

by thought as age, in the high cheek-bones and iron-grey beard, the well-known features of the old Bambee, Lalla. But his eye, usually cast down or shooting out piercing glances of inquiring thought, was now literally rolling in delight. Folding his hands, and bending low, while his voice quivered with joyful emotion, in his own peculiar patois he signified the great satisfaction the services had given him. For nearly three months he had attended daily on our ministrations, and much light had found its way into his mind; but still he cherished grave suspicions that the Christian rite of baptism must have something in it akin to the mystic and profane initiatory formulas of the Sauts. Hence he resolved to be present and narrowly watch the ceremony. Chintu Ram, who had kept his eye on him, told me that Lalla's glance never ceased to rest on me, watching my every motion, as he lay coiled up close at my feet, with no sign of life in him except the long protruding neck and flashing eye. When it came to the sprinkling of the water he had risen to his feet as if drawn up by some magnetic force, and pushing forward his head until within a few inches of mine, he had scanned with intense eagerness every movement of hand and lip, and carefully noted every word I uttered. These words of his—'a bat ghani achchi hai' (this is a most excellent thing) gave vent to the bursting feelings of his heart and to his thorough conviction now that our religion depended on none of those tricks and mummeries with which he had become so familiar through association with the orgies of the Sauts, but, in its sublime simplicity, attested its origin to be divine.

My first acquaintance with this interesting old man was formed as follows:—We were preaching in the main bazaar one evening, when I observed an old weaver, with grey beard, but an eye whose fires age had not quenched, join the crowd. He bore on his shoulder the warp of a web, just as I had seen many a weaver on the streets of my own town of Dunfermline standing to listen to a preaching politician. His whole personal appearance too, apart from the singularity of his dress, forcibly reminded me of old men I had known at home. So true is it that a common trade or profession stamps a common impress even on widely different races of men. As he stood and listened, he kept hitching up his web, or moving it from shoulder to shoulder, as they successively became weary of the weight. At last, stretching out his right hand, and raising the forefinger in a way peculiar to him, he called my attention by a loud 'dekho!' (look here,) and then began to ask several questions very pertinent to the subject of my address. I answered his questions apparently to his satisfaction; and as darkness was fast falling, I invited him to come to the bunga-

low next morning at 10 o'clock, when he would hear more about the way of salvation I had pointed out. He promised, and the meeting broke up.

I had received so many unfulfilled promises of the same kind, that I had almost forgotten it, when, punctual to the hour, Lalla made his appearance, and took his seat humbly among the servants. Next day he again appeared, and after worship followed me into my room. Bending low at my feet, he presented me with two halves of cocoa-nut kernel, the usual offering presented to a Guru from one who becomes his disciple; and although I disclaimed any title to such worship as they are in the habit of paying to their religious teachers, he could scarcely be restrained. To this day, when leaving my presence, he always backs out to the door with as much grace as if he had served an apprenticeship to royal etiquette at a court!

Three months have passed since that meeting, and poor old Lalla has not been once absent from our morning worship. One morning when it rained, as in the tropics only it can, and no one thought of leaving the shelter of a roof unless from dire necessity, Lalla made his appearance as usual at the bungalow, and as he pointed to his own body scantily clad with the dhotie, and with rills of rain-water trickling down through the turrows of his naked shoulders, he grinned, and wondered why people should be frightened from the worship of God by a little rain. Sometimes he brings with him quite a number of his neighbours with their wives and children: the men unkempt, unshaven, thrummy but thoughtful specimens of the weaver race as one could wish to see; and the women, tucked out in every rag of finery they possess, or can borrow from their neighbours, all to grace the sahib's bungalow. I cherish the hope that in this we have the beginning of a most important movement, which by the blessing of God, may issue in christianizing many of these poor Indian weavers. Lalla himself is evidently under the teaching of the Spirit; others are thoughtful and inquiring; and one Bambee, who can himself read a little, has put himself under our pundit for daily instruction, and has collected into a school, boys to the number of eighteen, whom he is most successfully initiating into the elements of Hinduee.

I could wish to note down a number of Lalla's sayings and reasonings with me, all highly characteristic of his simple but deeply thoughtful nature, but for the present forbear. Need I urge the whole Church to continue instant and persevering in prayer, that the good work which has opened so hopefully in Ajmere, and continues to progress so favourably here, may grow and spread to the other stations of the mission, until not twos and threes, but hundreds and