

## Excerpts from 'Bluegrass', Kansas Magazine, 1872

Next in importance to the Divine profusion of water, light, and air – these three great physical facts, which render existence possible – may be reckoned the universal beneficence of grass.

Grass is the most widely distributed of all vegetable beings, and is at once the type of our life and the emblem of our mortality. Lying in the sunshine among the buttercups and dandelions of May, scarcely higher in intelligence than the minuté 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 of closed, grass heals over the scare which our descent into the bosom of the earth is made, and the carpet of the infant becomes the blanket of the dead.

Grass is the Forgiveness of Nature – her constant benefaction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood, torn with the ruts of the cannon grow green again with grass and the 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 first solicitation of the 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 outline of the world. Its tenacious fibres hold the earth in its place and prevent its soluble components from washing into the wasting sea. It invades the solitude of the deserts, climbs the inaccessible slopes and forbidding pinnacles of mountains, modifies climates, and determines the history, character, and destiny of nations.

Unobtrusive and patient, it has immortal vigor and aggression. Banished from the thoroughfare and the field 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 bears no blazonry of bloom to charm the sense with, fragrance or splendor, but its homely hue is more enchanting than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or air, and yet, should its harvest fail for a single year, famine would depopulate the world.

by *John James Ingalls*