

THE TWO MONKS.

[By A. A. Bragdon.]

A worthy monk, as ancient legends say,
Planted, with care, a tender tree one day,
Thinking with joy how it would grow anon.
And yield him profit from the fruit thereon.
Pleased with his task, upon the spot he bowed,
And to himself with pious pride he vowed:
"Now I will pray each day, and God will give
Whate'er I ask to make the sapling live."

And to his credit be it written now,
Not even once did he forget his vow,
But morn and eve he came to view the tree,
And asked for what he saw its needs to be.
He prayed for rain, and gentle showers fell;
He prayed for sun, and sunshine came as well;
And when he asked for dew, there came the dew;
For winds to blow, then grateful breezes blew.

For storm to strengthen, or for heat or cold,
Whate'er he craved, not once did God withhold;
And yet in vain the selfish plan he tried:
For all his prayers, the sapling drooped and died.

Another monk his tree had planted, too,
And day by day its spreading branches grew
Above the way, to shelter as they pass
God's weary children going up to mass;
And travelers oft aside their burdens laid,
Sat there and rested in its peaceful shade.

One day they met among the shadows there.
Just as the convent bell had called to prayer.
"Now tell me, Brother John," the first monk
said,
"Why your tree thrives, while mine, alas! is
dead?
I pruned it well and tended it with care,
And twice each each day I told its needs in
prayer."

The other monk in meekness bowed his head,
While with sweet humility he said:
"My simple mind could not presume to know
Just what was best to make a sapling grow,
And so I put it in God's care, and left the rest
To Him who made the tree, and knows the best.
I never asked for sun or rain or frost,
I only prayed: 'Give what it needeth most.'"

The High School
HIGH SCHOOL REGISTER for March
DEBATES. takes exceptions to
THE CONSERVATIVE'S

criticisms of certain high school debates which transpired hereabouts during the last year. Nevertheless, THE CONSERVATIVE still holds that the discussion of questions of vital importance to the welfare of the race by callow youth who have never investigated the questions at all, except by looking into encyclopedias and other books of reference, is not the best method of developing thoroughness in the logical faculty.

The Register says:

"A visit to the libraries at the time when a debate is being prepared will convince this critic that his remarks are unjust."

That sentence proves all that THE CONSERVATIVE asserted. By the confession of the Register, the boys simply post themselves for the occasion. THE CONSERVATIVE was led to the remarks that it made because several of the debaters called at its office to get pointers from books of reference, and other sources, relative to questions then being discussed.

Whether United States senators

should be elected by legislatures, or by the people, was under discussion. One of the debaters asserted that during the last session of congress a law providing for the election of senators by the people had passed the House of Representatives and been defeated by the Senate. He was quite certain of it. Evidently that debater had never read the Constitution! [See Article I, Section 3.] Thus it occurred to THE CONSERVATIVE that instead of pupils of the high school traveling from one town to another for the purpose of debating questions which have for generations puzzled the experienced minds of statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic, they had better be studiously at work endeavoring to master arithmetic, geography, English grammar, and the art of correctly reading aloud the English language.

TREE GROWTH IN NEBRASKA.

The Division of Forestry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has decided to make a thorough examination, during the coming summer, of tree growth in the State of Nebraska. The object of this examination is to determine if forest production on a large scale is possible in this region. Throughout the greater part of Nebraska there is but a sparse timber growth, while portions of the state are practically treeless. From the results of the proposed investigations the Division of Forestry hopes to devise means for improving and extending the present forest growth, and, in the case of the treeless regions, to formulate a plan of tree planting whereby the waste lands may be reclaimed. The best methods of tree culture will be considered and a careful study will be made of climate, soil, and the natural enemies of trees in this region.

For several years past the Division of Forestry, through its section of tree planting, has been investigating the forest growth in several of the middle western states. The agents selected for the work to be done in Nebraska this summer are men who have a practical knowledge of the existing conditions, and are well fitted for the task of making an exhaustive study of the region. The results obtained from this tour of investigation will be of value to several of the neighboring states, for in Kansas, South Dakota, and portions of eastern Colorado and Wyoming much the same conditions exist.

The valley of the Platte river, from Plattsmouth to Kearney, and the entire western half of the state, will constitute the field of investigation. About May 1, two representatives of the Division will begin work at Plattsmouth and go up the river examining and classifying the growth of trees. Especial attention will be paid to the distribution of species, and to all efforts to cultivate considerable bodies of timber. In the

investigation of tree-planting experiments the failures as well as the successes will be noted, for it is desirable to obtain all possible information on the subject.

It is expected that Kearney will be reached before July 1. At this point the party will be increased to six members and will be equipped with a complete camp outfit and saddle horses. The following four months will be spent in work that will practically cover the western half of the state. The line of travel will be from Kearney to the western boundary of the state, along the Platte, thence northeast to Crawford, and then in a general southeasterly direction through the sand hills, and down the Middle Loup River to Loup City.

A wide strip of territory can be studied on each side of the route, as the party will be mounted, and particular attention is to be given to the distribution and reproduction of the yellow pine. Nebraska is the meeting ground of the plains and mountain floras, and for this reason much valuable and interesting information is likely to be obtained. Coöperation by the people along the route to be taken by the government party will greatly facilitate the work.

The Division of Forestry has received sufficient encouragement from work already done in Nebraska to warrant the thorough examination that is to be made this summer. The fact that many tree growers in the state are already realizing substantial profits from planted timber is noteworthy. A number of men who have had wide experience in dealing with the problem of forestry in Nebraska have written to the Division of Forestry stating that there is no doubt in their minds of the possibility of increasing the present scant growth of trees, and agreeing that even the sand hills can be forested. Among those who have expressed such an opinion are Ex-Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton; Prof. Charles E. Bessey, of the University of Nebraska; C. S. Harrison, President of the Nebraska Park and Forest Association; and E. F. Stephens.

The rapid spread of interest in forestry will soon bring landowners to realize that timber may be considered as truly an agricultural crop as wheat or corn. With the Division of Forestry investigating the best methods of tree culture and offering its advice and assistance to landowners interested in tree-planting, there is reason to believe that in the near future much headway will be made in bringing about a reasonable forest growth on lands now almost treeless.

The work outlined by the division, looking to the improvement of the Nebraska forests, should attract general attention, considering that throughout this region forest products are in constant demand, commanding high prices and presenting a profitable field for the