

adopted as a text book both in the district and Church schools, the revision was undertaken to make it still more serviceable as such.

The book is divided in four parts, devoted respectively to the animal kingdom, plants, minerals and the heavens. It is, as the title implies, a "first book" on these vast subjects opening, as it were, to the student the gates of the inexhaustible treasure, house of nature, and directing his first efforts towards the acquirement of knowledge in these most interesting branches of learning. By perusing the volume one feature of it impresses itself on the reader's mind and deserves special mention. While everything has been carefully eliminated that might be offensive in a school devoted only to instructions of a secular character, the tone throughout is such that the reader in contemplating the objects of nature is filled with admiration for nature's great Author. On this account it is well adapted as a book to be placed in the hands of the young, for whom it is, in the first place, intended.

Numerous illustrations have been added and, as usual with Dr. Talmage in his literary works, special attention has been given to subjects of local interest. Thus, for instance, an illustration is given of microscopic life as found in drops of water from the ditches of Salt Lake City.

An appendix has been added to the present edition containing review questions on the subjects of the chapters, and will be found of great assistance to both teachers and pupils.

AN EX-EDITOR'S SATURDAY TALK.

At times the cultured communities of the earth are appalled by isolated or sporadic practices of barbarity, springing from the very heart of our civilization. For instance: the sale of convict labor in certain states of the Union under circumstances which may mean the most brutal slavery for a life shortened by inhuman exposure, want and infection; or the barter of a wife, as occasionally recorded in English journals; or the importation of young females from some orient country to our own for immoral purposes. The people of America are sometimes shocked, or so express themselves, even by the system of marriage for convenience which prevails in France, by which the sacredness of this most holy rite is often made the means of obtaining what in France is known as an establishment, and a freedom amounting to license by the wife, and the compliance with a mere social usage by the husband.

All of these things that sting the best moral sense of today are evils which this enlightened age should correct; and yet they all have their emboliment and crystallization in a practice apparently growing wider and more respectfully considered each year in certain parts of this land—a practice protected possibly by the law's letter and form and yet violative of every sacred principle upon which certain laws have been established. A New York paper, of wide-spread fame, was handed to the writer recently on a railway train and his attention was called to its most prominent column. There, boldly, was conducted an ad-

vertisement of personal desires so flagrant as to shock the sensibility of every one not dulled by familiarity with customs of evil. Such a column with its shameless avowal of mercenary purpose, its proposed barter of body and soul, is made especially horrifying because the divine institution of marriage is used as a shield against the law; and the profanation is doubly alarming because a newspaper held to be reputable will thus make merchandise of humanity and carry to the eyes and minds of wives and daughters, husbands and sons a knowledge which is itself almost a degradation. A complete exposition of that column is unfit for production here; but its character may be gleaned from advertisements taken at random from its contents: "A gentleman, young, good looking and of fine physique, would marry a rich woman." An "attractive young widow" wants to meet a wealthy man matrimonially inclined. An "ambitious young man desires honorable matrimony" with a lady of fortune. A "man in business" seeks marriage with a woman possessing a few thousand dollars. In the long, long list it is a surprise to find the advertisement of "a young Israelitish gentleman," since the Jews hold with sublime tenacity to the holiness of the domestic relations.

But day after day the auction goes on, only changing as to the personality of the buyers and sellers of body and soul. The social reformers of New York thunder their maledictions at the nameless, homeless, hopeless creatures, made desperate by betrayal or poverty, carrying the mark which enables virtue to avoid their contact; while a great family newspaper, guarded by public esteem, eagerly scanned by hundreds of thousands, carries safely with it the invitation to a sin more scarlet than the woeful horror of a lost woman's offense for bread.

An editorial writer in the *Detroit News*, commenting upon a late proclamation of amnesty, recalls that his paper long ago took the ground that the worse evil of marriage was not in a community then undergoing proscription by the law, but in the Eastern states where legalized polyandry and kindred destructions of the sanctity of marriage were growing more and more into the life of people who are blessed with wealth and intelligence, and whose constant aspiration and practice should be toward the upbuilding of the race. In his latest article, the *Detroit* editor calls for a system of reform which shall correct the infinitely greater evil, as he avows the lesser wrong has been corrected.

The frailties and misdeeds of any of God's children constitute at any time an unlovable subject for comment by this present writer. It is particularly so when that misdoing becomes an organized and protected invasion of the purity of marriage, upon which, more than upon law, or armies, or inventions, or material progress, depends the life and safety of the nation and the race. But disagreeable as is the subject of this barter of body and soul, it is a duty to mention it in warning tones.

Marriage is an ordinance from

which can in no wise be safely absent the elements of love, esteem, mutual purpose, based upon a tried and approved friendship. To all the world it is or should be this. But to the Latter-day Saints it is more. It is a holy alliance for time and all eternity. With us not only must regard be had for these characteristics and circumstances which can contribute to the happiness of this life, the physical, intellectual and moral welfare of offspring, and the sweetening more and more of conjugal and parental association as life's shadows grow longer under the setting sun; but we must constantly remember that in God's providence and under His laws marriage is for ever, and therefore a mere worldly consideration or marital association for any unworthy purpose is sacrilege. Whatever mutations have come to us as a people in our domestic relations here upon earth, there is one feature which the good of all the world will learn to reverence: the solemn nature of our marriage vows.

A shrewd business friend once said: "If you go into a commercial partnership, be sure that you know your man."

If a common prudence demands intimate acquaintance with associates in a temporal and temporary enterprise, how much more does duty require knowledge of each other between persons who contemplate wedding for life and whose unfitness for marriage or failure to agree may bring sorrow to themselves and entail penalty of woe unto their generations—the physical distress, the mental unsoundness, the moral obliquity, the sorrow if not the disgrace of divorce, and the evils of which the *Detroit* editor speaks in such unmeasured condemnation!

One of the sins of this age is the recklessness with which people assume the relation of husband or wife, followed by a corresponding lightness in estimating the causes which justify a severance of that relation. No other people hold this sin in greater dread than the Latter-day Saints, no other people have so strongly laid upon them the mission to redeem all willing souls from its consequences. In this particular and under the changed conditions of our own life, we will find thousands of listeners. Every honest man and woman entering into an honest marriage, begetting children as ties of affection and esteem will sympathize with us in the work of reform—a mighty reform by which the world is to be taught that marriage is of God and that the bartering of body and soul under form of this relation is wicked in His sight and the most serious menace to the nation. When this sin of the age is forsaken, the special and exclusive reformers will find much of their work accomplished. Happy marriages as a rule result in happy homes, from which children go forth armed in virtue and sobriety to battle with the world and do their noble part in earthly progress.

The system of buying and selling body and soul in marriage has already received the recognition of great family newspapers, and inferentially the endorsement of many of their readers. If these things are a part of the social life of the present generation in the world, what awful degradation will