," etc.

The subject of my paper is the early dawn of the Maratha power. I wish, however, to preface it by some explanatory remarks. In the course of it I have carefully abstained from laying down that any particular fact is legendary and not historical. The men whose names I shall mention are worshipped either as divine saints or as incarnations of various deities. To hazard publicly an opinion that any of their recorded miracles never occurred might possibly give great offence.

That you may better understand the subject of this paper, I would ask you for a moment to come back with me to the year A.D. 1192. At that time Delhi was the capital of Prithvi Raj, chief of the Chohan Rajputs; Kanauj was the

capital of the Rathors. South of the Vindhya Mountains a new dynasty had just emerged. One Bhillama Yadhav, a Maratha chief of the same family as the rulers of Dhorasamudra in Mysore, had, after a series of battles, declared himself independent and had founded as his capital the town of Devgiri, now known as Daulatabad. In the Punjab a foreigner had established himself. Between the Afghan cities of Ghazni and Herat run the hills of Ghor. The wild tribes of that region had overpowered the successors of Mahmud the Ghaznvide, who more than sixty years before had raided India to sack Somnath; and, led by a great captain, Muizzadin, better known as Mahomed Ghori, they had consolidated into a powerful kingdom, Sind, the North-Western Punjab and Eastern Afghanistan. Mahomed Ghori had, in 1191, tried to push further eastwards into India; but he had been severely defeated by Prithvi Raj. The year A.D. 1192 was to see the Afghan's revenge. On the scene of his previous defeat he overthrew the Chohans, and on the banks of the Jumna he defeated the Rathors.

By these two victories Mahomed Ghori founded the Mussulman kingdom of Delhi, which was to last over 600 years, and in the course of his reign most of Northern India fell a prey to his arms. The country south of the Vindhya was not immediately affected by the success of the Ghori Afghans. For 100 years afterwards the Yadhav dynasty not only endured but prospered. Thus when, in 1290, Jalaluddin Firoz Khilji became Emperor of Delhi, Ramdev Yadhav, the fifth in descent from Bhillama, had been ruling over Devgiri for nineteen years. For four years more he continued to rule without any mishap, when a palace squabble in Delhi struck down his prosperity. Jalaluddin's nephew Alauddin was married to the Emperor's daughter. The marriage was unhappy, and Alauddin feared that his wife would induce her father to kill or imprison her husband. He asked for and obtained leave to collect an army to attack

Chanderi. Then he passed beyond it into the Deccan, and without any warning raided Devgiri. The raid was a complete success. The Maratha chief offered hardly any resistance and gladly paid a huge ransom. With it and the prestige of victory Alauddin returned to Delhi, and not long afterwards murdered his uncle and became emperor in his stead. Once master of the Delhi throne, Alauddin reduced Devgiri to vassalage. His successor, Kutubuddin Mubarak, completely subdued it.

The extraordinary collapse of Devgiri was probably due to other causes than the superior physique or courage of the Mussulmans. The previous establishment of the Spaniards in the Caribbean Sea was of itself the main cause of the downfall of the Aztecs. The ferment in the mind of Montezuma more surely caused his ruin than the military skill of Cortez. In the same way the conquest of the great Rajput kingdoms of the North, and the intrusion of another religion—that of Islam—into India, upset all the previous conceptions of the Hindus. The Brahmans pronounced that the domination of the Mussulmans was foreordained to last for 30,000 years. And long before the Afghans came the Marathas had accepted them as their future conquerors. Nor did the conquest cease with the overthrow of the Yadhavs. For a moment it seemed likely that the whole Deccan would turn Mussulman. From this national calamity the Maratha race was saved by the Saints of Pandharpur.

The first of these saints was Dnyandev. Although it is impossible to fix exactly the dates of any of them, we may say with some certainty that Dnyandev was a contemporary of Alauddin and of Ramdev. The story of his birth, as told by Mahipati, is as follows. The sins of the world had so increased that Brahmadev and Shiva sought out Vishnu to consider the question. As a result of the interview Shiva took the form of Nivratti, Vishnu that of Dnyandev, and Brahmadev that of Sopana. Lastly Laxmi assumed human shape in their sister Muktabai. The method of the incarnation was as follows. The earthly father of the three brothers and their sister was one Vithoba, a Brahman from Apegaon. His wife was one Rakhmai, the daughter of a Brahman at Alandi, a small town on the Indryani, about twelve miles north of Poona. Vithoba and Rakhmai settled at Alandi, but the married pair, although happy, were childless. In a fit of melancholy, caused by the death of his parents, Vithoba went to Benares and became a *sanyasi*, or anchorite.

