

THIS  
TIME  
OF  
DAFFODILS

Walter R. Courtenay, D. D.

Spring is once more tickling the ears of daffodils, teasing tall trees, whispering love songs to northbound birds, dancing lightly on grassy slopes, and skipping airily over half-awake fields. In consequence, the air we breathe has been vitamized, the horizons we see have had their faces lifted, the sky above our heads has been cobalt-sprayed, and the sod beneath our feet has been inner-springed. Look, listen, breathe, walk, taste, smell—everything in this radiant world of ours says that it is springtime again, and before us lie the thrilling days of golden chalice cups and greening earth.

While we work and sleep, the Power behind all nature is setting the stage whereon will occur the next great drama of our lives. If we had ears to hear, there would come to us the rush and rustle of an earth reborn. To the songs of the birds we would have to add the patter of their feet, the driving power of their beaks, the squirming of worms and beetles, the beating of large and tiny wings, the push of roots, the reach of twigs and branches, the melodies of waterfalls too small for human eyes to see, and tiny rivers that flow through the invisible canyons in the grasses. Only Walt Disney could make us see and hear the resurrection sounds, the music of revival, and the symphony that ebbs and flows in every part of the awakening, stretching earth. If we could amplify the unheard sounds of nature, it would be like the merging of Niagara, ocean waves on rocky coasts, cars at high speed, factories, storms, man's anger and the lion's triumph. What we call silence is never silence, for the growing, awakening earth is a place of sound and movement, a place where the old seeks rebirth in newness and new beginnings.

Such thoughts move me to both joy and sadness. This special season, extravagant in loveliness, exuberant in youthfulness, strong in optimism and ambition, leaves no sensitive human being untouched and unaltered. All around us are things too good to be true, and so good that they must be forever true. Every flower bed is a place of prophecy. Every hedgerow is a place of poetry. Sermons are preached by trees that move like mighty orators, stirred by winds from distant places. Lyrics are as plentiful as blades of grass. Woodlots cease to be places where honeysuckles vie with brambles for survival, and become instead music halls where robed choirs sing their Maker's praise. The busy birds building new homes for new lives is more than a bit of nature's heady program of

perpetuation. The urgent call of fields to experience anew the pressure of both plow and seed is more than the throb of life that hungers with expectant passion. Wherever spring waves her magic wand we are conscious of old days and new tomorrows. God, the One who lives to make all things fresh, exciting and new, walks the earth with a basket on His arm, casting into the earth the seed that dreams of harvests yet to be.

Who can ignore the vibrations of vital life where death has been? Who would want to die in days when everything about him reaches for sun and stars? Who can fail to sing and swing when warming winds whisper exotically?

Yet, even as when the sunset glorifies the dullness of the day, filling us with a sadness words cannot describe, so does spring. It touches more than the laughter-areas of our lives. Its splendor and meaning penetrate the armour of our selfhood and reach our overly-protected souls. Is not springtime a reminder that we all need new beginnings? Is it not the time when ugliness in us, as in fields, should give place to beauty? Is not this the time and place where we grumbling, grasping, grubby human beings should find encouragement for our hopes and aspirations? Does not the Voice above all human speaking urge all of us to lives that become less like ill-kept cemeteries and cocktail bars, and become instead gardens where freshness sparkles, and where tears give place to encouraging laughter? Surely this is the time when the plow and harrow of God seeks to prepare us for growing days and fruitful tomorrows.

I who have loved each springtime and have strung them like pearls upon the silver thread of memory cannot ignore the one that now bids earth give up her winterways and dress for party days. In such a mood, and in such a wondrous world, I am moved to pause and pray, "O God, who fillest earth with beauty and maketh things devoid of consciousness to be conscious of Thee, who giveth us this season as a symbol of hope and promise, do not let us miss the meaning of these days. Enrich us by their beauty, enliven us with their virility, and help us to be as cooperative in the fulfilment of Thy purposes. Be Thou, O God, our springtime, and work within us until the beauty and the thrust of life divine becomes the power of all living. Amen."