

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

Contributed by "Archer" in *Echo*, London, Ont.

My eyes were dim, the morning light
 Ne'er shone upon my darkened sight.
 For night was constant unto me
 From earliest days of infancy ;
 An inner power, unseen by sight,
 Within my soul revealed its light ;
 I felt the breeze of summer play,
 I heard the brooklet on its way—
 A wondrous music, soft and low,
 About my presence seemed to flow ;
 And voices from the field and wood
 Dispelled my sense of solitude ;
 The happy children, in their glee,
 They gathered perfumed flowers for me,
 They told me of their colors rare,
 Of sights of woodland, field and air ;
 But all was from my vision sealed,
 Their beauties ne'er to me revealed.
 My home was by a silver lake,
 I heard its waves in motion break
 Upon the winding, pebbled shore,
 That I had often wandered o'er ;
 The cool breeze sighing, soft and low,
 Like breath of heaven used to blow,
 And cool my forehead's fevered heat,
 And soothe my soul like music sweet ;
 I felt the morning's golden ray
 In warmth upon my dull eyes play ;
 I stretched my hands as though to feel
 The light my blindness did conceal
 The only light, below, above,
 That touched my soul—the light of love.
 Ah ! well do I remember now
 My mother's hand upon my brow ;
 From memory I can ne'er efface
 The tears of love that on my face
 In pity fell. I ne'er could trace
 The love-light on my mother's face ;
 I loved to feel her tender clasp.
 And learned to trust my father's grasp,
 For his was strength, the sense of power,
 To shield me every passing hour ;
 My brothers, sisters, gentle, all,
 In my misfortune I recall—
 I heard them in their merry play,
 But all alone my childhood's way.
 No youthful joy then had I known
 But by the wayside sat alone.
 But on one summer morning sweet,
 I heard the gentle tread of feet,
 Along the pebbled pathway near,
 As tho' they came with youthful fear,
 My heart with expectation thrilled,
 With sudden joy was strangely filled ;
 And tho' my eyes to sight were dim,
 A lovely vision rose within—
 It seemed as though, with smile of love,
 An angel bent from heaven above ;
 But then the vision soon did fade—
 Then sweet the voice of gentle maid :

" Poor lad, you've never seen the flowers,
 That blush to life 'neath summer showers ;
 Here in my hand are lilies pale,
 Their fragrance lingers in the vale ;
 And here's a rose with bloom so red,
 As though love's heart blood had been shed
 To dye it with so deep a hue ;
 Here, lad, the flowers are for you."
 She laid them in my trembling hand,
 My faltering voice lost its command—
 My heart o'erflowed with love's surprise,
 And grateful tears fell from my eyes.
 She lingered long in gentle mood,
 And life then lost its solitude ;
 She daily came, my heart to cheer.
 And make the passing hours less drear ;
 Soon love for one so gentle, true,
 Within my heart most strongly grew.
 Her presence threw an influence bright,
 That flooded all my soul with light ;
 I dreamed of her through lonely hours,
 I treasured all her gifts of flowers,
 Like her, they seemed so sweet and fair,
 Her memory like their perfume rare ;
 And long I listened to her feet,
 As, like a timid fawn so fleet,
 She left me as she sought her home—
 Then long my eager eyes would roam
 Ah ! how my eyes then longed for light,
 That I might see her presence bright.
 That beauty sat upon her brow,
 I knew it then—I see it now—
 My soul with subtle sense perceived,
 The beauty sight had not received.
 Ah ! many an hour in silent mood
 I dreamed of love in solitude ;
 And many a tear of grief I shed
 That dimmed the hope that we might wed.
 One day with deeper grief thus stirred,
 Sweet Mary came to me unheard ;
 Her pitying voice the silence woke
 My heart from its deep dreams awoke ;
 She questioned why I wept so sore,
 And begged of me to grieve no more.
 I spake the sorrow of my mind,
 The love I bore to her, so kind,
 So gentle, tender, true, refined ;
 Then, like an angel standing there,
 She lifted from my heart its care.
 " Ah ! Well, though we may never wed,
 We'll ever love," she sweetly said.
 Then throbbed my heart with rapture sweet.
 Oh, joy of life ! Oh, bliss complete !
 But soon a shadow o'er me came,
 Why should I her sweet pledge retain ?
 I ne'er could wed ; in hopeless plight,
 No hope of home without my sight.
 And when she came, like dream of peace,
 I offered her from love release.
 Why should her life be bound to one
 Who never saw the morning sun ?
 Who ne'er to daily labor went,
 Whose life would be in darkness spent.