



A Cry from Afar

Mabel Collins

Title

A Cry from Afar

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About this eBook

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A CRY FROM AFAR - To Students of "Light on the Path"

I.

The opening sentences of "Light on the Path" are the far cry from beyond the incarnations to those who are struggling in them. While man is embodied he is incapable of apprehending the state which is indicated by these sentences, for he is actually passing through the vale of tears, he is subject to pain, he is unable to live without causing pain, and it is by the power of his living heart that he attains complete experience, and unites himself consciously with the whole.

The keynote to the mystery, the stupendous promise of the far future, which makes the pilgrimage enduring, is given in these first sentences. They stand at the beginning of the path, the ray of light that comes from the very end of it, where full light is; the ray of light which illumines its whole course and guides the pilgrim and cheers him on the bitter way.

No human eyes can be incapable of tears, even those of the Master in life, the adept or the teacher. From the time that illusion and ignorance begin to pass away from the soul, and enlightenment takes the place of darkness, the disciple dwells in present sorrow, for he sees ignorance and consequent suffering on all sides. Tears are as the dew on the dried ground; his being would wither in the dryness of the material world, if there did not arise from himself that tenderness which is tears, and which dissolves, from within, the iron bondage of separateness. Let no man look for the time when his eyes shall be incapable of tears; if that state should come upon him while he is still that which we now call man he would have become a partner in the dark company which is fighting for the ruin of the race. Infinite pity, the capacity for profound sorrow and compassion, characterize the enlightened man, are an intrinsic part of the nature of the Saviours of the race, and are only to be laid down at the far gate of eternal life when these saviours and shepherds have guided all their flocks safely to it and through it. But it is right and necessary for the disciple to know that there is in the future an Hour when all tears shall have been wiped away never to well up again; when all sources of sorrow shall be at an end, the whole enslaved nature of man having been freed and having escaped for ever from the pangs of desire. It will then no longer be human nature, and in the condition into which it will be born that which is known now to us as sorrow will be inconceivable. None can pass that gate till all can pass it; for the purified and perfected soul which is ready to go through and enter the new life is unable to do so because of the bond of sympathy between him and all those others who are to him much dearer than himself; because of the deep yearnings of compassion, and the welling up of the tears which are a mark of humanity, and one of its chief glories. The ethereal being within man's physical body sheds many tears of too subtle and fine a nature to be shed by the physical eyes; and the spirit weeps when it stands upon the threshold of matter and is drawn into its darkness by the laws of life and love and the bonds of kinship and association. Thus the whole being is softened and suffused with the dew of its own tenderness. All men must be thus softened and suffused ere they are fitted to enter upon that state in which they are incapable of tears. Then the eyes of the pure spirit will see that which has for us now neither shape nor colour because it is invisible, and can only be apprehended by faith. The capacity for faith is the first essential quality for the disciple who has heard the far cry and would enter upon the path which shall eventually bring him to that state in which he will be able to see.

That which is called the hearing of the ear of the emancipated and redeemed being is a complete consciousness of all that is, without any difficulty in separating one sound from another, or any necessity to do so. The whole makes itself known, in its living activity, to the ceaseless apprehension of the one who is able to hear. This hearing is only possible when the senses have not only been subdued but entirely laid aside, with the vestures to which they belong. The apprehension through the medium of the senses must have ceased altogether before the released and purified spirit can obtain consciousness of the whole by means of attention.

The intensity of sensitiveness must be increased with every successive incarnation in order that the spirit shall acquire knowledge and experience, and so progress and ripen and make the required advance towards that condition in which direct consciousness is possible. No sound, no smallest cry, no trumpet call can be ignored or avoided with impunity; because that of which the spirit prefers to remain ignorant it will have to learn in later and more severe lessons. All teaching and experience increase in severity with the progress of the soul and the advancement of the race as we see these take place in time; only so can the race be ushered into the eternal state and induced to cross the threshold of birth into complete being.

The far cry from the Master to the disciple conveys an even greater command in respect to the power of speech than in respect to sight and hearing. Speech is the creative power and the spoken word can be uttered only by the perfected being which has taken on the attributes of the divine power. By the spoken word were the heavens and the earth made, for the development and the education of the soul of man, and by the spoken word will innumerable heavens and earths be made yet, for the races which need the experience of dwelling within them.

