



### Monument in Grass

**G**RASSES, it might be safely asserted, are the most important of all plants so far as mankind is concerned. The grains he eats, the pastures for his cattle, the lawns and links he plays on, even the bamboos and thatch for some types of houses, represent only a few of the manifold uses of grass. Grass roots bind his soil against erosion: negatively, grasses are sometimes weeds.

It is not remarkable therefore that some botanists devote distinguished lifetimes to the study of grasses, wild and tame. One such, Dr. Albert S. Hitchcock, died some time ago, and his special library on grasses, most notable collection of its kind in the world, is now in process of being catalogued at the Smithsonian Institution, in which he worked for many years and to which he willed his approximately 6,000 books and pamphlets on the world's grasses.

In the course of his long working lifetime, Dr. Hitchcock contributed very materially to the building up of the immense collection of grasses in the U. S. National Herbarium. Nearly a quarter of a million sheets of grass specimens, duly mounted, identified and labeled, constitute the largest grass collection in the world and make the National Herbarium the Mecca of grass specialists.

Characteristic of Dr. Hitchcock's devotion to his science and to the interests of the National Herbarium was his action in putting up funds of his own for the purchase of a large private collection containing many important original or "type" specimens, which might otherwise have been sold abroad. His money remained tied up for eight years before the government got round to taking the collection over, at exactly the same sum he had paid for it.

*Science News Letter, December 10, 1938*

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*192 pages*

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