This was a sin on his part, for no one who has a living wife and no children should take *sanyas*. Eventually his preceptor came to hear the true facts, which Vithoba had concealed, and made him return to Alandi and once again to live with his wife. This reunion led to the birth of Nivratti, Dnyandev, Sopana and Muktabai. The return, however, of Vithoba to the life of a householder, after he had taken a vow of asceticism, offended deeply the Brahmans of Alandi. They out-casted him. And when he wished to have his son Nivratti invested with the sacred thread they refused, unless he could get the Brahmans of Paithan, a holy place on the Godaveri, to give him a letter of purification. Nivratti with his two brothers and his sister went to Paithan, asked for the letter, and at first received a flat refusal. Then the Brahmans said that if Nivratti bowed to every cow, ass, hare or dog that he met, thinking the while of Brahmadev, they would relent in his favour. Lastly, hearing Dnyandev's name, they mocked him by transferring it to a buffalo that happened to pass. Dnyandev, however, was in no way disconcerted. He placed his hand on the buffalo's head. And to show that in the sight of God no earthly distinctions mattered, he made the buffalo recite the four Vedas without an error. This miracle was soon followed by another one. He called up the ancestors of his landlord to attend the *shradh* ceremony of the latter's father in place of the Brahmans who had refused his invitation owing to the presence of his four polluted lodgers. Convinced by these two miracles, the Paithan Brahmans gave the letter of purification to Nivratti, and he was duly invested with the sacred thread. To tell the miracles of Dnyandev and his brethren would take me many hours. I shall simply relate one more, which occurred at Alandi. A certain Changdev—really an incarnation of Indra—was a Brahman of extraordinary occult power and knowledge. The allotted term of his life was only 100 years. By an original device he managed to prolong it to 1,400 years. When his 100 years were on the point of closing he disengaged his soul from his body and hid it, leaving his corpse on the ground. When Yama, the god of death, came to take away Changdev's soul, he found only an empty corpse, and after a vain search for the soul had to leave on other business. Directly Yama left, Changdev's soul came out of its hiding, re-entered his body, and started on a fresh 100 years. When he had done this fourteen times he had acquired a vast amount of experience and wisdom, and

wished to try a fall with Dnyandev. Changdev did not declare open warfare. He affected to wish that Dnyandev should become his *guru*, or spiritual teacher. He wished to send him a letter to this effect, but as he could not bring himself to address Dnyandev as *tirtharup* (i.e., father), he sent Dnyandev merely a blank sheet of paper. Nevertheless, Dnyandev grasped Changdev's meaning, and in reply sent him a letter of sixty-five verses. But the sense was too deep for Changdev. Unwilling to confess himself beaten, he mounted a tiger, took a snake in his hand for a whip and, followed by over one thousand pupils, he sailed through the sky until he met Dnyandev outside Alandi. Dnyandev, however, was in no way disturbed by the apparition. He mounted a wall and made it run alongside Changdev's tiger. Both man and beast were dumbfounded, and Changdev became a devout follower of Dnyandev. I may add that Changdev obtained no further extension of life. When his current one hundred years expired, Yama came again and this time carried off Changdev's soul in triumph.

The poet Namdev, to whom I shall again refer, has told in touching stanzas the death of Dnyandev. When he felt the approach of death, he asked that he might be buried at Pandharpur. But the god Krishna bade him choose Alandi as his burial place. There, amid a great company of gods and saints, Dnyandev entered alive a cave dug beneath an image of Nandi (Shiva's bull), and ordered it to be closed. A golden peepul tree grew out of his tomb. His bamboo staff took root and grew into a tree. And to-day Alandi is regarded by Marathas as only second in holiness to Pandharpur.

But let us return to our main theme. Why should Dnyandev be called a Saint of Pandharpur? Pandharpur is a very old shrine in the Sholapur district, on the banks of the Bhima. It appears to have once been a shrine of Shiva; but within historical times the worship of Shiva has been overshadowed by that of Vithal. According to Sir R. Bhandarkar, Vithal, or Vithu, is merely a Canarese corruption of Vishnu; and at Pandharpur Vithal is regarded as a synonym of Vishnu's incarnation Krishna. Now Dnyandev was a follower of Krishna; his books, the *Dnyaneshwari* and the *Amritanubhav*, glorify Krishna. By his talents and fame he made it the chief religious centre in the Deccan. Next, how did he save the Maratha race? To those who were drawn towards Islam he offered another and more warmly coloured faith. Instead

