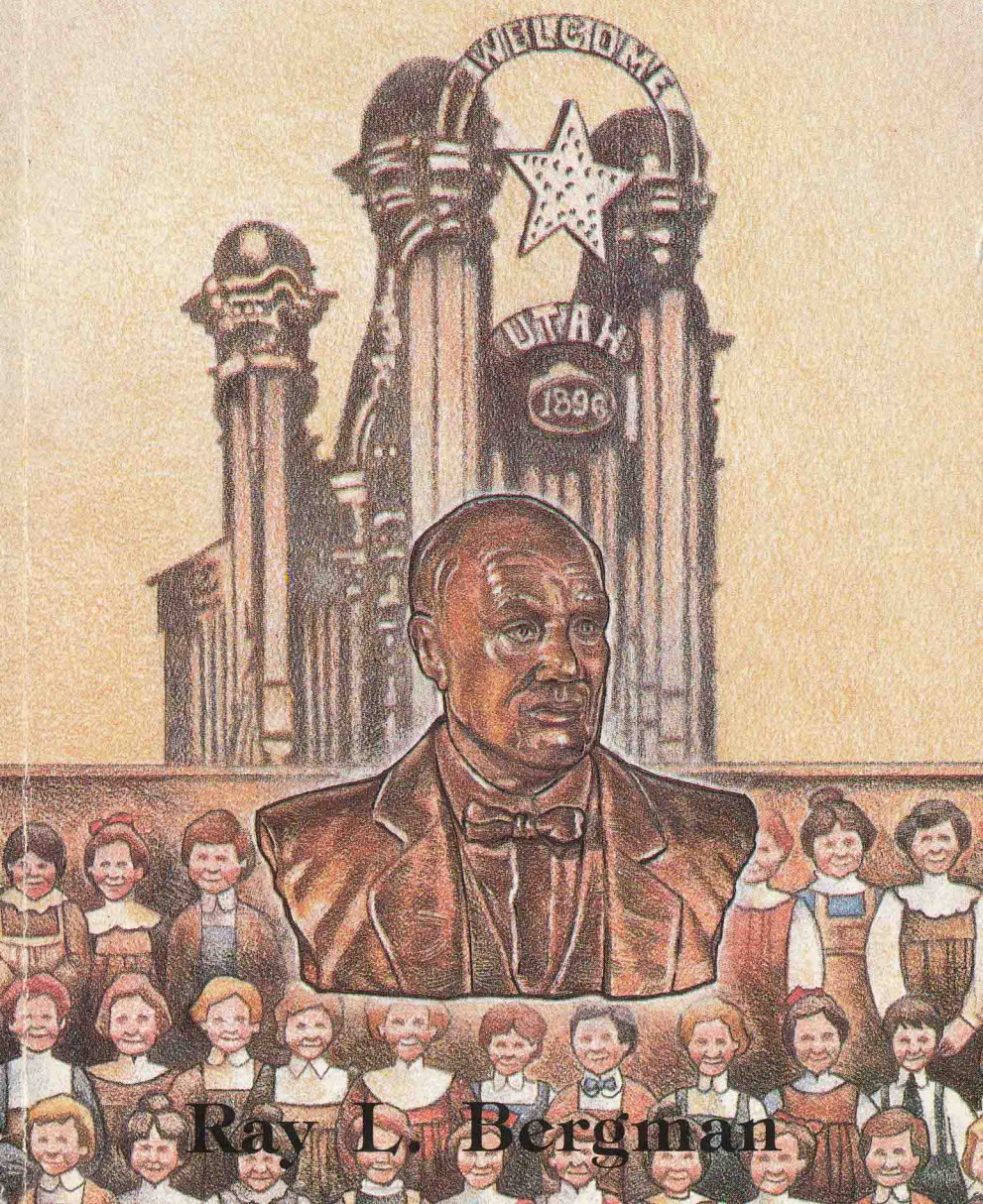


THE CHILDREN SANG

The Life and Music
of

Evan Stephens



The Children Sang

**The Life and Music of Evan Stephens
with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir**

by
Ray L. Bergman

**Edited and Cover Design
by James Van Treese**



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Preface

The Lost Monument

At the funeral services for Evan Stephens on 31 October 1930, the Professor, as he was known throughout his life, was eulogized as having “done more than any other person toward musical progress of the Church and State.”

Yet, only nineteen of his eighty-four compositions in the 1927 L.D.S. Hymn book are now included in the 1985 Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the 1989 L.D.S. publication of the Children’s Song Book not one of Stephens’s numerous songs composed for young people in the church is included.

