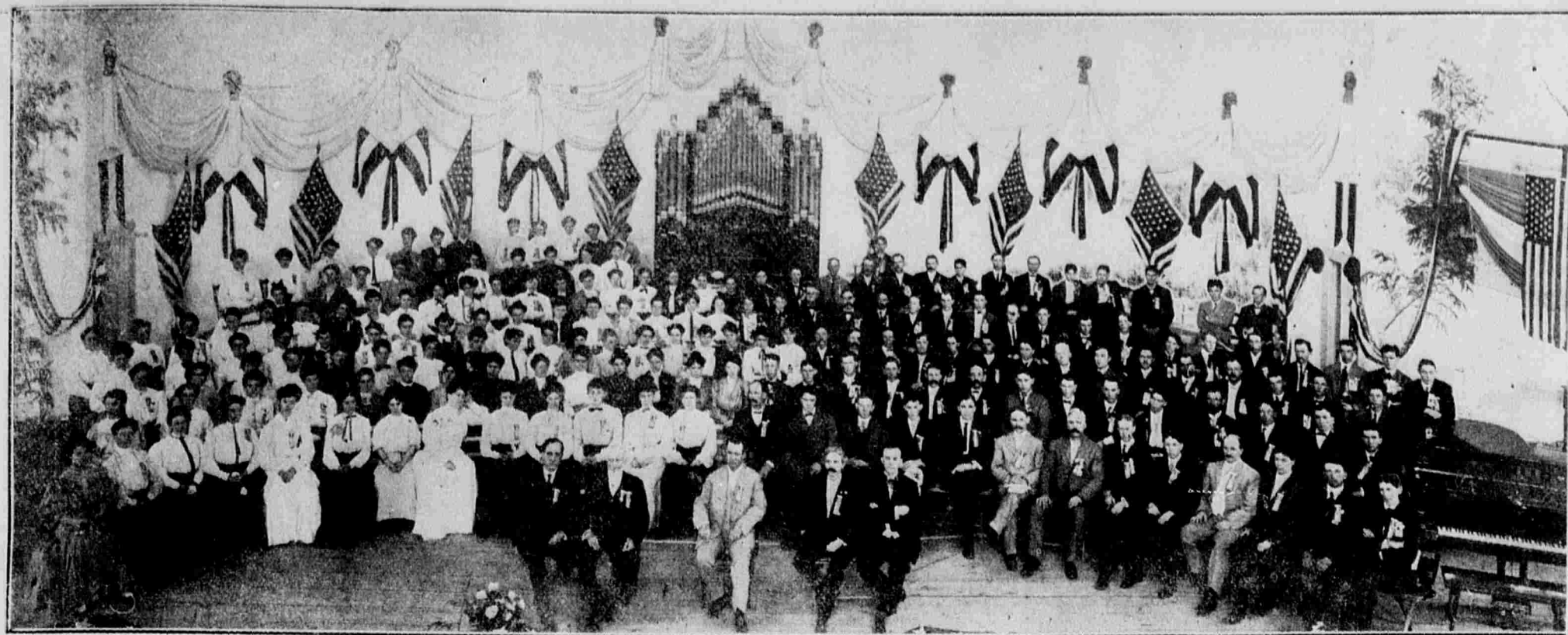


Utah Singers Start For Sacramento on Saturday.



OGDEN'S FAMOUS TABERNALE CHOIR.

ONE week from today, on Saturday evening, Aug. 31, the Ogden tabernacle choir, under the leadership of Joseph Ballantyne, will leave for Sacramento to take part in the exercises of the National Irrigation congress.