of the austere prophet of Arabia, he bade men look to the wondrous child of Mathura; by holding out hopes of brighter things in a future life he enabled men better to bear their present troubles. At one time an out-caste himself, his renown as a saint proved to men of all castes that Krishna looked more to faith in him than to pure birth or sacrifice or ceremonial. Devotees of all, especially the lower, castes began to crowd to Pandharpur. One famous worshipper, Savata, was a *mali*, a gardener; Ranka was a *kumbhar*, or potter; Chokhamela was a *mhar*, one of the untouchable classes. Yet, according to Mahipati, he found such favour in the eyes of Vithal that one night, after the priests had mocked Chokhamela, Vithal's image descended from its shrine and, lifting Chokhamela from his bed, carried him inside the temple and placed him by its side. Nor did Pandharpur attract only Hindus. Kabir, a Mussulman weaver, was permitted to become one of Vithal's most ardent worshippers. Nor did her sex exclude Mirabai. Betrothed as a young girl in the usual Hindu way to a boy of her own caste and position, she fell in love with Krishna's image. And, resisting all and various persecutions, she became an ardent follower of the god, and eventually migrating to Dwarka composed there the first poems ever written in Guzarathi. But when caste ties are weakened, as Dnyandev's teaching weakened them, something else must take its place. Man, a gregarious animal, wishes to associate with other men on some common basis. The usual substitutes for caste are common religion and common language. And so it followed that all those who worshipped at Pandharpur, and could speak to each other in the language of Dnyandev, and could read his poetry, became drawn to each other. In this way the Maratha race became the Maratha nation.

I would now ask you once again to turn to political history. In 1347, about fifty years after Alauddin's first assault on Devgiri, Hasan Ganga revolted against the Delhi emperor, Mahomed Tughlak, and founded what is known as the Bahmani empire; and now for the first time since the conquest we hear of the Marathas. By the aid of the Maratha nobles the revolution succeeded. They were no longer the tough country bumpkins so easily routed by Alauddin. The poetry and metaphysics of Pandharpur had enlarged their minds; they had become capable of learning military science and of proving useful allies to a great soldier. This change in the Maratha nobles is reflected in the work of the Pandharpur poet Namdev. This famous

man deserves really a paper to himself; as it is, I can give him very little space. According to Mahipati, Namdev was an incarnation of Uddhav, the friend of Krishna. His parents, Damshet and Gonabai, were members of the Shimpi, or tailor caste, and lived at Pandharpur. They were childless, but in their old age Vithal took pity on them and granted them a son. He was not born in the usual way, but was found by Gonabai inside a shell that came floating down the Bhima River. Damshet and Gonabai accepted him gladly, and by means of another miracle Gonabai, although advanced in years and not his mother, was able to nurse him herself. Namdev always writes of himself as a contemporary of Dnyandev; but, as Sir R. Bhandarkar has pointed out, the difference between the Marathi of the two poets makes this impossible. According to Sir R. Bhandarkar, Namdev lived at the close of the fourteenth century. Taking this surmise as correct, Namdev lived some years after the Bahmani empire had been founded by the aid of the Maratha nobles. He neglected entirely his tailor's business to become an ardent psalmist of the god Vithal; but whereas Dnyandev bade his readers cast out from their minds all earthly affairs, a different tendency is to be found in Namdev's verses. He advises his followers not to make vows, fasts, or pilgrimages, or to practise austerities. They will find salvation in the remembrance of Hari (*i.e.*, Vithal). If they are so unfortunate as to have worldly duties, let them perform them; but they should, during the performance, remember god always. And here follows a delightful illustration. They should act exactly like an unfaithful wife. To the outside world she appears to be attending to her husband's comforts, but inwardly she never ceases to think of her absent lover.

At the close of the fifteenth century the Bahmani empire began to break up, and in its place arose the states of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Berar and Bidar. These five states were always quarrelling; they were cut off from the Mussulman recruiting ground beyond the Himalayas. Thus the Marathas yearly obtained fresh opportunities of advancement, and by the sixteenth century we find Mores and Nimbalkars, Ghatges and Manes, Ghorpades and Daphles, holding high offices both in Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Indeed, it is probable that within another 200 years the Mussulman Padshahs would automatically have disappeared in favour of Hindu kings had not certain events happened beyond the

Vindhya. In 1526 Babar, King of Ferghana, successfully invaded India, and founded what is known as the Moghul Empire. In 1556 his grandson Akbar became Emperor of Delhi; and he, his grandson Shah Jehan, and his great grandson Aurangzib, never ceased to covet the southern kingdoms as former provinces of the Delhi empire. The most accessible, and therefore the first victim, was Ahmadnagar, and by 1637 it had been completely annexed. It was clear that Bijapur would soon meet the same fate, and the Marathas, so far from realising their hopes of independence, seemed likely to become merely "a conscript appendage to a foreign power." Let us now see how this calamity affected the Saints of Pandharpur. In 1607 there was born at Dehu, a town fourteen miles to the north-east of Poona, one Tukaram More. He inherited a village shop, but he had no head for business. His thoughts, influenced by the sufferings of his country, turned to religion; he became bankrupt, and, leaving his wife to provide for their family as best she could, he turned for consolation to Vithoba. But the old Brahmanical opposition to saintship in inferior castes, crushed at Pandharpur, lingered at Dehu. Tukaram was forced to throw his poems into the Indryani, which passes by Dehu. Vithoba, however, befriended him, and the poems a few days later returned perfectly dry to the surface of the water. After this miracle Tukaram was hailed as a saint, and when he died at the age of forty-two or thereabouts, at Dehu, Vishnu sent his heavenly chariot to convey him to heaven. In Tukaram's works we find a distinct retreat from Namdev's position to that of the earliest saints. Nowhere have I seen any suggestion that man's duty lies in work. On the contrary, Tukaram repeats over and over again, "False is the world; Hari (*i.e.*, Vithoba) alone is real." At the same time he emphasizes the view that in the eyes of Vithoba caste has no meaning: "God does not feel ashamed to help anyone; he seeks to comfort people of all conditions."