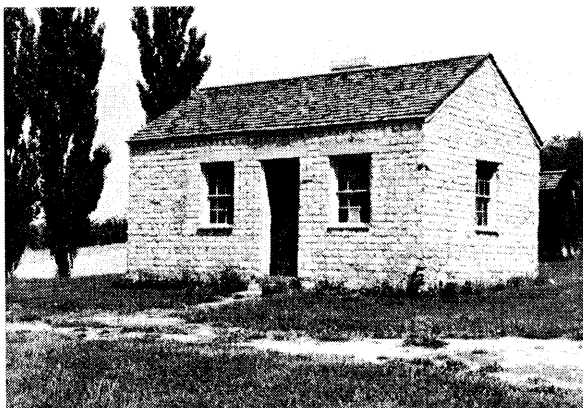
The annals of his life as a composer, teacher and humanitarian are buried in the yellowing pages and microfilms of early newspapers and church magazines; short chapters in a few books published thirty to sixty years ago line the shelves of special-collections areas in libraries and archives; and a couple of contemporary music treatises.

In May 1966 the Professor’s white Victorian frame home—his beloved Pine Lodge—at 1966 South State Street in Salt Lake City, was converted into rubble by a heavy clamshell digger to make way for an expanded Evergreen Motel parking lot. The historic home had been offered to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a memorial if it were moved, but the offer had been declined.



Evan Stephens in the parlor of his home, Pine Lodge. Circa 1910. Photo from Library, Utah Historical Society

Mary Fielding Smith's home as moved to Pioneer Trails State Park.



Finally, in 1972, a monument which had been dedicated in 1927 featuring Evan Stephens's chorus of 6,000 children singing his "O Noble Mother Pioneer," was bulldozed to make way for a swimming pool at the Graystone Condominiums. In the twenties, the huge celebration was an impressive "first", yet few historians know of it now. All of these factors have motivated the compilation of Stephens's life story.

On that special Sunday morning in 1927 a flock of California gulls, disturbed from their feeding, were squawking overhead, scolding the throng which moved through the streets of Sugarhouse, a suburb of Salt Lake City. In a fan-shaped formation, 6,000 children dressed in their Sunday-best were marching from the nine chapels of Granite L.D.S. Stake to sing under the direction of Evan Stephens at what the *Deseret News* of 4 June 1927 described as "one of the most picturesque celebrations ever designed to honor the sturdy pioneers of Utah and recall those days of toil and strife through which brave hearts struggled until they had laid secure the foundations of a great civilization". . . . A monument to the Pioneer Mother was to be unveiled on Hyrum Jensen's estate on 27th South at Highland Drive.¹

Professor Stephens, then in his seventy-third year, had composed the new chorus for the dedication of a monument and fountain to the memory of Mary Fielding Smith, mother of President Joseph F. Smith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to pioneer womanhood. Over 12,000 persons jammed the parking lot which was bordered by brilliant hued flower beds and a circle of poplar trees. The children in the huge chorus had been trained in their own Ward Primaries and assembled for a rehearsal and the performance. The popular 38th Infantry Band, directed by L. A. Yost, accompanied the chorus and congregational singing.

Attired in his usual tight-fitting black suit with high-cut vest and black bow tie, Evan Stephens "led with up-beats,

vigorously and inspiringly."² As Wendell J. Ashton described him, "His hands seemed better fitted for gripping a hayfork than a baton. In fact, most of his features had rather a rustic breadth: his forehead, his nose, his mouth, his neck and his shoulders. His large eyes were deeply set, and his head, except for short tufts on the sides, was bald most of his life. Professor Stephens was not impressively portly nor trimly thin. Instead, his stature bore the homey blessedness of an honest farmer, one you would envision in blue denim rather than a conductor's dress suit."³

The dedication program also included the pioneer hymn, "Come, Come Ye Saints" by William Clayton, sung by the entire assemblage; and a new composition of Stephens's dedicated to Mrs. Smith and sung by a ladies' chorus. After the dedicatory address by Nephi L. Morris, president of the Salt Lake Stake, and the dedicatory prayer pronounced by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, a grandson of Mary Fielding Smith, the "Doxology" was sung. President Heber J. Grant and Governor George H. Dern also spoke.

Adding color to the ceremonies, the members of the Granite Stake Primary Board and the ward presidencies were dressed in pioneer costumes, many of which had been rescued from basements and attics where they had been stored by the original pioneer settlers of the community who had worn them.

