

Evan Stephens Reviews Sixth Tour of Tabernacle Choir

FULLY worthy of its producer Evan Stephens is the last which it will not—the choir's last public appearance away from home would have been a worthy tribute to the work of any great musical organization.

At the request of the Deseret News I will attempt a brief, flying, retrospective glance over the trip as it came in my memory.

On Saturday night August 11, a big, happy gathering of about 100 people were about 100 cheerful and excited, and equally crowded into their sections in the elegant Pullman sleepers. Two minutes ahead of time the train pulled out without any commotion, leaving only a few people behind who caught up with the special 24 hours later. At Ogden another Pullman was coupled to the train and at Willard, my old home, when a lay-off farmer had another reason for being. Everybody wanted to sleep in the car and the night was spent in chatter and peeping out of the car windows.

HOSPITABLE NAMPAL

Sunday at 10 a. m. the train arrived on time at Nampa. There was a momentary keen disappointment that some had been sent out of the train for all desired to visit the capital of Idaho. A cordial invitation to the Dewey Baker, hotel by its hospitable owner, was accepted. The train and baggage assembly followed to the river the beautiful and spacious grounds and verandas. Our disappointment was soon forgotten in the feeling that it was a "good to have." From the plans was hauled out on the veranda and your humble servant perched upon a step ladder, with his mighty stick in hand faced the assembling Nampalians and at the key-board and my two hundred happy singers grouped around. Almost before we knew it we were warbling away at the choruses. After half a dozen were sung by us and applauded by the hundreds of spectators we were treated to enthusiastic speeches of welcome from the mayor of the city and others who were in our presence. While a brother musician, a resident of Nampa, whistled half a dozen of us to dine at the hotel. I was enthusiastically invited to the hotel for lunch and to the hotel for a whole day. The Nampalians were very kind and their return—my breakfast we did not fail to keep. Again a few songs and then the will of the engine permitted us that we were beginning our journey. With many hearty handshakes and calls of "so long" and "How Can We Hear To Leave Thee" from the boys (what a heart-rending trip has been as much felt as sung).

ARRIVAL AT LA GRANDE

A rather warm ride brought us to Huntington and then a climb up the hills to Baker City, followed. Here we stayed two hours in the twilight of evening and as several thousand people had made the journey in the day, the crowd looked like a circus day in town. We gathered on the porch of a corner hotel and gave them a short impromptu concert which was greatly appreciated. Over 2000 people attended fifty miles the next day to attend our concert at La Grande.

The majority of the party was asleep before we arrived at this beautiful place. La Grande where we were destined to spend the day and give the first concert of the trip.

Monday—Eager to enjoy every moment our people were out before the residents could possibly be prepared to serve their morning meal (chickens at home play that trick 365 days in the year). But by 11 a. m. every member of the choir had breakfasted and by the same hour at night the hearts of all were filled with gratitude for those people for their boundless hospitality.

We were now in a land where the great pine trees claim the eye of the visitor and make fat the pocketbooks of the hosts. How much they aided in making the trees and the hosts delighted they never know. The day was spent much among them.

I may as well say that we saw the tree planted, grown into a giant, cut down hauled to the mill, sawn into boards, made into boxes, furniture etc., right before our eyes. To tell the things we saw performed at those great mills would perhaps place me in the Baron of the class.

At night, it is said, that even more people heard our concert from the outside than those who crowded into the big Latter-day Saint tabernacle. Every seat was taken inside and many stood throughout the concert. It was hard to keep enough tenetudes within reason and maintain the train schedule.

rounding their musical director they decided at once that safety compelled them to make it a "stagn" affair, or least the treasury of the chamber of commerce.

The city street car company officials, upon the other hand, desired it more advantageous to them to favor the choir and at once placed cars enough of their disposal to take the entire party out to the pleasure gardens "The Lakes."

Thus was I joyously separated from my folk and somehow these gaudy and vulgar officials managed to show a real good time to their guests of honor.

At night the Baker theater was all sold out and two or three houses were turned away, as were some of the singers on account of the smallness of the stage. How well was singing, I may never be able to decide. The audience in a manner quite enthusiastic, sometimes almost frantic would have made us believe we were doing fine. But the three officers who were seated with the audience while two papers did not catch that enthusiastic feeling and one of the two told us some good things to remember—we were to please the critic rather than the audience.

BEAUTIFUL TACOMA

After a very happy time with our friends we again board "all aboard." Next morning on peeping out of our "stagn" or "stagn" windows, I don't know which, we beheld the knowledge and towering masts of ocean going vessels.

Wednesday the beauty that water alone can add to the landscape Tacoma will, perhaps, because of tide and the great woods in its bay, almost rival that of Port Denham, remain in my memory as the choicest of the cities visited. Of course Portland has been a point of admiration with me for over 20 years, but Tacoma is my heart's desire. Its beautiful sloping bay and abundance of fragrant flowers surrounding the big residences were all so refreshing. There was a regular drizzle and gentle rain on the coast, congenial to me, a native and lover of the old country. Our party scattered in every direction and spent the day in their hearts' content, but to their credit, let me say, the parks ministered most to their delight. Oh, for more in Salt Lake!

