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Weed

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I walk in the yard and see a weed—they told me weeds are undesirable plants because they grow too fast; you see pretty soon you’ve got nothing else! Also they’re ugly: that golden dandelion and its later fairylike seeds will produce more golden dandelions and notchy leaves and hollow stems (You don’t like hollow stems, do you? No, of course you don’t.) and so to stop dandelion world domination we’ve got to exterminate THEM.

So exterminate all the dandelions and the crab grass and the thistles and the milkweed and the nightshade and the pokeweed and the chicory and the other noxious weeds and then we can grow everything else (if we use plenty of fertilizer and bug spray and water them often and dig them up each fall or shelter them or buy new ones every once in a while) and won’t that be a Triumph? Yes, of course.

Then, too, if one just lets these things grow, they don’t grow in nice neat rows or in circles or squares, but are haphazard with an extremely horrible sort of ‘variety’ and if we are going to plant things properly, why not plant nice common appreciated expensive rare Tulips?

Then I got to wondering about daylilies—they grow pretty fast, and sometimes even grow wild; what’s wrong here? So I asked a friend, and was told that hers were rare hybrids and very expensive and she had rooted out all her common daylilies—there was a scientific name for hers, but I’ve forgotten it—I like to admire her rare daylilies when I walk past her garden. They grow in a nice neat row, and are proudly set off from all her other plants, and kept well weeded.
Lately, it seems, lots of plants that we once thought were flowers are being discovered to be really weeds. We used to have a catnip patch, and when I admired some catnip in a friend’s garden by joyfully sniffing it, I discovered that it was now a weed—promptly to be pulled up and thrown away. The cats are going to be disappointed.

Also, it seems that some people are allergic to ragweed and goldenrod and probably lots of others; I hope nobody is allergic to iris or lilies. Public interest in Health, Morality, Education, or some such thing wants all grass and weeds below eighteen inches now; all the interesting creatures that dwell in the high grass are going to have to adjust, and I hope they make it because most of them are interesting—the ones I’ve met have been, anyway, and I hate to cut down their homes. Pretty soon I’m afraid we’ll have nobody left but ourselves and maybe plants like the rare daylilies.

And then I got to thinking about myself and thought about the way I sort of wander weedily from gardens to woods to fields, and in school take all kinds of stuff, and refuse to be satisfied with religion and the world and such things, and dream in sort of all directions at once, and I got to wondering if maybe I wasn’t a weed.