

Grass Constant Benefit to Man

(From the WILDLIFE
REVIEW)

NEXT IN IMPORTANCE to the divine profusion of water, light and air, those three physical facts which render existence possible, may be reckoned the universal beneficence of grass.

Lying in the sunshine among the buttercups and dandelions in May, scarcely higher in intelligence than the minute tenants of that mimic wilderness, our earliest recollections are of grass; and when the fitful fever is ended and the foolish wrangle of the market and forum is closed, grass heals over the scar which our descent into the bosom of the earth has made, and the carpet of the infant becomes the blanket of the dead!

GRASS is the forgiveness of nature—her constant benediction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood, torn with ruts of cannon, grow green again with grass, and carnage is forgotten; streets abandoned by traffic become grass grown like rural lanes, and are obliterated. Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal.

Beleaguered by the sullen hosts of winter it withdraws into the impregnable fortress of its subterranean vitality and emerges upon the solicitation of spring. Sown by the winds, by wandering birds, propagated by the subtle horticulture of the elements which are its ministers and servants, it softens the rude outlines of the world.

IT INVADES the solitudes of deserts, climbs the inaccessible slopes and pinnacles of mountains, and modifies the history, character and destiny of nations.

Unobtrusive and patient, it has immortal vigour and aggression. Banished from the thoroughfares and the fields, it bides its time to return, and when vigilance is relaxed or the dynasty has perished, it silently resumes the throne from which it has been expelled but which it never abdicates.

IT BARES no blazonry of bloom to charm the senses with fragrance or splendour, but its homely hue is more enchanting than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or air, yet should its harvest fail for a single year, famine would depopulate the world.

—from IN PRAISE OF BLUE-GRASS, by John James Ingalls