At night another full and enthusiastic house, whose verdict the Tacoma choir next day agreed, leaving me free from puzzling doubts as to our work. Thanks gentle critics; also thanks for your staff and photo greeters. Our mascot seems to be "The Little Gypsy Sweetheart," which gained upon our audiences more and more each night and continued to do until the vigorous applause after a selection of a religious or serious character, but



SAMPLE FAIR BULLETIN BOARD. Photos by Johnson. BRISK HEAD WIND ON BOARD

People point to it and say: "Is that the sort of home the Mormons have?" At first I thought that to use up the same area for camp of wickets would have been wiser and better understood. But once inside and at second sight, even from the outside, it became more and more attractive.

The hour we were to rehearse arrived and we found several noted speakers yet upon the platform at the A. Y. P. E. Auditorium with manuscripts in hand to read to a handful of listeners, things of great import that would take time to read, so we released our singers to enjoy themselves and risked the result at our concert that night.

An offer to sing at the great amphitheater on Sunday night, but we had declined. This morning, before I was out of bed, one of them was there offering to greatly enlarge his terms. I promised again to put the matter to the singers and management when we met upon the steamer at 2:30 p. m. Between 200 and 400 were aboard and decided in favor of singing Sunday night with the understanding that they would furnish Kelly's band for our accompaniment, and to furnish part of the program. This subsequently proved the climax to our tour in every pleasant sense.

Our only chance for a rehearsal seemed to be 6:30 p. m. at the hall, so the singers were notified accordingly. During the afternoon I tried to reach some of the committee and made myself known at the box office window, asking to be favored with having two seats sold me for the evening session. There was not the slightest recognition for me or my badge. I was told in a somewhat annoyed tone of voice that though there were seats available I could get none until after 5 p. m.

At 6:30 the singers gathered as requested, but the stage doors were securely locked and we could get no admittance. The word had now reached

stetly called for "fair play" and a hearing. I told him that he could have both freely. He accused us of having been in Seattle for three days and having taken no interest in the Elsteddoff. He seemed to be entirely oblivious of the fact that we had come 1,500 miles to be present, and they had not had the decent courtesy to say, "Have you arrived?" He said that the other choruses (sic) had paid to enter and we used not look for favors. They could get along very well without us, etc., etc. There was a tendency among the spectators to enter into the discussion, and the choir members were advised to disperse and each one go where he would most enjoy himself and forget at once the unpleasant incident. We had not gone to Seattle by any means for the Elsteddoff. It was a mere incident in a pleasure tour, and when we found that we had people and sentiment like this man represented to deal with, we had too much self-respect to do anything but wipe out that incident as quickly as possible, and it was done.

The frate gentleman called upon the police to disperse us, as he tells the Seattle papers; nothing was done for the men in grey, however, and the real sentiment of Seattle was shown us the following night at our big concert at the Amphitheater, when they remained until we were forced to leave to catch our train, cheering and waving handkerchiefs at us.

Do not let it be misunderstood for moment. The Elsteddoff committee only turned us the cold shoulder, and only one man out of that openly insulted us.

RAY OF SUNSHINE

Two gentlemen of the committee hunted me up while I was pleasantly chatting in the mother tongue with various Welsh people from Vancouver and elsewhere upon those same steps from which Mr. Williams would have the people believe the police drove the choir members. Both apologized for the action taken and begged me to reconvene the singers, one offering to pay their way in if they would accept. These two gentlemen were possessed of an entirely different spirit to the others, and while I could do nothing towards recalling my singers who were now scattered, I told them frankly that had we been treated in that spirit before there would have been nothing too good or too much for us to have done for the Elsteddoff. We would have sung freely in addition to the competition wanted, but it was now too late to do anything.

The exposition management treated us royally. We had passed for three days and a handsome offer for an engagement for the rest of the week if we would only remain.

While it is true that the Elsteddoff is a Welsh affair I must insist that the stigma of it be in no sense attached to that nationality. We can-

It was the Salt Lake Tabernacle choir, that was an ever-toning. As people hastened faster and faster to the great Amphitheater. Long before eight o'clock it was a great mass of humanity from the hotel in the ravine in the top. And there was charming and attention that made it seem appropriate for the sacred day. It is said by those who should know, and printed by the Seattle papers, that even far back of the top rows were crowded. The thousands who could get no seats, not a sound was heard, but every one intently trying to catch every note of the music, coming from the far distant platform. Every word, I am told, could be heard from the top walk. Thirty-five thousand people had entered the grounds and nearly all of them crowded near the Amphitheater to listen.

The band was received with great favor as it deserved, for every night was on his mettle, never before had they played to such an audience as numerous and so intent.

Our first chorus was done without rehearsal, preparation or copies, but was rapturously received, and repeated. Then again the band played charmingly, then their baritone, then a magnificent singer of Italian opera, received an ovation from our singers, as well as the mosaic audience. Our Mr. Ensign was decidedly hoarse and I feared for him a little in such a vast place after such an artist.