But if the political situation made Tukaram despair, there were two men alive at this time who saw that out of it might arise freedom. The first was a Deshasth Brahman called Narayan; he was the son of a certain Suryajipant and his wife Rambai. From his earliest days the young Brahman devoted himself to the worship, not of Vithoba, but of Ramchandra the conqueror of Lanka, the seventh instead of the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. Nevertheless, Pandharpur can claim him as one of her saints,

for, according to his biographer, Narayan received a call to Pandharpur from Vithal himself. When he went there the god informed him that Rama and Vithal were one, and commanded him to visit Pandharpur at least once a year. This command Narayan did not fail to obey. The second was a lad of amazing talents, who was growing to manhood in Poona city. His father had been one of the foremost soldiers in the service of Ahmadnagar. He had tried in vain to save that kingdom, and after its fall had taken service with the king of Bijapur. The lad's mother was a descendant of the old Yadhav kings of Devgiri. His parents had quarrelled and the boy grew up under the care of his mother Jijabai and an old Brahman called Dadaji Kondev. No surroundings could have been more favourable to the growth of a daring man. The Brahman repeated to the boy the old Sanskrit tales of the Indian heroes, until the latter vowed that he would be as brave as Ramchandra and as knightly as Arjuna. At the same time Jijabai told her son legends of the glory of the old Hindu kings his ancestors, and urged him to restore at least some measure of their greatness. The boy grew into a man. He first seized the forts round Poona, and then successfully defied in turn the governments of Bijapur and Delhi. His name was Shivaji Bhosle, and he is immortal as the liberator of the Maratha nation. This, however, is not the place to write of Shivaji the conqueror. I wish to show his connection with the Saints of Pandharpur. From the first Shivaji was a deeply religious man. After his successful raid on Chandrarav More, Shivaji fortified Pratapgad. It was an anxious time, as Bijapur would certainly try to avenge their officer's death. Shivaji's thoughts turned to things spiritual. He sought a preceptor to instruct him more fully in religion. By this time the young Narayan had become a renowned saint. So fervently did he worship Ramchandra that men said that he was an incarnation of Maruti, the monkey god who helped the divine hero on his southern march. And Narayan himself took the name of *Ramdas*, or slave of Rama. Shivaji heard of him, and wished to make him his *guru* or spiritual teacher, and went to see him at Chaphal where he had built a temple to his favourite god. But Ramdas hid himself and Shivaji sought him everywhere in vain. At last Shivaji vowed that he would not touch food until he had seen the saint. Then Ramdas relented. He sent him a metrical letter exhorting him to restore the Hindu religion and to clear

the country of its Mussulman oppressors. The next day Shivaji and Ramdas met. The king, delighted with the letter, was still more pleased with the saint. He would not, however, make Ramdas his *guru* without a test. He ordered him, so runs a story, to fetch a *ser* of tigress' milk. Such a task was nothing to Ramdas. He went at once into the forest, sought out a tigress with cubs, milked her, and brought back the milk to the king. From this time on Ramdas was the constant companion and spiritual guide of the king. His influence was wise and kindly. While he taught Shivaji the duties of kingship, and the divine task which lay before him of freeing his countrymen, he at the same time bade him not to be over stern, to speak no harsh words, not to cherish his anger, and not to act unjustly in any matter. And Shivaji's career shows this teaching. He gave no mercy to Afzul Khan the Bijapur general, but he treated his beaten army with the utmost consideration. Shivaji would have killed Aurangzib without scruple; but when Abaji Sondev captured, and sent as a present to the king, the beautiful daughter-in-law of Mulana Ahmad—the Mussulman governor of Kalyan—Shivaji sent her home again to her relations with all respect. In spite of his influence over Shivaji, Ramdas was wise enough not to seek to guide his campaigns. Unlike Peter the Hermit, Ramdas did not wish both to inspire and to lead a crusade. When Shivaji heard of the approach of Afzul Khan, he asked Ramdas' advice. The saint replied that he could not advise. Shivaji should pray for guidance to Bhavani, the goddess of Pratapgad. The saint knew that the king's fertile brain would, if left to itself, devise the proper measures. But when the king grew vain of his victories Ramdas did not hesitate to rebuke him. Once the king and the saint were watching the building of Samangad fort. Thousands of men were at work, all paid by the royal treasury. The king let fall some remark that showed his pride that he was the source of their livelihood. "That," replied Ramdas, "is but a small part of your great work." He then bade some workmen split open a boulder close by. In the centre was a cavity half filled with water, in the water was a frog. "O, king," said Ramdas, "who but you could have made a hole in the centre of the stone, placed a frog in it and provided it with water." The king was confused, asked the saint's forgiveness, and admitted that it was alike God who had kept alive the frog and God who cared for the needs of the workers at Samangad.