The disciple who has conquered self and yielded his being to the whole, has obtained within himself the germ of each of the necessary powers of the purified and perfected being. He has that confidence which comes of the surrender of the personal desire and the consciousness of the whole; he has that hearing which brings to him the sound of many voices whether of suffering or joy; he has that sight, which shows him other men's lives, other men's woes and hopes, and enables him to penetrate into the heart of those with whom he associates; he has obtained such knowledge of men that his presence among them develops and attracts the creative force and develops the power of love. The disciple who has so far attained, who has beheld the wonder of his own living soul, is able to read the future of man. He knows the meaning of the "far cry" which he has heard, the voice that has come to him in the silence, from the pioneers of the race who stand at the gate of eternal life and call to him. He can enter the Hall of Learning and see written there the words which contain within them the fate and future of the race. The lessons which man has to learn are there set forth, and it is those lessons which shape the future. It is only the slowness of the individual man to enter into the life of the whole and to surrender his personal desires, which hinders the progress of the whole race. The steps are set plainly before all men and each man, and have to be taken in their due course. The pioneers who have climbed to the highest must linger there for the laggards, and even descend to help them up; for the spirit of humanity is an indivisible whole.

Faith, hope and love are the three first qualities essential to all who move towards the light. Faith, which is the perfect trust in that which though known, cannot be expressed; that entire confidence in the evolution of the whole which enables the disciple to stand calm amid all conflicts, and to fight unflinchingly against the heaviest odds; and that love which embraces all and forgives all.

The invisible, for the recognition of which faith is essential, surrounds us and presses upon us at all points, and the man who does not recognise it dwells in a cage formed of his own personality. There is ethereal and spiritual continuity, a linking of all parts, which passes through man's physical being in the same way that light passes through a transparent substance. It passes through it and is not arrested by it. Thought passes through other men's minds, emotion passes through men's hearts, in such a manner as to be almost visible in their action. Faith is scarcely needed for the apprehension of the fact that thought and feeling pass through men in waves; occasions of great and universal interest have made this plain. But it is only recognised in connection with events of unusual importance such as simultaneous discoveries, and religious revivals, outbreaks of rebellion or war-like demonstrations. That which is evident at these times of excitement is true at all times. Much that is supposed to be due to what is called instinct, and to be inborn, is due to the tides of thought and feeling which ceaselessly pass through the human race. Thought power is known in the present century and to a certain extent understood; but even those who consciously use it are frequently under the misapprehension that the thoughts by which they influence others originate in their own minds. This is an impossibility, as thought is a flowing tide, set in motion on the threshold of the material world and inspired by powers beyond and outside this limited condition. As the waves of light pass through all things, and each thing receives and reflects such rays as it is capable of receiving and reflecting, so with the waves of thought. They pass through all men's souls, and each soul apprehends that which it is capable of apprehending, and gives that to the world. They are the inspiring tide of man's life, and they become in him that which is called good or bad, in accordance with his own capacity. The disciple who has faith opens his soul to the fulness of the tide, and his soul becomes white as do the white flowers which reflect all the rays of light instead of selecting among them. He knows that in this tide that exists which is brotherhood. Men do not need to aim at unity of thought, or to set thought forces in motion. They need to be able to apprehend the full tide of thought that sweeps ceaselessly through the collective mind of the race, and those who are capable of this have attained to that condition which places them inalienably among the White Brotherhood. Then they know the power of the Brotherhood, and each leans upon the other equally, without need of speech or contact. The iron bar of separateness is for them pushed back, and the golden gate is set ajar. The disciple who has pushed this iron bar back knows that the criminal and evil-doer errs because of limitation, and because of inability to apprehend. He knows that there is no punishment for sin save forgiveness, because the love which gave the great opportunity that is contained in the pilgrimage through matter, desires only that every man shall so grow and develop that he shall be able to accomplish this pilgrimage, and so help to release and redeem the race and free it for ever from material conditions. The emotions of the heart appear, to the man who dwells within his separate personality, to be his own, born within himself. They are his, and they are not his, in the same sense that the air he breathes, and the winds which stir that air, are, and are not, the possession of his physical body. They pass through him, and he shares them with all others who come within their range of action. In studying his own heart the disciple obtains illumination and perceives aright the hearts of other men, because his discipleship makes him aware of the flow of emotion which passes through him and them, and enables him to understand that it is necessary to have experienced all feeling, to have responded to every wave of emotion possible to man, before it is given to him to enter the condition in which sensitiveness can be laid aside. The criminal and evil-doer are misguided by being only able to feel in a portion of their being; sensitiveness is awakened only in the lowest and most possessive part of the nature and all the divine part is numb and without sensation. Thus they are not merely separated from the brotherhood of love, but separated from the race to which they physically belong. But the sensitiveness increases, following the law of growth under which man exists; and in the course of the incarnations the whole heart