AUDIENCE ENTHUSIASTIC

Well, we opened the second part with "Vales of Deseret," with only piano accompaniment. The great audience received it with wild applause and responded to demands by the part song "Twilight," in placing the band in front of us we were stretched clear across the platform, our banners being about 10 straight feet from our soprano, and in singing this the audience had very mixed giving our choruses, had we had any in the vast multitude, a fine chance to rest us. We got together in the second verse and did it fairly, and were applauded. Then sang a magnificent band number "Carmen," after which "The Little Gypsy Sweetheart," with Ensign and the choir, Ensign sang, but held up well, and delivered his lines carefully and sonorously, and the chorus accompaniment added, brought the first verse to a grand close, we were not through with the first chorus before the applause raised from every quarter. The second verse went even better and at the close it was a roar of shouts and applause. Ensign felt he could not sing another verse, so the chorus sang the first verse, and delivered his lines carefully and sonorously, and the chorus accompaniment added, brought the first verse to a grand close, we were not through with the first chorus before the applause raised from every quarter. The second verse went even better and at the close it was a roar of shouts and applause. Ensign felt he could not sing another verse, so the chorus sang the first verse, and delivered his lines carefully and sonorously, and the chorus accompaniment added, brought the first verse to a grand close, we were not through with the first chorus before the applause raised from every quarter. The second verse went even better and at the close it was a roar of shouts and applause.

Tempo marziale **W E L C O M E**

The accompanying cut appeared on the front page of the Tacoma News on the day the Tabernacle Choir arrived there. If it were not for a little blunder it would represent the opening of the Soldiers' Chorus from Faust. The idea was conceived and drawn by Cartoonist James North who some years ago was employed on a Salt Lake morning paper. J. Elliot Kelly, who was manager of another Salt Lake paper and is now general manager of the Perkins papers in the Northwest presented to the choir the original cut, here reproduced, as a souvenir of the delightful time spent in Tacoma.

AT SEATTLE EXPOSITION

Thursday—Seattle and the exposition. Our passage for the day were awaiting us. The sun is shining bright and our train is again not far from the water front, which is much more filled with life and stir than Tacoma. The war vessels out at their moorings in the sound and the excursion steamers make this port reminiscent of San Francisco. A hurried breakfast and we board the big steamer car of the exposition, miles and miles over hill and dale. The general appearance of the widely scattered city, is at this time of the year disappointing to a lover of the beautiful. So dry have the vacant lots become that it looks like a vast mining camp of shanties; even respectable houses look commonplace in the midst of the immense area yet for sale. But here and there as various attractive points upon the lake shore come to view one feels a prophetic feeling of future greatness for this queen of the north-west.

We find the exposition charming for its size. We would say, magnificent were not Chicago, St. Louis and Paris fresh in our minds, as they ever will remain.

The Utah building is at first intensely disappointing, and I fear, remains so to most visitors, who fail to catch the meaning of its unattractiveness.

STEAMER TRIP

Friday—Our holiday. Not a rehearsal nor a performance to worry us, and we were too happy in our anticipations of a steamer ride on the waters of Puget sound to even give the Elsteddoff a thought except those who had unfortunately entered the solo and quartet contests. They had to miss this treat and rest to either be tested or compare. The previous night at the close of the concert the exposition management, catching the enthusiasm, had made us

UNPLEASANT INCIDENT

Saturday—The concert! We had almost forgotten it in our delight at other and better things, but it discordant echo reached us on arriving at our cars the previous night. "No fair play!" "cut and dried, etc." began to spread around. I paid little attention to it. I felt that the Elsteddoff committee had so far ignored our presence in a way very humiliating and unusual to us. But I had absolute confidence in the adjudicator as a man of both the proper ability and integrity to do every party justice as he saw it.

EXCITED SECRETARY

I asked our choir to remain until our managers, Bishop D. A. Smith and George E. Carpenter, could get a hearing from some official of the Elsteddoff. These gentlemen went to the box office and there met the secretary of the Elsteddoff committee, and officially asked for a definite reply upon the admission question, and were answered curtly. "You pay or you don't sing." They returned and announced, "We don't sing," to which every Utah present responded. I briefly explained the situation to the singers and asked them to disperse at once, that we might cause no annoyance. The secretary then rushed down the steps and ex-

CLIMAX OF THE TRIP

Sunday—Some attended the Latter-day Saints' conference and some visited the fair grounds. I spent the time after my own heart and incidentally came across the High school cadet band and was proud of young Utah.

As night approached one noted that all streams of humanity flowed in one direction, towards the huge Amphitheater. People began taking seats two hours before our concert began.

The fine Kelly's Italian band was to cooperate with us in this concert, as already mentioned, but for once they were not the attraction. They played constantly upon the grounds and had many admirers but the thousands, and tens of thousands did not stop to listen.

SOME INCIDENTS ALONG THE ROAD TO THE SEATTLE FAIR.



WATERMELONS LAY THE DUST.

SECOND AVENUE, SEATTLE.

SHIRTY MINUTES FOR LUNCH.

(Continued on page fifteen.)