Now let us sum up the work of the Saints of Pandharpur. In the first place, they drew the thoughts of the Marathas away from Islam. Secondly, they created a centre at once literary and religious, and thus made of the race a nation. Thirdly, by their doctrines and writings they improved and enlarged the minds of the Maratha leaders, so that they became the indispensable servants of their conquerors. Fourthly, by belittling caste, they united the Maratha nation, and thus made the way smooth for the coming of a national hero. And lastly, when that hero came, great beyond human expectation—I had almost said human imagination—they made him better than great. They made him modest and just, pure minded and humane.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN (Lieut.-Colonel Sir David Barr, K.C.S.I.), in opening the discussion, said he thought that few of the audience when they came to the meeting had ever heard of the Saints of Pandharpur, but the author had said sufficient to prove that holy men did exist at the time and in the manner that had been related, and that they had great influence over the Maratha race. It was not until he carefully read a book on the rise of the Maratha power—written by the late Hon. Mr. Justice Ranade, a Judge of the High Court of Bombay—that he had any knowledge of the subject; and although the author had, very rightly, deprecated a discussion with regard to the religion of the Hindus, he could not refrain from reading a few sentences showing what were Mr. Justice Ranade's views on the subject. In a chapter devoted to the history of the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, he referred to their teaching as resulting in a religious and political upheaval, and continued: "The supremacy of one God, One without a Second, was the first article of the creed with every one of these saints, which they would not allow anybody to question or challenge . . . All their love has been freely poured upon the intense realisation of the everyday presence of the supreme God in the heart, in a way more convincing than eyes, or ears, or the sense of touch can realise. This constitutes the glory of the saints." Mr. Kincaid had stated that the results of the work of the Saints of Pandharpur were not only to turn the Maratha people from conversion to Islam, but to give them a greater respect for themselves, to learn that caste was not the most important thing, and that the love of God was really the sole motive which should prompt men in this life. He thought it might be said that the pure religion of the Hindus led the people to believe in the love of God, in Tennyson's words—

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

He thought most people would recognise in that simple teaching the precepts of the religion in which all believed. With regard to the miracles that were performed, and the extraordinary events that happened during the lives of the saints, it must be borne in mind that our teaching from childhood was based upon myth, legend, and history as taught in the nursery, and from that was evolved the faith that grew up in us as we became older. The Hindus were perhaps more liable to these influences than we were. They were the most childlike people in the world; they were very credulous and believed almost anything they were told. They had that "faith like a little child" which the Bible says is the only means of knowing God. English children were brought up to believe in all sorts of stories; but where should we be but for nursery tales? And who would grudge the pleasure children took in peeps into fairyland? They firmly believed in the visit of Santa Claus at Christmas time, and parents devoted themselves at that period to practising a pious fraud upon their children, by seeing that Santa Claus arrived in due time, and that things were exactly as the children thought they would be. In 1887-1888, when he was Political Agent at Rewa, he became a great friend of the head priest, the Swami of Lachman Bagh, who was a very pious and good man, with whom he spent many hours sitting outside his temple, learning a great deal about the Hindu religion and the manner in which it was propagated, and being taught a few of the mantras from the Veda. Some years afterwards, when he was at Indore as Agent to the Governor-General, a great fair, which was held once in a period of so many years, and was attended by Hindus of various castes from all parts of India, was about to take place at Ujjain, a sacred city about forty miles from Indore. It so happened that at the time cholera, in a very virulent form, broke out at Ujjain, and he was asked to do everything in his power to stop the large gathering of 200,000, 300,000, or 400,000 pilgrims taking place, and so prevent the epidemic spreading. The pilgrims had already arrived in their thousands at Indore, and the Maharaja suggested that he (the Chairman) should enlist the assistance of some of the holy men. Accordingly he invited twenty or thirty of them to the Residency, and told them that the pilgrimage to Ujjain was likely to result in a serious outbreak of cholera, and he begged them not to go there, but he was not able to impress them at all. He ascertained that the Priest of the Temple of Juggernaut was the most important of these holy men, and he tried to persuade him, but at first unsuccessfully. He then repeated in a low voice the mantra he had learned years before from the Swami of Lachman Bagh. The Priest at once turned round and said: "Where did you learn that?" He told him, and the Priest asked him if he was the sahib who, when at Rewa, called himself the Chela of the Swami. On replying that he was, the Priest said: "I have heard of you; we will not go to Ujjain." And they did not. He

mentioned that as an instance of the advantage and importance of getting into touch with the people, and as showing how bread cast upon the waters in that way returned after many days.