A five-foot bronze plaque, sculptured by Gilbert Riswold and cemented between cobblestone columns, was unveiled by Hyrum Jensen's granddaughter, Yvonne James, flanked by a group of nine Trailbuilders—boys nine to eleven years of age wearing green-visored skull caps and V-shaped felt bandelos. The author of this work was among the group. Eleven older girls in long white gowns represented the various attributes of the pioneer mother including gratitude, courage, sacrifice, love, etc. The monument had been financed through pennies

contributed by the children of Granite Stake Primary.

A tiny one-room cabin built of adobe bricks stood behind the plaque. Mary Smith had built the house herself as early as 1849 and had lived there with her own children as well as those of Jerusha Smith, who had died before crossing the plains to Zion.

In 1972 Mary Smith's cabin was moved at the request of President Joseph Fielding Smith of the L.D.S. Church to Pioneer State Park, east of Salt Lake City. The Jensen property was then commercially developed into condominiums and offices, which are currently occupied. Although Melvin Jensen, current owner of the property claims the bronze plaque was destroyed at that time, one rumor suggests that it was moved to downtown Salt Lake City behind the historic Kimball Apartments. But no trace of the monument remains there nor in many other sites investigated.

Nevertheless, the tribute of 12,000 Utahns to their pioneer ancestors and to Evan Stephens must not be forgotten. His music represented pioneer life because "it had a pinch of sagebrush in it."⁴

From the beginning of his musical career in Willard, Utah, Professor Stephens developed his own method of instruction and taught thirty thousand relatively unschooled farm children to read music and sing with utmost comprehension. His participation in the 1927 celebration was typical of his career in directing children's choruses of up to twelve hundred trained singers. He thrilled to the euphony of hundreds of young voices lifted in the songs of Zion as well as operatic choruses and selections from the religious works of Europe. Never satisfied with the mediocre, he dominated his singers though he sometimes was criticized for his inflexibility.

Stephens's fascinating lifetime in "musical matters," as he was wont to describe his activities, is the subject of the chapters that follow. He conducted choirs and choruses of

both children and adults in Utah and other western states and directed seven major Mormon Tabernacle Choir tours in this country to the east and west coasts. He composed some seven hundred songs, hymns, anthems, cantatas, operas, and arrangements. The mountains of the American West reminded him of his native Wales, and he wrote of them in such songs as "Utah, We Love Thee" and "O Happy Homes Among the Hills."

Some critics may agree with Dale A. Johnson, who wrote, "So while the professional musician finds the music of Evan Stephens somewhat lacking and greatly over-rated, these hymns may be said to have found a permanent place in the repertoire of the Latter-day Saint Church.

"Evan Stephens's real contributions were the results, not of creative endeavors, but of his great works as an organizer and leader of musical organizations. He was untiring in his efforts to spread the cultural spirit of Mormonism through the medium of the Tabernacle Choir." ⁵

David Oshinsky, Ph.D. and professor of history at Rutgers University has written, "The first job of a historian is to be a storyteller and to reach as large an audience as possible. The trouble with my profession is that historians talk largely to themselves, producing monographs read by 200 or 300 people. Too many historians have stopped communicating with the educated American public." ⁶

In the spirit of Oshinsky's pronouncement, this volume has been assembled for music lovers and L.D.S. Church members as well as historians, and includes anecdotes and myths demonstrating Stephens's wry sense of humor and complex personality. Many of his life experiences are told through quotations from his lectures, articles, and letters, which reveal so well his convictions and philosophy concerning music.

The Children's Friend in the last of a series of articles on

Stephens said, "What he has accomplished . . . since the age of eighteen in advancing the community in musical matters, and the many, many scores of wonderfully interesting experiences attending the work would fill volumes, much of which will be made known and written up in later histories in due time, with likely some of his sweet songs, and many musical selections as yet but little known." ⁷ Hopefully this volume will meet the challenge and provide inspiration and insight to readers.

My special appreciation is due to a number of individuals who have made this volume possible. A little monograph by Richard Bolton Kennedy and his wife, Mary Mitton Kennedy, started it all, and they graciously furnished copies of their collection of Evan Stephens letters and provided invaluable personal recollections and support.

Dr. Gary Topping of the Utah Historical Society has been most helpful, as have Ron Barney and Melvin Bashore and the staff of the Library-Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Materials from the Willard Davis Stephens Collection and many manuscripts are used by permission.

A.J. Symonds and Bradford Cole of Utah State University Special Collections and University Archives, Merrill Library, provided special help on a critique of the manuscript and primary source materials. The staff of the Harold B. Lee Library Archives and Special Collections, Brigham Young University, located the Evan Stephens etching and provided many resources. The Mariott Library Archives staff at the University of Utah have been extra helpful with the George D. Pyper Papers Collection as have the Salt Lake City Public Library staff on rare books.

