

A MOHAMMEDAN'S DEFENSE.

53 West 133rd Street,
NEW YORK, March 10, '93.

Editor Deseret News, Salt Lake City,
Utah:

Dear Sir.—I have just received a copy of your journal dated the 28th ult. and containing an editorial headed: "Mistaken as to That." Its tone is so unusually just and impartial that I am prompted to thank you for thus endeavoring to set your readers right upon a most important subject and for, in a sense, coming to my defense.

The recklessness and gross inaccuracy which have characterized the efforts of many of the newspapers to tell the public what I say and believe and the dense ignorance of the Islamic system and the lives and the practices of the Mohammedans of the East manifested by some of the editorial writers in various parts of the country have annoyed me considerably and it is, therefore, very refreshing to read your fair, intelligent expressions regarding the teaching of the Koran relative to polygamy. An editorial writer in New York, after devoting half a column to a display of his ignorance regarding Mohammed and his teachings, seriously refers to him as "the famous Greek prophet." In my opinion that writer is not competent to express an opinion upon the subject.

I have never said that the Koran inculcates polygamy, nor have I ever said that Mohammed told his followers that they might marry as many wives as they chose. I am too familiar with the book to make such a mistake as that.

One of the most striking evidences I have encountered of the depraved state of mind of a large proportion of the Americans with whom I have come in contact since my return from the East is the promptness with which they exclaim: "Poly. amy!" when the subject of Islam is referred to, the hypocritical expressions of horror and disgust which they generally indulge in and their utter failure to see anything in the polygamic relation but an opportunity for the varied and unbridled indulgence of the sexual instinct or inclination.

During my travels in the East I was constantly in the company and homes of Mohammedans and I never heard one of them tell a shady story, to make his companions laugh, discuss, in any way, the relations of the sexes, refer to their wives in conversation with other men, nor utter a single word or expression that might not have been heard without a blush by the most refined lady in our country. In America I have heard stories and expressions from the mouths of merchants, professional men and even clergymen that were obscene, and in some cases, absolutely disgusting to me.

The sexual relation seems to hold a very insignificant place in the minds of the thousands of devout Mohammedans I have met; they do not look upon marriage solely as a means of sensual gratification. Our prophet taught that the union of the sexes had a far higher meaning than that and that woman was too far above the animal plane to be used by man as a mere toy or plaything. I have met very few Americans who seem to be able to realize that it is possible for a man to

have a wife and never exercise all the rights and privileges of a husband. They seem to be firmly wedded to the idea that all a man needs in order to give full play to the animal within him is to have a legal opportunity to do so. My experience, which has been quite extensive, leads me to believe that the average Mussulman takes a much higher view of the marriage relation than does the average American.

I am an advocate of polygamy under certain conditions, but I am free to say that I would not advocate its introduction into our social system. The masses are not moral enough, are not able to rise above the animal in their nature sufficiently to use the privilege wisely and justly; it would prove a curse. It is not a part of the Islamic system and our prophet clearly discouraged its practice. He found the Arabs indulging in unlimited polygamy and treating their numerous wives as if they had no rights that any one was bound to respect. He modified these conditions, restored the Arab women to their proper sphere and in many places abolished polygamy entirely.

The idea that polygamy is practiced by the masses of the eastern Mohammedans is a grave error. The Indian Mohammedan with more than one wife is rarely to be found and in Turkey, Egypt and Arabia the almost universal rule is to have one wife. But there are cases where a man might very properly take two wives; these cases are provided for in the Islamic laws and frequently much misery and suffering are thereby prevented.

Rather an amusing incident occurred last week at one of the up-town clubs in this city and I tell it simply to illustrate a point which you will readily understand. A party of Episcopalians were seated in a corner of the reading room discussing church matters. Three or four of them were vestrymen. An old friend of mine who has taken quite an interest in my lectures and is generally supposed to have become interested in Islam, entered the room and was immediately greeted with:

"Hello, old man, when are you going to start your harem?"

This remark was made by one of the vestrymen and all the rest of the party burst into a loud laugh.

"Well," said my friend when the laughter had somewhat subsided, "When I do I'm going to have it under my own roof and not do as you fellows do."

The laughter ceased and the discussion of church affairs was resumed.

Yours very sincerely,

ALEXANDER RUSSELL WEBB.

SECRETARY J. STERLING MORTON has not up to date proven himself one whit better than his predecessor, Secretary Jeremiah Rusk, in the matter of weather.

DEATHS.