COLONEL J. M. HUNTER, C.S.I. (late Political Agent in Kathiawar), thought the paper and the discussion upon it were not only of interest to the student but had a political and administrative value. The more this country knew of India and India knew of this country, the better it would be for both. There could be no doubt that a study of the language, the religion, and the customs of the people of India led to a more sympathetic administration of the country. Indian friends had often spoken to him with gratitude and appreciation of those European officers who, like the author, took the trouble to study the language and customs of the people, because they always seemed to feel that any disputes that might arise would be decided with greater justice and consideration for their feelings. He thought the Royal Society of Arts was doing a great and patriotic work by offering opportunities for the discussion of questions bearing upon the religion and manners of the people of India, because they tended to strengthen the bonds of union which already existed between the two countries. The paper gave rise to one or two very interesting reflections. In the first place, one could not fail to be struck with the shrewdness of the sages to whom reference had been made. The author had given the dignity of saints to many of them, and he supposed men who could perform such stupendous miracles as changing stone walls into chargers, tilting on the top of tigers and milking tigresses, were entitled to that dignity; in fact, the title of the paper might have been "The Sporting Saints of Pandharpur!" The so-called anchorites were really men of the world with a very shrewd knowledge of human nature, because they knew that the most successful way of rendering a cult popular was to attach it to some dominant personality such as some of the incarnations of the Hindu Triad. The next reflection that occurred to him was the extraordinary vitality and force of an ancient and popular cult like that of the Hindus. From the time of the defeat of the two leading Rajput tribes by Mahomed Ghori to the overthrow of the Mohammedan Empire by the Maratha Confederacy, a period of some 600 years elapsed, and, during that time, there was intimate social intercourse and intermarriage between the devotees of the two cults, the Mohammedan and the Hindu. Colonel Watson, in his book on the Mohammedan rule in Gujerat, said it was the custom of the Mohammedan conquerors as soon as they occupied a country to take all the young women into their zenanas, with the result that the offspring of these unions prided themselves upon being descended from the conquering race. There was no doubt that that gave the Mohammedans an extraordinary power and influence throughout the whole country. It was a remarkable thing that, although the

people who held those two religions were both Orientals, and lived in the same houses under similar conditions, every distinction between the Hindus and the Mohammedans had not been obliterated. That, he thought, was explained by the fact that in spite of religious persecution the people maintained their love of their own cult. The old saying of the Pope, that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," was no doubt illustrated in that wonderful vitality and force of an ancient and popular cult, and it was found, at the end of 600 years, that the religion was able to weld together all the different parts of the Maratha Confederacy and enable them to subvert the Mohammedan power which had lasted for that period. That gave rise to the question, What should be the attitude of a governing power towards a religion that was hostile at the beginning and no doubt dangerous for the future? It might be said that if it was not suppressed there would always be a risk of it causing rebellion; but he did not think that was so. If an ancient cult was associated with just laws, education, and prosperity, that cult became a pillar of the State instead of a danger; and he believed the Hindu religion was a pillar of the State at the present moment, because it had been treated with such perfect toleration. When St. Paul gave the injunction that the Jews were to be subject to the superior powers because they had been ordained of God, he was not founding a new doctrine; it was as old as the Vedas. That brought him to a comparison between the condition of India at the present time and the condition which existed when the Saints of Pandharpur were able to unite the Maratha nation and again restore their ancient religion and liberty. He believed there was no greater evidence of the justice of British rule than the fact that the natives of India were now fighting on our side in this great war. It was perhaps a long way to go to Bernhardt's book, but those who had read it had probably noticed that one of the reasons the author gave why the British Government had no right to its present place in the sun, nor to be the nucleus of such an immense Empire, was because the British Government had never imposed a State religion upon India. It was a good thing the Government had not done so, because if it had attempted to impose a foreign religion upon an unwilling people, would not our position have been much the same as the position of the Mohammedan Government at the time of Shivaji? One of the most remarkable and striking evidences of the contentment and attachment of the Native States to British rule came before him a few weeks ago, when he received a letter from the Maharanee of Bhavnagar, in which she said: "I hope you will accept the bound volume which I am sending you by post of a year's publications of my weekly newspaper, which I have been editing myself, the object of which is to refute all the abominable falsehoods which are being perpetrated and spread all over India by the Germans." It was impossible to have a more striking tribute than that; and in

spite of those who were detractors of British rule in India, he believed this country could look back upon the past history of the administration of India with pardonable feelings of pride, and look forward with confident hope to a greater and happier future for that interesting country as a member of our great Empire.

