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The Story of the Daffodils.

'I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows,
Where cowslips and the nodding violet blows.'

So sang Mary Smith, as she entered the dining-room where her mother and sisters were sitting. 'At least—no, I don't,' she continued, 'but I do know a garden where the daffodils are growing in thousands, and I want you girls to come and have a look at them after tea.'

Her sisters eagerly responded. They were all bright and bonnie girls, who had just come

his hand, he said: 'Would you like a flower, miss?' and gave two or three to each of them.

'Oh, thank you!' exclaimed the girls. 'It is good of you—they are so beautiful.'

'And shall you send all these off to-night?' asked the eldest sister, as she glanced over the field.

'Yes, miss, leastways all that are ready,' said the man. 'You see, miss, these are very early, and if we get them in the market to-morrow morning, they'll fetch a good price.'

'And shall you work all night?'

knock, and on opening the door they saw a woman with a keen, bright, eager-looking face, lying upon a sofa. They saw she was an invalid directly they got in. 'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'I see you have been with my husband, by the flowers you have in your hand. He is so fond of them; and he likes, too,' she continued with a pleasant smile, 'to send people in here to talk to me. It's very good of you to come. You see I can never get out to see people myself.'

'Do you mean that you are always confined to this couch?' said one of them.

'Yes, always, except when my husband lifts me off on to the bed. He is so good. I think he'd neglect even his flowers for me.'

'Oh! that is nice of him,' they cried.

'Yes,' she continued, 'people wouldn't always think it. You see he is a rough sort of man—a little gruff, and with not much to say for himself. He's something like a nut, the hard shell outside, but a sweet kernel within.'

'Oh, but he has a pleasant face!' said Mary.

'It looked quite nice when he gave us the flowers. I do not think we should have ventured here but for that.'

'I am glad to see you, too,' continued the woman. 'It brightens me so much to see fresh young faces; it was good of you to come.'

'Oh, no!' they cried.

'And these flowers, too,' she cried, taking the bunch from the hand of one of them, 'how beautiful they are! I haven't seen them yet so fully out. I expect he'll bring me in a bunch before he goes to market. They always seem to speak to me the same lesson as the lilies: "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." How beautiful God must be, that he should put so much beauty into the world! How he must love it!' continued the woman, gazing earnestly at the flowers.

'I have not thought of it in that way,' replied Mary, who was the eldest of the three. 'I felt it was good of him to put here so many lovely things.'

'But how he must love them,' said the woman, looking up at the girls, 'to take so much pains with them. How perfect they all are! Not a flaw in any of them.'

'You know,' she continued, 'that is what he is doing with us. He spares no pains to make our lives beautiful and good. Our Lord Jesus Christ came and died for us, and now he lives to help us, just that we may be flowers in his garden—beautiful flowers, you know—for goodness is beauty. Some of us need so much training, pain, and weakness to make us fit for heaven. Yes, like me,' she added, looking up at the girls with a keen, earnest gaze.

'And do you feel that?' asked Mary, touched by her quiet earnestness.

'I do. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you?" This is my promise, and it comforts me. And now, dear girls, I hope you all are flowers in our Lord's garden, and are trying to serve him.'

'We are, indeed,' said Mary, a little tremulously, 'we are trying to serve him, but we are not at all beautiful yet.'

'It will come, though,' said the woman, very thoughtfully. 'He will present you faultless before the presence of his glory. Try on,' she added, as she gave the flowers back into the



GATHERING DAFFODILS FOR MARKET.

down into the country from London, and were ready to hunt out all the glories of the place. Accordingly, as soon as tea was over, putting on their hats, they were ready to follow their sister to see the flowers. And, indeed, nothing is more beautiful than the wide expanse of the field covered with the golden bloom of the daffodil. They stood and gazed at it with delight, as the lovely flowers caught the fading glow of the setting sun.

There was a man with two boys at work busily picking the flowers, and packing them to send off ready for the early market next day. The man raised his head and looked at them, and heard their exclamations of delight, then, going across to them with a bunch in

'Oh, yes, miss, either here or on the road,' continued the man. 'You see they don't make a heavy load, so we can rattle them along. And, eh, miss! I don't wonder folks like to have them, for they are bonnie. But you go and see my missus, she lives in that little cottage, she'll talk to you about the flowers. I have to get them ready for market;' and the man turned back to his work.

The girls turned away to the cottage; they rather shrank from going in, for they were strangers; but they did not like to refuse after the man's kindness. So with the daffodils in their hands, they went rather timidly up to the door.

'Come in,' cried a voice in response to their