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"MILKMA PRIMA"

There sits a thrush in my garden
And sings on the topmost spray;
And I hear him over the longest
In the bush at the close of day.

There lies a child in a bedroom,
White-gowned in a cot now white,
And I hear him even the gayest
In the dusk, at the fall of night.

My beautiful child in her chamber,
My beautiful child in her chamber,
Where comes it that burst of gloe?

Is it thanks for the day just over,
No stain in the Past to rue?
Or the joy of the living Present,
Ah, would I could be like you!

In a moment the thrush has ended,
In a moment the child has done;
In a moment has sleep descended,
And covered them both, God's own.

But I lie and toss on my pillow,
I lie there the whole night long;
And I hear the lullaby from the tower
Till I feel like a doleful song.

Ah, me, for the child's free spirit!
Ah, me, for the bird's gay tone!
Gilt greater we men inherit,
But the light, free heart has down.

NO FAULTLESS LINE.

I am Lucy Denham. I am asked to
write the story of these events. It
seems to me, looking back, that it all
began one autumn night. I remember
it well, was sitting in the twilight
by myself, the lattice window wide
open, the huge dusty beech-trees that
fringe the road standing out darkly
against a bright evening sky. Then,
staring across the darkening room, I
began to dream.

I was thinking how many reasons I
had for being happy. I have been told
that when one does that it is a sure sign
of unhappiness. It may be so; I am
not wise enough to decide. My mother
had died when I was six, and I immu-
nably found myself in Mr. Payne's
step-daughter. I had lived with her
and her son Richard, in this dear old
cottage called the Wood Farm, for
fourteen years. And then I thought of
Richard—how he found me; and the
care of superintending a large farm, to
be a step-daughter, and to be at once
father and brother to me, until, through
his gentle schooling I learned to see all
things through a medium of contented
peace, and to recognize the great com-
fort and guardian of human life—work.

Then I remembered the change that
came over him during the last few
weeks. There was some scarcely per-
ceptible difference in his manner when
he spoke to his mother, a greater differ-
ence still when he spoke to me. If any-
thing, his voice was kinder; but still it
had a new ring in it which gave me a
pain that I could not explain. It was
part of the beginning.

Suddenly I began to cry. I took my-
self severely to task. I said—
"Come, come, Lucy Denham—you
used to flatter yourself that if ever
trouble came to you you would bear it
bravely and in silence; and now you
teach me when only the shadow of a
disappointment begins to touch you, you
break down."

Some one came between me and the
light, and I heard Richard's glad voice
exclaim—
"Hail, little wisdom! All alone?
Why you were so busy with your
thoughts you didn't hear me speak to
you twice—in no low tones either!
What deep plots are you devising for
our good now, eh?"

And, coming over to me, he put his
hand caressingly on my wet cheek be-
fore I could prevent him.

"What," he said, drawing me gently
to the light—"you've been crying,
Lucy!" And he looked steadily into
my eyes. "Come—tell me what is the
matter, little sister."

"Nothing is the matter," I answered,
smiling. "I grew foolish, I suppose, in
the twilight. I really don't know my-
self what made me cry. I don't un-
derstand."

"You are happy here?" he asked
tenderly.

"I do not feel lonely?"

"No, no," I answered eagerly;
"please don't take any more notice of
my foolishness."

"Is my mother in?" he asked sud-
denly.

"No; she is gone up to the Mill
House to talk to Mrs. Godwin. She
said she was coming to see me, and
that she would be here in the evening."

"I am thinking how strange it is
that Richard should be in love with me."

"Why?" I asked, astonished.

"You are so pretty and so good," she
said, with naive flattery.

"I am hard, harder even than I had
thought," I answered quietly.

"I am only his sister, who loves him
very dearly."

"And you will be mine too, Lucy,
will you?" she whispered. "You will
soon find out how much I need you."

"How foolish of me!" he said, laugh-
ing merrily. "Of course you don't!
How should you? But you have read
about it."

"Yes," I answered quickly; "I think
I know."

I wondered, yet guessed, what was
coming. I found I was trembling. I
tried to be calm; but I could not.

"I will tell you, Lucy," he contin-
ued, in a low, earnest tone, "it is to
be my shoulder. It is to be my arm
in every one's life and in every one's
existence, except one. It is to risk the
existence of every hope you have ever
held on the will of one person. It is to
be a slave to the whims of one person,
by which you have fashioned your life,
and to live in a glad, feverish, wonder-
ful dream, without laws, without order,
with only a sense of some one's exist-
ence in whose life you are, and to be
better than that—worse than that; and
I cannot tell you after all!"

I scarcely knew him; he spoke so
passionately, pressing my poor shoulder
till it ached again. He, who was al-
ways so quiet and cheerful and steady,
seemed to have lost control of himself.

I began doubtfully, for I felt how
bold it was of me to hazard an opinion
on such a subject.

"Do you think all love is like that?"
To live in a silent adoration of only one;
to blend sweet thoughts of that one
with the common duties of your life;
until the smallest of their gains a new
charm in your eyes; to—

"I know—I know!" he broke in
quickly. "I once thought that such
would be my love." Then he stopped,
but presently went on. "But, oh, Lucy,
Lucy, when you love, you love for one
who is only a little of earthly bloom
upon her, whom you may lose in an hour,
and lose the violet which you pluck
and put in your breast only to kill them.
—then, Lucy, you can understand the
kind of love I mean."

"Is she very beautiful?" I asked, to
turn his thoughts. I tried to keep my

voice steady; but it shook in spite of
me.

He was quieter now. He answered,
staring at me—
"As beautiful as my sister Lucy, and
as good. There—I needn't praise her
more than that. But I want you to
understand for me. She is young—very
young; and I want you to know her,
to be her best friend, for my sake, and
to give her some of that dear old-fash-
ioned steadiness that I love so well.
Will you do this for me, Lucy?"

I promised, to quiet her. I knew as
well then as now that my beautiful
drooping flower would never learn to be
otherwise than beautiful and fragile
and sweet.

So, when Richard asked at our gar-
den gate, "What do you think of her,
Lucy?" and seemed half to dread my
answer, lest it should blame her, I was
glad to tell him.

"She is worthy of you. But, Rich-
ard, be always very tender with her."
"I will," he said.

And so the Sunday was over, and my
first and greatest trial had passed.

She was so innocent, so childish in
her quaint way, that I found myself
treating her as a beautiful plaything.
At first she would come in the morn-
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kitchen or dairy, sometimes playing
shadowy looper with me, and then she
would sit by me, and I would tell her
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would trip in during the afternoon, and
pretend to learn to sew. This suited
her perfectly, for she was not at all
fond of her work, she would begin to
look uneasy, and at last throw down her
work and come over to me.

"See how beautiful the day is! Why
worry ourselves with dull work? Let
us go into the wood, and let us tell
stories under the trees."

Sometimes I would consent, so little
could I refuse her; and in those days I
began to notice in her eyes a strange
shadowy look, as if she were not
happy, as if she were not content.

Then there was a change in our little
household. Norwood Templeton came.
He soon made himself at home, and
seemed not at all conscious of the em-
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And I am sure Richard would say the
same.

I said it to comfort her. She looked
at me with such a sad lost look, in
her beautiful eyes; but she saw through
me.

"Ah, do you think so?" she said
doubtfully; then, before I could an-
swer—"But I will try to be useful to
you. I will learn what things Richard's
wife should know. Teach me, Lucy, will
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