SIR H. EVAN M. JAMES, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., said he was afraid he could not follow the author in all the excellent results which he thought flowed from the existence of the poetical saints referred to in the paper. He did not quite understand whether the author meant to convey that the Marathas were made a strong nation and able to defend themselves against proselytising Mohammedans, or whether he merely meant that the saints made the Hindu religion more popular than Islam. If he meant the former, with great deference he disagreed with him, because the Mohammedans were never a great proselytising race in India. They were usually tender towards the conquered Hindus and even around the Mogul capitals the proportion of Mohammedans was quite small. They were iconoclasts, of course, like the Puritans in England. He also could not quite follow the author's statement that the poets made Pandharpur a literary centre. As a matter of fact, there was no Maratha literature in those days, and even the great Shivaji could not write his own name. It was possible that some of the poems might have influenced the language of literary people at a later period, in the same way as Chaucer was supposed to have affected the English language; but otherwise he could hardly see that Pandharpur was ever more than a religious centre, and a very popular place of pilgrimage.

MR. J. S. COTTON said, that though he had never been on pilgrimage to Pandharpur, nor could even claim to know the Marathi language, he might venture to contribute to the discussion from a fresh point of view. Among the MSS. collected by Colonel Colin Mackenzie a hundred years ago, most of which were now in the library of the India Office, there were at least three relating to Pandharpur. Two of them are *Sthala Mahatmyas*, or Legends of the Holy Place, one in Marathi and the other in Telugu. The latter was of special interest in connection with the temple of Vithoba at Vijayanagar, to which he would refer again, for Telugu was the vernacular of the Rayals (or Rajas) of that place, though not of the people. In addition, there was an English translation (Vol. XIV. No. 17) of a Marathi account of Pandharpur, its legends and its temples, in considerable detail, which had been taken down on the spot in 1807. There was, first, the story of the eponym of the place, Pandlik, here called Pandarika, a name with a Kanarese termination. He was a Brahman so famed for filial piety that the god Krishna came all the way from Dwarka to visit him. Instead of attending to the god, he was so absorbed in his duties to his parents that he only gave the god a brick to sit upon; and to this day

the image of Vithoba stands on a brick, *ita* = "brick" in Marathi, from which his name is traditionally derived. Afterwards, Rukhmini, the consort of Krishna at Dwarka, in despair at the long absence of her husband, came in search of him, and there she now stood by his side. It was evident, therefore, that the incarnation of Vishnu worshipped at Pandharpur is not Rama, or even the Krishna of Muttra, but the Krishna of Dwarka. Another story here told was worthy of mention. Perhaps the only temple of Vithoba to be found in the South of India is a magnificent building still standing among the ruins of Vijayanagar, which had never been completely finished, and contained no image of the god. The story there told (*Bellary Gazetteer*, p. 276) is that Vithoba had been conveyed thither from Pandharpur by the Rayal, but that he had found the place too grand for him and preferred to return to his own humble home. At Pandharpur the same story is told somewhat differently. One of his devotees followed him all the way to Vijayanagar, where the god, in response to his fervent entreaties, transformed himself into his Dwarf incarnation as Vaman, so that he could conveniently be carried back. The speaker concluded with some arguments indicating that Vithoba, though not now worshipped in the Kanarese country, may originally have been a Kanarese deity. Bhagwanlal Indraji (*Sholapur Gazetteer*) agreed with Sir R. Bhandarkar that "Vithal" was a Kanarese corruption of "Vishnu." The same authority stated that the oldest inscription in the temple, dated in the thirteenth century, contained two place-names each with a Kanarese termination, one of which was Pandarika, mentioned above. He had since noticed that Sir G. Grierson, in his chapter on Vernacular Literature in the *Imperial Gazetteer* (II. 425), mentions a Krishna poet named Vithala-natha, who wrote in Kanarese. All this tended to show—what there were other grounds for believing—that the linguistic boundary between Kanarese and Marathi formerly extended some distance further north than at present up the course of the Bhima River.

