

and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point—not a perfect point either, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature's workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of its roots." That is all. "And yet," he adds, "think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green."

Consider, then, the grass of the fields! Consider it, particularly, in the places where your dead are lying. What Golgothas would be our cemeteries did not the grass grow there more green and more abundant, if possible, than almost anywhere beside! How unwilling we are to turn away until above the freshly opened grave the turf has again been heaped, making the place restful and holy, and causing us to think of it with sad, yet pleasurable emotions.

3. Consider what may fitly be termed *the characteristic virtues of the grass of the fields*. (a) Consider its humility—humility in that it seems made for lowliest service, made to be trodden down, made to minister rather than to be ministered unto—teaching us, over and over again, when we look upon it, the great lesson taught us by the picture of that girded figure "who, on the night that he was betrayed," washed His disciples' feet, saying after that He had done it: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." Let, then, the lowly grass upon which you tread teach you to remember, that while "God resisteth the proud, he giveth grace unto the humble." (b) Consider its cheerfulness.

It never complains, never murmurs, never repines, is ever content. It seems to exult when in tribulation. Cut it, and it grows more luxuriously than before; roll it, and it is the stronger for the rolling; tread upon it, and it is but the more elastic to your step; crush it, and it breathes a perfume upon the hand that deals the blow. Spring comes, and it rejoices that "the time of the singing of birds has come;" summer and its heats wither not its spirit; autumn frosts come, and the frosts change not the greenness of its hue; it is *yet* green, greener, if possible, than ever when seen over against the hoar frost that covers it. If it could speak it could almost adopt the very language of the apostle: "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Anxious and troubled soul! burdened with care, weary and heavy-laden, consider the grass of the fields, and learn from it how to "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses for Christ's sake," knowing that when you are weak, then are you strong.

Learn from it, too, to be grateful to God for His mercies. How quickly the grass responds to the touch of the falling rain! Dry, dusty, and withered, the shower comes, and in a moment all is changed. Every blade of grass in the meadows, every flower in the fields, every leaf upon every tree, seems to quiver, as with grateful joy; while the low-flying winds seem burdened with their freightage of perfume and of praise. So let the heart of man speak forth the praise of Him who sends to man—as dew upon the grass, and as the former and the latter rain—the blessings of His years.

Finally, consider the grass as the emblem of human life. "The grass withereth; the flower fadeth." "As for man, his days are as grass." "In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth." *So shall man fade away in his days!* As the grass! As the grass! But the