

nothing could be so grand or so beautiful as this grass in which they lived.

But did any of them know what was going to happen this morning?

Something new was coming to pass among these grass blades. Listen, as their slender heads sway together, to what they are saying. Do you think you can hear if you put your ear down close and still beside them?

Hark?

This was it.

"I am tired of life," said one tall spear that grew higher than the others and was looked up to by all.

"What is the use of it when one can never be anything but grass? and grass is so commonplace!"

The other little grass blades stopped smiling up at the sun and bowed their heads to listen to the strange, new idea.

"Ah!" sighed the discontented one, "If I could be like the beautiful delicate harebell that lifts her royal purple head above me, I should be satisfied with my sphere, Bluebell despises us, I know; she is æsthetic, and there is nothing so distasteful to her as what is vulgar or common."

"What is 'æsthetic'?" timidly demanded another grass blade, beginning to feel unusually small and common.

"It is something high and fine," responded the first speaker. "Don't you see the harebell is higher than we, and how fine is the slender green stem on which her beautiful bell swings?"

Yes; all the little grass blades were obliged to admit it was true.

"And there are so many more beautiful things to be," put in a third (for a thought once started goes on and on among grass blades).

"If I could not be a harebell I should be content if I could bear a daisy's white star on the point of my stem."

"And, oh! I should like to be a grand spotted lily," panted still another. "But, I" declared a fifth, with a decided little wave back and forth, "should never be satisfied till I could flaunt as proud a gold to the breeze as does the brown-eyed coreopsis."

So the foolish little grass blades went on.

"None of you are so badly off as I," came in a sad little tone from a shaded corner.

"I grow directly under this great mullein leaf, so that no one can ever see me. I can be of no possible use in all the world, and I cannot even see the light for my own pleasure. Why was I made at all?"

The last words died away in such a faint-hearted murmur that nobody paid the least attention to them. So the little shadowed grass blade could do nothing but return to its own dreary drawing of contrasts between itself and its unnoticed brethren and the mullein

plants which stood like candelabra bearing aloft as so many cathedral candles their tall stalks tipped with yellow flames.

"Let us give it up!" burst, after a short pause, from the first speaker.

"What is the use in continuing to grow? Let us turn our heads downward and go back into the dark earth from which we came, where we shall be troubled by no vain longings, no wishing for impossible things; where we need not keep up this constant struggle to grow, but may lie down and sleep."

Now, would you believe it? All the little grass blades listened to this advice and assented.

"Let us do it; we will never be missed," they cried, unanimously, and without waiting for a second thought on the matter, each individual grass turned back and drew its green blade down, slowly down, down to its root again. Soon the meadow was bare and brown.

The traveller lifted his head for one last look at the refreshing green before starting with renewed strength upon his way. It was gone!

Little Nettie jumped down backwards from the last fence, and turned round for her romp with Prince over the cool, clean sward.

Lo! in its place bare ground, with here and there a withered mullein stalk! Of all the little flowers, not one, no longer protected by cool grass at its roots, could live, but drooped its pretty head and faded away. The sheep put their little noses close to the ground, and poked under all the mullein leaves, but not one spear of their expected feast could they find.

The cows gazed slowly around and then turned away, as who should say, "One more disappointment!"

And the ants and spiders, and all the little nameless winged and creeping things whose home had vanished in a moment? From them arose a universal cry of panic. Only they were so very small no one could hear the bitter wail in which they mourned: "Grass, grass is gone out of the world; grass, that was so plentiful, more abundant than any other single thing? Grass was so common. What will the world do without grass?"

And the great sun, shining down in his splendor saw no answering green of little grass blades, and a pang of sudden doubt smote to his heart of fire.

"Where are the grass blades upon which I smiled in the morning? Can it be that I have shone in vain? Have I failed in my great design?"

Did any of the little grass blades who had gone into wilful darkness dream that there was disappointment in the heart of the Great King of Day because of them, and their perverse folly in refusing to be grass?