

Written for this Paper.

SINGERS' EXCURSION.

SALT LAKE CITY, April 25.—What has been the success of the Tabernacle choir chorus in its western trip and work? From the point of pleasure immense, exceeding even the World's Fair trip. Artistically—while not so far-reaching in its effects, still decidedly more marked than that in the east, especially the choir work. Financially—within the limits of possibilities anticipated from the first, the proceeds and expenses being a very close match; far below the anticipations of the many over sanguine, and the possibilities under more favorable circumstances, but not below what we were prepared for, thanks to our modest calculations, a valuable lesson which I pride myself in not having to be taught when too late for usefulness.

Permit me now to particularize on these three points, pleasure, artistic and financial. The first was the chief and most important factor. The whole affair was the outgrowth of my own enjoyment of California, which I have now visited six times for health, rest and pleasure; my attachment to my young singers who have grown up around me, made it natural for me to wish they could enjoy what always gave me so much pleasure and their delight, constant, and unfeigned, on this trip, was been a full reward to me for the financial risk so narrowly run, and the extra work of training for nearly a year, not to mention the care and labor of the musical work of the trip. The first day was made bright by pleasant callings, anticipations, acquaintance making and the jolly, harmless fun that naturally bubbles up among a youthful merry crowd of singers.

The second morning found us in a snow storm, in the Sierra Nevada mountains with many on board "sea-sick" or rather "train-sick," but between nine and ten o'clock in the morning we had emerged from storm and snowed, and the beauty and grandeur of the western slope kept the crowd in each of these magnificent Pullmans giving vent to enthusiastic exclamations of delight as they rushed from side to side to catch a glimpse now at deep gorges, now at beautiful green stretches and forest, and soon at blooming orchards and hamlets dotting the beautiful mountain side. Winter giving way to spring and summer, all within a couple of hours, presented a panorama worthy of the greatest enthusiasm. By noon we had traversed down the valley past stately oak-bedotted farms, and rose-embowered homes to the capital, Sacramento. One hour for dinner and a brief peep around, and on down the valley to Venicia, the water of river and bay challenging the beautiful landscapes for a claim to our admiration. Arriving in Oakland the singers went to the church where our concert was to take place, while our accompanying friends went sight-seeing.

After the concert about fifty crossed the bay for San Francisco, the rest retired to their beds in the Pullmans, and were ferried across Wednesday morning. It was one whirl of pleasure and excitement for the entire five days in San Francisco, each following his or her own inclinations, the ship, the

park, the presidio, the Cliff house and that crowning attraction given without money and without price, Sutter Heights, were constantly besieged and admired notwithstanding the more than usual severity of the cold, damp ocean wind—which played havoc with many a musical throat. And then those delightful and wonderful baths, a perfect combination of utility, interest and beauty. Our own Saltair pavilion is all right, so far as it goes, but oh for the addition of a little of the beautiful lavished upon its California brother, a few score palms, tastefully distributed, a small stretch of a hundred feet or more in verdure, trees and flowers each side of the approaching railroad track, would be scarcely less restful to the weary, bescorched senses than the water itself.

Impracticable? nonsense! Not a hundredth part so much as the great pavilion itself. It is our lack of that demand for the beautiful that must ere long assert itself that permits us to imprison ourselves in the charming old palace while our feet long to tread on mother earth, instead of the hard cruel boards, our eyes on something living and green to contrast the beautiful expanse of surrounding water. I heard that Mr. Sutter expressed a wish that our choir could have given a concert in his great bathing pavilion. It might seem absurd, a church choir singing in a bath house! But the thought aside, I can think of nothing more charming than a chorus concert there, the chorus arranged over the water at a fair distance and singing to a multitude seated tier upon tier along the shore side—but I digress—one more attraction (?) save the mark! though I blush to admit it was a prominent one, the filthy, foul-smelling too-noted Chinatown. Here youth and maiden, who would loath themselves to be seen in more decent quarters at home, gazed not without some disgust and shame, on many an unmentionable sight simply because it is the thing to do in San Francisco (I mean for the tourists).

I need not say that all were sadly overdoing themselves and making severe work of pleasure, until it was an absolute relief to leave the charming wide awake city, and hie to the more pure realms of pleasure and beauty found in Monterey and Del Monte. It was like a cleansing bath for the sickened soul, the peaceful, beautiful surroundings of this earthly paradise. Oh, how we did feast on the deep blue bay, as seen from the hills, and the endless charming nooks of the hotel grounds, the return ride to San Jose, that lovely town of trees, flowers and human habitations. Alas we had a shock here, the concert hall was a barn. Our fair ladies in white robes shivered, and the gales that swept the stage would have been realistically dramatic had we sung "Crowned with the tempest." The few looks on my head were haplessly scattered for the night. Our charming audience and the knowledge that just outside the roses grew in profusion, were our only comforters. A charming ride to Sacramento, a general flower, orange and lemon begging raid, and pleasantest audience (notwithstanding the rain poured outside) ended our California most pleasant experience. Two more jolly nights in the train

any one day over the desert brought the end of the journey with greatest pleasure of all, the meeting of loved ones.

Artistically, what sort of work have we done? Of course I can only answer this in a comparative sense. Compared with our work at home, numbers considered, we have kept up at least to our best standard. We could not possibly equal the full choir in massive effects, but could perhaps excel it in attention to details. The careful attention and determination of every individual to do his or her best has been almost beyond praise, thus resulting in the very best the state of their voices and ability permitted, and in almost every instance the singing of the full choir has been very satisfactory to me. Neither the ladies' chorus nor the male chorus have done their best work on this trip. Yet not a single number has been at all bad. The soloists, too, notwithstanding some adverse criticism have generally done themselves full justice, and on the whole every night's program has gone off smoothly. The unsatisfactory condition of the pipe organ in our San Francisco hall has marred many of the effects in our chorus work, in spite of Prof. Daynes's care and ability. Still the choir sang on undisturbed, and were always received with that enthusiasm unknown at home. The cold of San Francisco held up many a valuable voice and made others more or less uncontrollable. All the soloists, with the exception of Mrs. Pugsley, were able to do themselves fair justice until the last. Mrs. Pugsley unfortunately took very ill on Friday and could take part with us no more, Mrs. Edward Nobles doing double duty at the rest of the concerts. The Harmony club were always received with enthusiasm by the public, though only winning slight but favorable mentions from the critics. This was evidently because their numbers were not of the classical order. Indeed, favorable as most of the press notices are they give not more than a shadow of the enthusiasm of the audience, who, while generally receiving us with absolute silence, always warmed up at the very first number and remained so until many encores and a selection or two had to be added at the close.

The Adverse Criticisms—It is noted that some adverse criticisms were given especially the soloists and some of the selections. This is not altogether surprising. Judged by the standard of eminent soloists we all know that the best of ours are but amateurs, and lay claim to nothing more, as vocalists. True, our choir is no more, but choirs are rare even, such as ours, and traveling soloists of high rank are plentiful. Our splendid violinist labored under the same disadvantage. Yeaye, Musin, Rivarde and a dozen other eminent violinists of note have been heard in San Francisco, and while ours might excel their local soloists even, he does not pretend to rank with these, and the critics chose to put their standard high—a great compliment to the choir, as they by so doing ranked it at once in a higher sphere than we lay any claim to. The entire choir are amateurs; but the West has unanimously placed them well in the ranks of professionals and demanded the solo work to be criticised