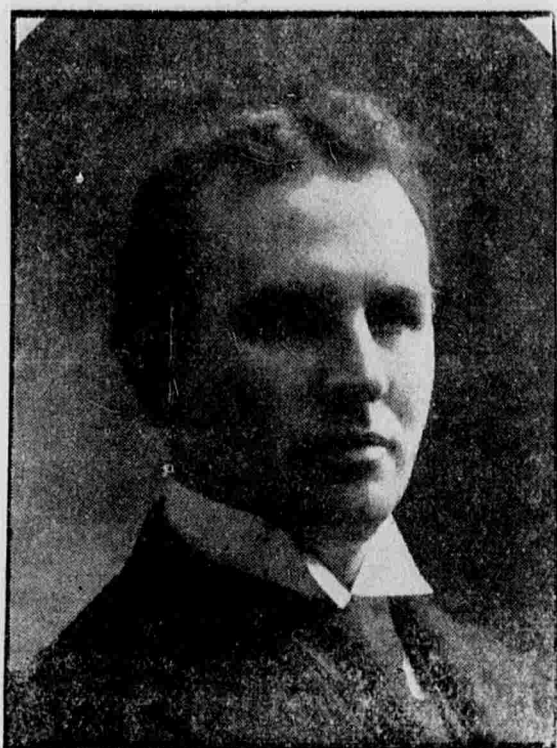
This is the second trip into other states taken by this organization of singers, and it has been preparing for the event for many weeks. Three rehearsals a day are now being held in the Ogden tabernacle—one in the morning for the sopranos, one in the afternoon for the basses, and one in the evening for the entire choir membership. The "Irrigation Ode," which is to be the principal song number on the Sacramento program, has been revised for the occasion, and the entire choir is rapidly becoming better perfect in its rendition.

On its trip to Portland the choir won great applause from all who heard it, and that its present form is an improvement on its condition at that time is the decision of those who heard its work in the recent Wandamette Chautauqua.

In the Sacramento trip the choir will spend eight days, including one at San Francisco and Oakland.

Two hundred singers will be included in the membership, and they are selected from the best voices in Ogden, many of the younger singers, whose presence adds a quality of sprightliness and life that is distinctive. Fred J. Kiesel, who has been an active advocate of having the tabernacle choir at the irrigation congress, is confident that its presence there will be one of the greatest features, and one that will be long remembered by the delegates, who will come from every section of the country.

One thousand copies of McClellan's "Ode to Irrigation" were received from the National Music Publishing company at Chicago, Thursday last, having been pushed through on a rush order; and this Ode the Ogden choir



PROF. JOSEPH BALLANTYNE.

Young Leader of the Famous Ogden Tabernacle Choir.

will sing at Sacramento, on the occasion of the irrigation congress convention. The Ode was first written

two and a half years ago by Prof. McClellan, in competition, and was awarded the prize. It was at that

time 24 pages long, and was sung at the National Irrigation congress in Portland, two years ago, on the occasion of the trip thereto of the Ogden choir; being repeated subsequently in Ogden and in the Salt Lake tabernacle. Three months ago the composer concluded to revise the Ode and make it more complete. This he accomplished after considerable labor, the result being a work of 45 pages, eight folio. The work is those of Mrs. Gilbert McClurg of Colorado Springs, who was awarded the prize at the time the Ode was first composed.

A characterization of the revised and completed score is as follows: The prelude portrays the desert as discovered by the pioneers, in molto moderato tempo, and in the key of F minor. After the introduction comes an andante movement, further descriptive of the desert conditions obtaining here back in the forties; and then a second movement in moderate for the soprano soloist, who increases to an allegro in descriptive of "the bones of man and beast lie together," and becoming highly dramatic. The first chorus follows in a succession of diminished seventh chords, and ends in a powerful burst of tone.

The second part of the Ode is entitled "March of Races." It opens with a tenor and cantabile in E major, and is made more noticeable from a point of harmony by the decorative musical progressions in 4-4 time, and in general lyric style. In the second half, the soprano joins the tenor in duet while the chorus takes up the motive of the tenor, and gives full and rich expression to the sentiment. "The waste reclaims the ribboned hills by toil and patience."

The third part of the Ode is in a majestic theme in 6-4 time, in which the orchestra has the predominance. The next movement is a soprano solo in A flat major, "As stars o'er passed the field of sky." The last of the movement is given by the chorus in pianissimo, descriptive of the early settlers, and then in double forte (F major) concludes the "Golden corn" theme.

The next part is entitled "The Pio-

neers," opening with a tenor solo in B major, which is later accompanied by a mixed quartet, and later by a complete chorus. "Fair Canaan smiles in Desert, neath Pisgah heights now world." The soprano has a difficult part here, for the score is rich in counterpoint, and fairly bristles with technical difficulties. The following division is entitled "O Glorious Land," descriptive of an irrigated region, and is considered perhaps the best part of the Ode. It is in A major and is opened by a male chorus, followed by the soprano soloist, singing "Land of homes for the homeless," and accompanied softly by the full chorus. The movement finally leads up to a climax, and is closed by a duet between the soprano and tenor, who are presently joined by the chorus in a strongly operatic accompaniment.

