

## TREES AND CLIMATE.

The Fort Worth Register of January 4th contains an interview with The Conservative's good friend, John P. Brown, of which we take pleasure in reproducing a part below:

Mr. Brown has just completed an inspection of the Panhandle country at the instance of the Fort Worth and Denver railroad, and it is possible as a result of his examination of the land that that road will fall in line with several other railroads which already have adopted the plan, and go in extensively for tree planting.

Mr. Brown has made a life study of forestry, climate and kindred topics. The first result of his studies, and he supports his conclusions with evidence that is most convincing, is that forests bring rain.

Speaking of this particular plan, Mr. Brown said:

"During the summer months the winds in Texas are principally from the south or southeast. They travel for hundreds of miles across hot prairies and plains, becoming warmer and warmer until by the time they get up to Kansas and Missouri and even in Oklahoma and Indian Territory they are so hot that they wither vegetation.

They become in fact, siroccos, just like those of the Mediterranean.

"Now, if there were stretches of timber at intervals, the winds would be tempered long before they reached the north, and, of course would, as a matter of fact, never get hot enough to do damage even in Texas. In the first place these timber belts would cause rain. The winds, striking a belt of timber, would be lifted and cooled, and when they came down again instead of withering plant life, would create a climate just right for the growth of food stuffs.

"Tree planting has been tried at many places in the west, and where it has failed, the failure, I have found on investigation, to be due to the use of the wrong species of trees. Farmers in the panhandle, for instance, might find the cottonwood growing along the streams and think that that was the species with which to conduct their experiments. The cottonwood will grow along the margins of streams, but when you take it away from the water its life is doubtful. Trees with soft, large roots are the kind that must be used. Catalpa and many other kinds of trees will do. The railroads are planting catalpa because the wood from this tree makes fine railroad ties. But there are many kinds of fruit and nut trees that would grow in the Panhandle.

"A great work is before the American people in replacing the forests ruthlessly wiped out in the last hundred years. There has been a greater destruction of forests in the Occident

in the last century than there was in the Orient during the thirty centuries preceding, and yet, laboring only with their axes on the mountains of Canaan, the Sidonians in six centuries, during which their fame as timber dealers continued, robbed the land of the forests that made it fertile. When the forests were gone, the famines came. The land became arid.

"We may readily trace the gradual change which took place in climatic conditions as the forests were removed from the mountain slopes all along the Mediterranean coast, as well as the Libanus and Taurus mountains, resulting in agricultural disturbances, drouths, famines, pestilence and ultimately in total barrenness from cessation of rainfall; then the dispersion of the people became a necessity. As the lands increased in aridity the soil refused its harvest; Judea and Israel were diminished in numbers, impaired in spirit and easily subdued by one after another of the nations which had long desired this historic land.

"The Sidonians furnished the lumber from which King Solomon built his temple which he called 'The house of the forest of Lebanon' because it was constructed chiefly of cedar from the mountains of the Lebanon. The Sidonians built Solomon's navy.

"Dean Stanley says: 'For miles and miles in Palestine there is no appearance of present life or habitation except the occasional goat herd. The brooks of the land are mostly now wadys or dry beds where once flowed considerable streams.'

"Yet look what it once was. Solomon employed 153,600 laborers for twenty years building his various religious and state buildings. All this time he kept a standing army of half a million men. Forty thousand stalls of horses were provided for his chariots, together with 12,000 men. All nations from Mediterranean to Euphrates acknowledged his sovereignty.

"To support a population so dense required an exceptionally fertile soil, intense cultivation with a regular and abundant rainfall. The land, cultivated as in gardens, produced wheat, barley and all manner of fruits; the hill-sides were terraced and planted with grapes, pomegranates, olives and figs, horticulture being one of the arts which was thoroughly understood and practiced by the children of Israel.

"The abundant agricultural resources of the kingdom may be better realized as we read that 320,000 bushels of grain were annually sent to pay the Sidonians, who were making lumber for the Israelites, while a million gallons each of wine and oil were also sent for the same purpose, year by year, for twenty years.

## The Ohio Valley.

"Now let us jump some centuries

and show that the same thing that happened to Palestine is happening to the United States only much more rapidly, because our forest fires and great mills make away with lumber much more swiftly than did the axes of the Sidonians. Let us take the hills of the Ohio valley. My home is up there. Those hills within the memory of thousands of citizens were heavily timbered, affording protection and fertility to numerous lower fields. They were rich with the mould of a thousand years' accumulation and for a time were extremely fertile; wheat, corn, potatoes, timothy hay and other farm crops were grown upon their rich, fresh soils for years.

"What cargoes of farm produce did these hills and slopes supply, as year after year many flatboats tied up at the various landings to bear away to southern plantations? How are they now? Rocks of loose limestone thickly cover many of the hillside fields, while others, embedded in the hard stiff clay, torment the husbandman who must plow their surface.

"How long will America continue to feed the world from her now inexhaustible granaries, after the forests are destroyed and climatic changes such as have devastated the lands of the Orient shall have completed their work in the Occident?

"The world has had distinguished philosophers whose names will be chronicled with high honor so long as history and civilization exist, who adopted theories and evolved hypotheses, based upon the knowledge possessed during their age of the world, which in the light of later discoveries have proven false, and in many cases ridiculous. Notably before the laws of gravitation were known, and while the earth was yet flat, and rested upon impossible animals. Yet they were quite as firm in their belief as some of our philosophers, who, because they cannot understand, assert that forests have no effect upon climate, that forests cannot attract clouds because leaves expire moisture. Yet that is just what forest masses do, concentrate moisture already in the atmosphere and cause its precipitation upon the earth.

"An illustration of forest influence upon cloud distribution is found in the Danish Island of St. Croix, one of the lesser Antilles, which group of islands form a regular crescent from Porto Rico southward to Venezuela, and all are wooded except St. Croix, from which the forests have been removed. This island lies twenty miles south of St. Thomas, and without the regular crescent of the group. The clouds follow the trend of the forest covered islands and rains are frequent, but St. Croix suffers severely from drouth, as the clouds are attracted from it—