BUCHANAN.—In the fifth ward, this city, March 14th, 1893, of bronchial pneumonia, David Thomas, infant son of Alexander and Margaret Buchanan, born February 18th, 1893.

SMITH.—In this city, at 1:15 a. m., March 17, 1893, Asa Burton Smith, son of Zenos Smith and

Anna Burton; born March 8, 1834, at Orange Co., Vermont.

WINEGAR.—In the Twenty-second Ward, this city, March 18, 1893, Alvin J., son of Alvin and Mary Judd Winegar, aged 47 years, 8 months and 3 days.

WHINYATES.—In the Seventeenth Ward, Salt Lake City, March 11, 1893, of rupture, Marian E. A., wife of John W. Whinyates, in her 54th year.

Funeral was held Sunday.
Millennial Star, please copy.

ORME.—In this city, March 18, of old age, Amy Orme, daughter of John Kirby and Charlotte Eddie; born January 13, 1804, in Burridge, Leicestershire, England; was baptized in February, 1844; crossed the plains with a handcart company.

EATON.—At Vernal, Uintah county, March 18, Victorine, wife of Joseph Eaton, and daughter of Henson and Elizabeth Walker.

Sister Eaton was born in Salt Lake City December 13, 1830. She was the mother of fourteen children, twelve of whom survive her, the youngest being only three weeks old. The immediate cause of death was influenza. She was a faithful Latter-day Saint.—[COM.]

TAYLOR.—At her residence in Goshen, Utah county, March 15, 1893, of general debility, Louisa Guyathes Taylor. She was born Jan. 15, 1827, at Bristol, Somersetshire, England; received the Gospel November 18, 1848; was married to Elder George Taylor October 19, 1853; emigrated to America November, 1860; crossed the plains in 1862 and settled in Goshen valley. She died as she had lived, a faithful Latter-day Saint.

NIXON.—Stephen Nixon died at Willow Creek, Idaho, March 5th, 1893; age, eighty-five years, eleven months and six days.

He was born on the Island of Malta, March 27th, 1807, and was baptized into the Church January 14th, 1841, and was ordained an Elder by George A. Smith in May following. Called on a mission by Elder Alfred Gordon to Doncaster, Yorkshire and vicinity and labored there some time and returned home to Malta; waited for Elder Gordon and then went back to Yorkshire. In January, 1842, he went to Liverpool to take passage to Nauvoo, and when he arrived at Liverpool he was called by Parley P. Pratt to take charge of a large company of saints on the ship Fremont. He arrived at New Orleans after being on the ocean eight weeks. He chartered a boat for St. Louis and landed at Nauvoo March 27th, 1842, meeting the Prophet the same day. Brother Nixon gave the Prophet some means for the building of the Nauvoo House and in return the Prophet thanked him and gave him a blessing. He joined the Nauvoo Legion and passed through all the trials and hardships of the Saints from the days of Nauvoo to the present day. He remained faithful to the Gospel and died in full faith, with an assurance of a glorious resurrection.—[COM.]

WEBER.—Of typhoid pneumonia, Jens O. A. Welby, Feb. 28th, 1893, at his residence in Mant, Sanpete county. He was born Sept. 26th, 1824, in Welby, Hjoring county, Denmark; received the Gospel April 16, 1854; married Sidsel Marie Pedersen April 16th, 1860.

He was appointed as a missionary in the Vendsyssel conference, April 30th, 1855, and continued to labor in the missionary field for seven years filling many important places, and the last three years of this mission he presided over that conference.

In April, 1862, he emigrated to Utah, and on November 15th, same year, he was ordained a Seventy and set apart as a president of the Sixty-fifth quorum, and for many years was the senior president of that quorum. August 8th, 1884, he was transferred to the Forty-eighth quorum and set apart as a president, and at the time of his death was the senior president.

He has filled two missions to Scandinavia since he came to Utah, one from 1871 to 1873, when he presided over the Christiania Conference, and one from 1887 to 1889. The first year he traveled in Hjoring branch and the last year presided over the Copenhagen Conference; in February, 1890, he was sentenced to six months in the Utah penitentiary for infraction of the Edmunds-Tucker law.

He acted as tithing clerk for many years and filled many other important positions in the community. He was a faithful Latter day Saint, devoted to the principles of the Gospel; honest and straight in his business transactions and active to the last. He was at his work on the 25th of February.

He leaves a loving family and many friends throughout Utah to mourn his departure. One wife and two children meet him on the other side.—[COM.]

Scandinavian Star, please copy.