The next movement is an interesting one, beginning "In the garden grows the Tree of Life where Eden's rivers run, and may be considered the gem of the entire work. The last part of the Ode is entitled "Glorious Land." It is largely for mixed voices and the instrumental score is strongly marked. The chief feature of this part of the work is the intertwining of the soprano and tenor, who are joined by the chorus in a highly effective manner, which allows of specially fine performance by orchestra, and on the organ by exceptional pedalling. This production of Utah talent has already attracted much attention, and in its elaboration and carefully developed orchestral revision ought to give the Salt Lake choir a high rank among American composers.

It is this Ode that took the Ogden choir on its former trips, and will make their visit to Sacramento next week, a specially memorable one. The Ode will be given a week next Monday morning, before the irrigation congress, on the same platform with Vice President Fairbank, and distinguished men from all over the union. Utah will certainly be remembered on that day. Prof. McClellan, the composer, will officiate as the accompanist.

Why Britain Leads In Choral Music.

To the Editor:

With regard to Mr. Evan Stephens' very interesting article in last Saturday's "News," I feel like endorsing some of his statements, also to say a few words of interest on other musical matters. It is a fact in which all musical critics—especially those of international fame—concur that England (using the term for British Isles) leads the world in choral singing, whether it be on oratorio or heavy chorus work, or on glee, madrigal, part song or any other style of unaccompanied singing. It is more in the latter style, viz. singing without accompaniment—the true test of choral ability—that English societies excel. Such fineness, delicacy, pure intonation, light and shade, etc., and in no part of the world has this unaccompanied singing reached such a high standard of excellence as in certain districts—mostly working class—in England such as in Nottinghamshire, the "Potteries" district of Staffordshire, northeast Lancashire, Bolton, Blackburn, Manchester, etc., and especially the West Riding of Yorkshire. Probably Mr. Stephens did not visit these, the musical gen-

ters par excellence of England. If so he certainly has missed a treat from the vocal standpoint as no metropolitan or south of England societies can compare with the world famous Yorkshire choirs. The performance of Elgar's famous work, "The Dream of Gerontius," by the Royal Choral Society or any other metropolitan society is absolutely tame compared to the work of either the Huddersfield, Leeds or Bradford festival choirs or what is today the finest oratorio chorus in the world, viz. Sheffield Festival choir (Dr. Coward) on this work. It is worth crossing the ocean to hear this famous choir perform Mr. Elgar's masterpiece, especially that weird piece, the "Chorus of Demons," the verse, the wonderful dramatic effect, the way the words are sung, almost spoken from the throat, the quivering and tremor, is absolutely thrilling and once heard can never be forgotten.

GREATEST CHORAL LEADER.

Without a shadow of a doubt Dr. Coward is the greatest choral leader and trainer living today. When his choir visited London to perform "The Ancestress," another glorious work by Elgar, Mozart's Twelfth Mass, some other works and the "Messiah," the

finest soloists being engaged, but they had to play second fiddle to the Yorkshire choirs, as all through the "Messiah" lasting over three hours, the Royal Albert hall was packed and one and all waited to hear Dr. Coward's choir in the final "Amen" chorus, one of Handel's masterpieces, and this when the "Messiah" is as common in London and England in general as the "Old Hundred." People in America haven't the faintest idea of the popularity and development of choral music in England; it is there you will have to bend your way to hear Handel's sublime oratorios properly performed. Cities one-half or one-third the population of Salt Lake possess not one, but several high-class choral societies, each one of which performs six or seven complete works, such as Handel's "Messiah," "Judas Maccabeus," Gounod's "Redemption," Haydn's "Creation," Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise," "Forty-first Psalm," "Elijah," Sullivan's "Golden Legend," and Rossini's "Stabat Mater," etc., every season leaving out no masterpiece, such as "Daughter of Jairus" (Stainer), etc., by different church and chapel choirs augmented for the occasion.

SALT LAKE MILES BEHIND.