A sincere thanks is extended to Rhett James of the L.D.S. Institute at Utah State University and member of the Stephens Family Association for review of the manuscript; to Mable Jones of Malad, Idaho and several residents of Willard and

Brigham City, who have added personal recollections. James Van Treese and the staff of Northwest Publishing, Inc. have seen the details of publication through in record time and their confidence in the book is deeply appreciated, as well as their technical prowess.

Photo of bust by Ron Read. Bust by Torlief S. Knaphus, 1928. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art, L.D.S. Church.

Finally, my gratitude to my wife, Betty, who has supported me unselfishly in this long project.

Abbreviations

CON	The Contributor
DN	Deseret News
HBL	Harold B. Lee Library, BYU
HDC	Library-Archives, Historical Dept of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
IE	Improvement Era
JI	Juvenile Instructor
TCF	The Children's Friend
TI	The Instructor
UHS	Utah Historical Society
YMJ	Young Woman's Journal
YLMIA	Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association
YMMIA	Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association

Chapter 1

Bittersweet Triumph

*The tender graces of the homestead,
The faith in what is good and gracious
For these you fought with word and voice:
The meed of praise for this is due.*

Landgrave's words from **Tannhauser**

As Evan Stephens waited in a dimly-lit alcove at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City on the evening of 6 April 1917, he nervously rolled into a cylinder the card on which he had jotted the text to his new song, "The Word Farewell." He could hear the Tabernacle Choir, arrayed below the organ in the great hall, singing Wagner's fervent "Hail Bright Abode," conducted by his successor, Professor Anthony C. Lund.

Though he had been obligated to appear at this retirement testimonial in his honor, he probably would have preferred to remain at home, having become somewhat weary of the persistent adulation which had followed his resignation from the conductor's post the previous July. Naturally he was gratified at the love and respect shown him by his associates on the executive committee of the choir, who, with the First Presidency of the L.D.S. Church were sponsoring the concert. But as he fidgeted in the darkened passageway, bleak thoughts about his retirement from almost fifty

years of musical activity in Utah translated the occasion into hollow triumph for him.

Some years later, Evan Stephens wrote to his friend, Samuel Bailey Mitton in Logan, Utah:

As for me, I sometimes feel that I get more attentions than I want in the way of public write ups and special public **Honors** knowing the purity and sweetness of their scourse [sic], I cannot but feel a keen sense of appreciation in the sence [sic] of the general desire to show **good-will** towards me. But the fact remains that it is work and **accomplishment** that has been the worth while factors for me in all my past transactions for and with the community and that **results** was my best pay, and of that I see very little worth while in these affairs in "Bro. Stephens' Honor." It is much like showing off the **silverware** taken down from the shelf and dust or shine them up for company. ¹

Now Stephens was scheduled to sing his new farewell composition as the fifth number on the elaborate program, accompanied by Professor J.J. McClellan at the organ, Professor Tracy Y. Cannon at the piano, and Romania Hyde, violinist. After his uneasy wait, he appeared on the platform to perform his baritone solo, and the audience of more than 2,500, who had paid 50¢ or \$1.00 admission arose and responded with a stirring ovation. The **Salt Lake Tribune** said, "No finer tribute could be paid a man than the enthusiastic testimonial accorded Professor Evan Stephens." ²

The Professor concluded the concert by conducting the combined choruses in the "Hallelujah" from Handel's **Messiah** and his own Utah State Song, "Utah, We Love Thee."

The committee in charge had written to him in New York, asking for his suggestions on program content and participants. Heading the committee were J.J. McClellan, Tabernacle Organist, and Horace S. Ensign, a dear friend whom Stephens had financed

through college. After release from the choir conductor's post, Professor Stephens had travelled to the east coast to "absorb some music" and try to escape the depression which was stifling his creativity. He had replied, in part, to the committee's letter:

I should like . . . to have a selection from each of the following: The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, Prof. A.C. Lund conducting; the Salt Lake Choral Society, Prof. Squire Coop conducting; the Ogden Tabernacle Choir, Prof. Joseph Ballantyne conducting; and the Orpheus Club with Prof. A.H. Peabody conducting. Not only because these organizations represent the form of music to which I have devoted myself, but for a further personal and sentimental reason of my own. All four conductors have been more or less intimately connected with me in my past work, Prof. Peabody having been my assistant conductor of the Salt Lake Choral Society in the early 90's, while Prof. Joseph Ballantyne and Prof. Squire Coop were each young members of my singing class away back in 1883—hence in the full sense are both 'my boys.'³

The program, as finally arranged, included all on Stephens's list but the Ogden Tabernacle Choir. Soloists, who had appeared frequently with him, were Lydia White-Boothby, Alfred Best, Romania Hyde, Becky Almond, and Horace S. Ensign.