SIR FREDERIC S. P. LELY, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to the author of the paper, said his only regret was that he did not hear it fifty years ago, because then he would have been equipped with a great deal of useful information which he had not obtained until the present moment. Nothing gripped the heart of the ordinary native of India so much as the discovery that his companion knew something about his heroes and saints, names which were household words in the family. The Indians were a nation of mystics; they lived in a supernatural atmosphere, which was always present with them. The stories which the author had narrated possessed for English people a philosophical interest, but to the natives of India they were gospel stories. He desired to mention one instance which showed how intensely present the supernatural was to the natives, and that the age of miracles was not by

any means past in India. Some years ago he noticed, when passing through a village in India, a temple which, from the newness of the masonry, showed that it had only just recently been built. He inquired of the local official why the temple had been built, and was told that it was because of a miracle that had occurred in the village two months previously, when the village cattle were coming back from pasture one evening and the earth opened and swallowed one of them. A temple was built in honour of its memory, and an image of a cow was placed in it. Personally he had no doubt that the little rascal who had charge of the cattle knew more about it than that; probably he had lost the cow, and invented the story to account for its absence.

SIR MANCHERJEE M. BHOWNAGGREE, K.C.I.E., in seconding the motion, said the paper would appeal very strongly to the mind of the people of India. A very widespread impression existed among many classes there that the English administrator did not so fully sympathise or enter into the lives and habits of the people as was desirable, and that he was always more or less of a stranger to them. The late Mr. Alexander Rogers, whose name was known to many present, and who, like Mr. Kincaid, belonged to the Civil Service in Bombay, after forty years' study of Persian and Oriental literature, rendered many of the works in those languages into English, and it was his (the speaker's) great pleasure a few years ago to co-operate with Mr. Rogers in publishing, for the benefit of the English-reading public both in this country and in India, some of those productions. He desired to emphasize the remark made by the Chairman and other speakers that such instances of the sympathetic study of the language and people of India on the part of European friends and officers carried the conviction to the minds of the people that both their history and mode of life appealed to their consideration and formed a serious subject of study.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

MR. C. A. KINCAID, in reply, said that Sir Evan James had said he could not understand why he (the author) thought it was a good thing the Marathas did not become Mohammedans. That depended upon the way in which the subject was looked at. Personally, he approached the paper from the Maratha point of view, and he thought that if he was a Maratha he would prefer to remain so, as an Englishman preferred to be an Englishman rather than become the subject of any other government.

TWELFTH ORDINARY MEETING.

Wednesday, March 1st, 1916; GEORGE GRANVILLE LEVESON-GOWER in the chair.

The following candidates were balloted for and duly elected Fellows of the Society:—

Barneson, Captain John, 310, Sansome-street, San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

Parrish, Samuel L., Southampton, Long Island, New York, U.S.A.

Sadd, W. A., Chattanooga Savings Bank, Chattanooga, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Tabor, Joseph Matthew, Peninsular House, Monument-street, E.C.

The paper read was—

MAETERLINCK, VERHAEREN ET LES LETTRES BELGES.

By M. CHARLES DELCHEVALERIE.

La petite nation belge, qui a grandi dans l'estime universelle, dès le début de la guerre, en s'illustrant par la défense de son honneur contre un adversaire dont elle n'ignorait pas la force, cette petite nation que l'Angleterre s'est si magnifiquement appliquée à secourir dans son immense infortune, avait déjà, avant la tourmente, conquis un noble rang, par le mérite et l'initiative de ses enfants, dans la famille européenne. Elle avait, vous le savez, produit des savants éminents, des hommes d'action, des hauts artistes. Et pourtant, au cours des âges, il y a dans ses annales plus de douleur encore que de gloire. Sa situation géographique a fait de son sol un perpétuel champ de bataille où les rivalités des princes et des peuples venaient vider leurs différends.

De Jules César à Charles le Téméraire, de Philippe le Bel de France à Philippe II d'Espagne, de Louis XIV à Napoléon, ce qui devait devenir la Belgique fut une mosaïque changeante de provinces morcelées, passant de siècle en siècle sous des dominations successives. Et cependant, les cruels bouleversements de l'histoire n'ont pas empêché les races jumelles attachées aux rives de l'Escaut et de la Meuse, la Flamande et la Wallonne, d'affirmer leur vigueur et leur volonté de progrès par la valeur et l'éclat des individualités auxquelles elles ont donné la vie.

Nous sommes ici dans la sereine Maison de l'Art. En ces jours, où le réveil de la barbarie agressive a déchaîné sur le vieux monde les aventures de la violence, il est réconfortant d'y pouvoir évoquer, pour l'honneur de cette petite nation qui reste la plus touchante victime du grand drame, la beauté du culte de l'idéal, la grandeur de ce qui ne peut mourir. Les Huns ont pu déchirer et mutiler la Belgique, ils ne lui enlèveront pas sa couronne. Ils n'ont pu que la faire briller d'une plus pure clarté en permettant qu'on y ajoutât les bijoux d'un nouvel héroïsme.

Ses gloires artistiques, dans le domaine de la peinture et de la sculpture, vous les connaissez