

KINSHIP WITH THE TREES.

Beneath the far-outreaching arch of boughs
That sweep with majesty on high
Some potent charm the human heart endows
With joy that shares the grandeur nigh.

A joy that feels the strong and subtle bond
That draws it with a kinship's tie
To wait and list while all the trees respond
With sweet companionship's reply.

Within the trees there springs the eager life
That works, unseen, with wondrous care,
That fills their cells with strength and vigor
rife
From roots to highest twigs in air;

That brings the yearly store for solid grain,
Built ever upward, ring by ring,
While outward, for the gifts from sun and air,
The boughs their open leaflets fling.

They stand like stalwart men whose cradled
days
Were blessed with fair environment,
Whose minds unfolded in the happy ways
Where all the best of life was blent.

Till added grace and force and wisdom's gain
Built characters that rose sublime
To meet unmoved the storms that sweep in
vain
To check the growth that comes with time.

With rugged, broken bark or scars' deep trace
The trees wear marks of force within,
Like lines that mirror on the human face
The hearts' pure thoughts, or stain of sin.

In shaded roads or in the woodland way,
When on the trees shines morning's beam
Or glows the mellow light of golden day
Or when the moon lends silver gleam,

Alluring witchery pervades the air,
A friendly spirit lurks in each soft breeze
And calls the heart to feel the tie that's there,
The bond of kinship with the trees.

—MARY FRENCH MORTON.

A CONSOLING
DISCOVERY.

The Nebraska State Journal published THE CONSERVATIVE'S analysis of the Porto Rican bill and found much kind, consoling comfort in the clause, giving the Porto Rican legislature authority to establish a system of local taxation to replace the tariff exactions of our government. The Journal hails this discovery with delight and regards it as "an answer to so much of the misrepresentation and abuse that has been showered upon the heads of the republican majority."

It is surprising that a circumstance so extenuating, a defence so complete, should have been overlooked by the Journal and the republican majority, which has been driven almost to desperation to find a justification for its abandonment of a "plain duty." Even our "Boy Congressman, the II," a most worthy successor of the I, failed to point out the saving grace of this beneficent feature of the bill, when he returned to the state and asked for a renomination. The republican press and other champions of the bill, appreciating the evil tendency and effect of the measure, have wisely refrained from attempting any

defence of it, as a whole, or of this clause in particular. To do so, would but emphasize the hollow pretense of this, which is the only one, of its many provisions, the Journal refers to with pride.

It is true the local legislature of Porto Rico may enact a system of local taxation to meet the necessities of the government of the island and the president, after being so informed, shall proclaim free trade between the islands and other portions of the territory of the United States. This does seem honest and equitable, until we consider how the legislature is constituted. Then it becomes quite clear why the influence, which stifled the voice of "plain duty" and dictated the imposition of the tariff, had no objection to the insertion of the clause in question, as a means of easing the minds of those congressmen, who were, not entirely conscienceless.

The legislature of Porto Rico is composed of two houses, an executive council and a house of delegates. The council consists of eleven members, all of whom shall be appointed by the president, with the approval of the senate, for a term of four years. Only five need be native Porto Ricans. There will be thirty-five delegates, elected every two years by the qualified voters of the island. A delegate must have reached the age of twenty-five years, able to read and write Spanish or English, and possessed in his own right of taxable real or personal property situated in Porto Rico. A qualified voter is one "who has been a bona fide resident of Porto Rico for one year and possesses the other qualifications of a voter under the laws and military orders in force March 1, 1900, subject to such modifications and additional qualifications and such regulations and restrictions as to registration as may be prescribed by the executive council." The franchise is not a *right* of the citizens of Porto Rico, but a *privilege* the council may give or withhold as it pleases.

The measure of self-government the people of Porto Rico are to enjoy will be only so much as the executive council chooses to grant and no more. The president appoints the members of the council. A majority may (will) be, not natives of the island but, citizens of the United States. This council will be the government of Porto Rico and will prescribe who shall vote for delegates. The governor and council are creatures of the president. The president is the instrument of the tariff barons. Hence the local government and fiscal system of Porto Rico will be not what the people of Porto Rico would desire but what the protected monopolies of this country see fit to give them.

Since this clause, then, does not provide an effective remedy for the evil,

which all acknowledge, the Journal must agree that it does not answer the criticism that has been hurled at the republican majority and must admit such criticism to be just and eminently proper. Those laws of taxation are best which the people make for themselves and not those which somebody else makes for them. It is immaterial to the people of Porto Rico whether their fiscal system is prescribed by congress or by a clique of political favorites appointed by the president. In either case they are not consulted. If there is any choice, the preference would probably be given to congress, a representative body, responsible to the people, rather than to an appointive council, beyond the restraining influence of public opinion. Under the miserable government prescribed for Porto Rico, an equitable system of taxation is a possibility so remote as to be removed from the realm of probability.

ANTI-POOLING
AGREEMENTS.

Elsewhere in this paper is published the statement of F. B. Thurber, before the Millers' Association, relative to pooling agreements among railroad companies. Mr. Thurber's opinion is entitled to especial consideration both on account of his broad knowledge of railway matters and the fact that he was one of the first men to propose the anti-pooling resolution incorporated as a part of the inter-state commerce act, believing that pooling agreements would result in exorbitant freight rates. Competition among transportation companies has reduced rates in the United States to about one-half what they are in other countries. The rate in the United States per ton for 1897, and it has been slightly reduced since that time, was 90 cents per 100 miles. The like rate in Great Britain and Switzerland was \$2.60, a marked difference in favor of the United States.

The real cause of complaint against the railroads at the present time is not high rates but Unjust Discrimination, unjust and unreasonable discrimination which the pooling prohibitions only make more intolerable. The experience of Massachusetts, as Mr. Thurber shows, is proof of this fact. There, the railway commission is not given the power to determine to what extent a rate is unreasonable but confines itself to investigating and publishing important facts relative to the condition of the roads. Fewer complaints of unjust discrimination are made in that state than in any other. In the case of competing lines between two places, where there is only so much freight to be moved, a better rate could be secured for the shipper if the companies were permitted to pool on the rate, agreeing upon a certain price, each line to share equally or in whatever proportion would be equitable,