In this respect Salt Lake compared to scores of English cities scarcely half her size is to use a common expression "miles behind," a statement which Mr. Stephens will probably endorse. Also, there is magnificent choral singing to be heard all over Wales especially in the mining regions and more especially in the Rhondda valley, Glamorganshire, a district that produces the finest voices for vocal music, especially tenors and basses in the world. But the fault in Wales is that such wonderful choirs as Carnarvon, Penryn, Arfon, Cardiff, Newport, Brecon, and others, are engaged mostly in choral competitions and devote too little of their time to the performance of complete works. The special glory of Wales is in her magnificent male voice choirs, whose name is legion. Time after time Welsh male choirs on the national platform have been heard to a standard that is barely possible to equal, let alone excel. The late Sir J. Barnby and Dr. MacFarren of the past and Dr. Coward of the present, have been amazed at the performance of the crack male voice choirs of Wales, especially in dramatic rendering and the incomparable quality of the voice. It is a pity in a sense that Mr. Stephens missed this year's contest, which is held this month in Swansea as all Wales is looking forward to the chief choral contest, the interest being centered on the performance of the crack male voice choirs of Wales, owing to the split. Rhymney has made a name for itself choral as the Rhymney United choir 230 voices, won the chief prize for three consecutive years. A split occurred, one section adhering to John Price, the old leader and the other to Dan Owen, leader of the Rhymney voice choir, which recently sang in Windsor Castle by royal command. Both of these parties appeared on the last Whit Monday and gave splendid rendering; being a revelation of choral music to the adjudicators, the choirs coming out first and second, and as again to compete at a while to add to the interest besides other choirs the famous North Staffordshire Choral Union, which in the last few years has defeated several of the best Welsh choirs, is entered, so in a sense Mr. Stephens has just missed what will be one of the finest choral treats of the year. When next he crosses the pond Mr. Stephens should look out for the Blackpool and Morecambe musical festivals, as there he will have an opportunity of hearing the finest children's choirs in the world. The standard is extremely high in Wales, but Welsh adjudicators with one accord say the standard is higher in the north of England. People here cannot form any conception of the wonderful singing of these children's choirs—it is nothing short of the marvelous Dr. Protheroe of Chicago, saying it, was worth the voyage to hear such singing. Great attention is paid to these choirs both in Wales and England; far more than on this side of the pond. Things are as a whole the singing of children's and juvenile choirs is of a low standard, while that of many of the Sunday schools, pitiable in the last few years have heard some large children's choirs sing here and barely a note of alto and second soprano to be heard. A correct children's choir is first soprano, second soprano, first alto, second alto. No tenor or bass as men's voices spoil the effect. This feature, all top line singing, is the fault of all classes of our Sunday schools, while in Wales on the other hand the alto part is as distinct as the soprano. Boys over there delight in taking up the alto, while in the congregational singing the boy alto is distinctly heard, which adds to the general effect.

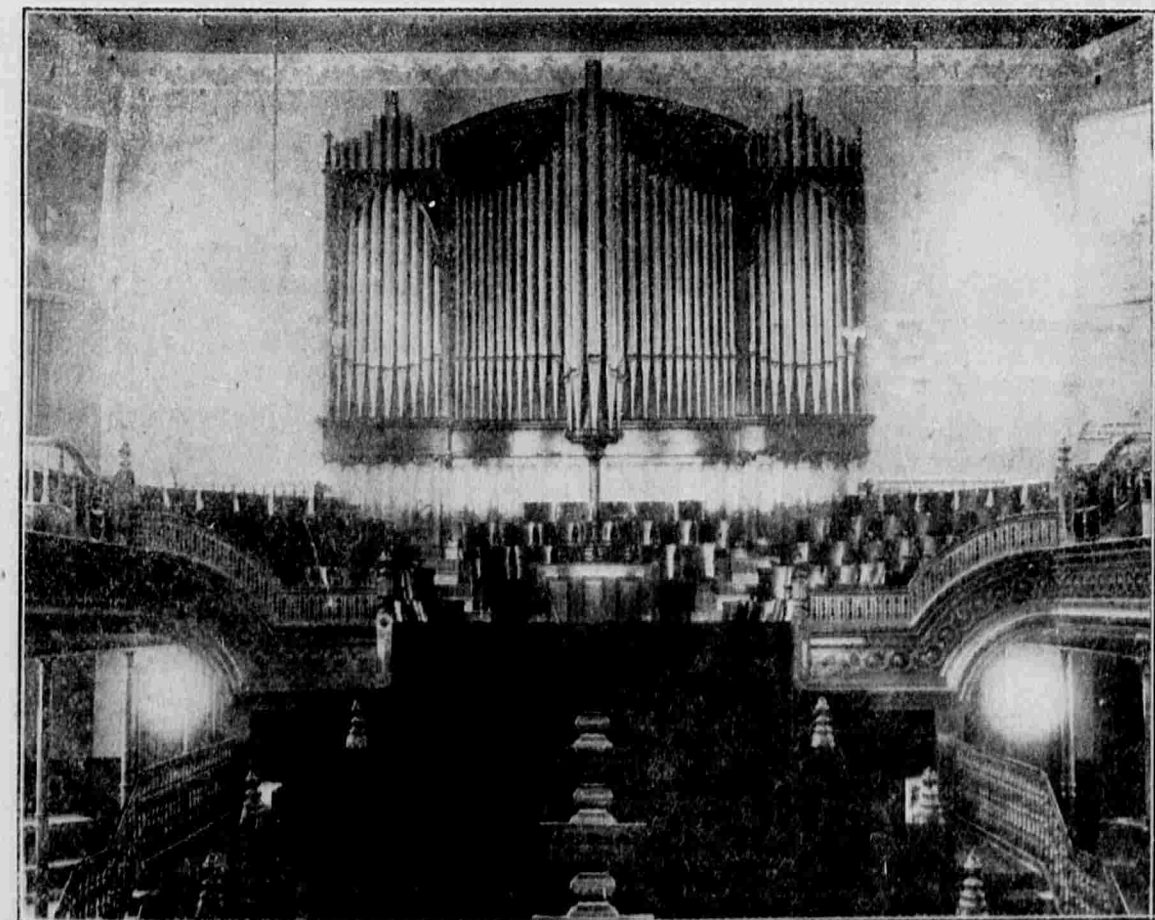
CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

Mr. Stephens was correct in stating that far more interest was taken in cultivating music and the love of it with the rising generation in Britain than is the case in America, also there is more enthusiasm for it among all classes over there than there is here. In one phase or sphere of music Wales

stands head and shoulders above all other nationalities, and that is in the general excellence and high standard of its congregational singing. Nothing to compare with it can be heard anywhere. When the revival was it is held in Rhose, special excursion trains were run from Liverpool, Birkenhead, Manchester and other places just to listen to the wonderful singing, purely congregational in many instances, without aid of organ or choir, simply led by the precentor. Fully 2,000 at times singing with the subdued tones of a quartet, a huge whisper, then carried off their feet by a tremendous double forte, such as organ and vocalists and singers are capable of producing—the bass voice (and those noted even in Wales for its bass) rolling and reverberating like peals of thunder. No person can picture or imagine what congregational singing in Wales is like, especially when worked up into a "hwy!" In singing some of them pathetic, weird, soul-stirring tunes, mostly in the minor key. This effective congregational singing has not been brought about by either accident or neglect. No country in the world has more even a tithe of what Welsh churches have done for the development and improvement of congregational singing. It costs untold effort, even in Wales, whose people has an inbred aptitude for and an intense love of choral music. I wonder, did Mr. Stephens attend any of the Cymru or Gwynedd (Welsh) musical festivals, peculiar to Wales, of which hundreds are held during the year, the combined choruses varying from as low as 250 voices with harp to as high as 10,000 voices with an orchestra of 250, according to population of the districts where the festivals are held. Scores of these festivals are held in the open air in the summer, no building being large enough to accommodate the throng. So the secret of good congregational singing, in Wales is hard work, devotion, both money and time being expended on the attainment of it, and the improvement is still going on.

DOWN GRADE IN AMERICA.

In America, on the other hand—more the pity—congregational singing is decidedly on the down grade, the standard never was very high, and it is going in one sense from bad to worse. Over here, far too much stress is laid on and place given to the "quartet" (may Britain be saved from it), and far too little on congregational singing. The average congregation does not get enough chances to sing in the services to become efficient, while it is the latter that not the quartet or choir that should have the premier place in public worship. The proper function quartet or choir in public worship is like that of an organ, to be a help and accompaniment to the congregational singing and not be the "whole show" by itself, as is so often the case. I have been in churches in this country, "evangelical" in that, where the congregation were merely gummies, simply "lookers on," only having a chance at one time or two at the "outside while the pastor was cut down to a 15 minute sermon and the rest simply wasted on some useless preliminaries, organ, violin and vocal solos, duet and quartet, etc., making the church more like a music hall than anything else. If this is the only feature that will attract some people to divine service then the church is far better off without them. I have no objections to church quartets or choirs so long as they act in their proper sphere, but their efforts however good should not be at the sacrifice and expense of congregational singing. I am sure the average pastor will reach his flock easier after the effective singing of a soul stirring hymn tune by the congregation than after the warblings of a high toned quartet, no matter how classical their rendering may have been. If the various churches in this country desire to attain good and



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