The 1917 testimonial had been preceded by three others. The first took place on 28 February 1898, "a fitting recognition of the services of Bro. Stephens to the choir and to the public." The entire program consisted of Stephens's compositions sung by the Tabernacle Choir and leading vocalists.

On 1 July 1914 a reception was held at the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City on the occasion of Evan Stephens's sixtieth birthday. More than 200 members of the Tabernacle Choir with their escorts attended, along with President Joseph F. Smith and other General Authorities. The choir sang from the mezzanine floor of the hotel

and the testimonial was given in the ballroom. A silver loving cup was presented to the Professor.

President Smith said that "the work of Prof. Stephens had been one of the things which had made Utah famous the world over for its musical accomplishments." Stephens was praised "not only as a musician and a conductor, but as a poet, for he had written some of the most inspiring songs besides composing the music to accompany them."⁴

Eli H. Peirce, committee spokesman, told of the rise of Evan Stephens from being foreman of a section gang on the Utah and Northern Railway to "one of the best-known composers and choir leaders in the country."

In 1916 outdoor illumination of homes was a novelty, but the innovative professor arranged to have his home at 1996 South State Street completely illuminated with electric lights for a farewell party. The two-story frame house, somewhat of a tourist attraction, had been placed at an angle from the property lines so Evan could see Mount Olympus from any room in the house. It was located on the edge of two man-made lakes surrounded by thick trees and colorful gardens of yellow primroses, daisies and wild pansies which Stephens had brought from Wales. The lakes were used for boating, and the quiet, shady nooks were popular with young friends and students.

Between 500 and 600 present and former choir members were guests on August 24 at the invitation of their former leader. The musical program ranged from a Stephens hymn sung by the entire ensemble to folk songs sung by a male quartet from Garfield, Utah; and renditions by an A'Capella chorus, surviving members of the quarter-century-old Harmony Glee Club, the Schubert male quartet, and the Hand opera chorus.

At the conclusion of the program, Evan Stephens was invited to speak. His remarks reflected his dissatisfaction with the irregular Tabernacle Choir attendance which had vexed him for many years, but also with the new program instituted by A.C. Lund to hold auditions and weed out older members.⁵ This concern, however, was a contradiction of his earlier statement to the effect that he did not want to take any singer older than forty years on his

California tour. He had told the choir that he didn't like aged singers and said it took "cheek" for them to remain in the organization. He acknowledged his purpose in arranging the tour to increase the younger choir membership with the incentive of a trip.

In his diary of this date, Thomas Griggs wrote "I suppose I am "cheeky" for I still hang to the choir as do Wm. Foster, C.R. Savage, et al."⁶

In the remarks at his home, Stephens said, "I deem this an opportune time to have a family reunion because the choir has been a family to me as I have had none of my own." He never married and had no offspring, but still retained contact with his brothers Thomas, John, and David, and sister Mary who had moved to St. John and Malad, Idaho. But evidently he had found their farm life uninteresting, and in his published writings and speeches seldom mentioned any of them. He referred more often to his "Boys", the young men who stayed with him at intervals and to whom he provided money for education.⁷

The third testimonial for Stephens was a Sunday service at the Tabernacle on 27 August 1916, with tributes by Horace S. Ensign, assistant conductor of the choir, and President Charles W. Penrose. The musical selections were all Stephens's compositions, and the Professor gave a lengthy address, illustrating gospel principles with words to his and other hymns. This was the last appearance of the choir before reorganization under A.C. Lund, and Stephens's final opportunity to direct as regular conductor.

In his talk Stephens indicated that since he had never been called as an L.D.S. missionary, he felt that a discussion of the music of the Latter-day Saints would be of more interest, and he proceeded to outline the philosophy which governed his work with the choir:

We do sing very fine, simple, beautiful sentiments as in general in all other churches dealing more or less with religious things, but there is a tendency in "Mormonism" to bring everything down to a matter of fact and practice . . . The tendency in music is naturally to lean toward sentimentalism and

emotion. Music is really the expression of emotion. It is the language of emotion and when wedded to words, it yields readily in the expression of the same emotion as the words themselves, and singers often forget that definite truth and principle should be put into practice in our everyday life.

What I want to insist upon, impress over and over upon you, is that we mean what we sing, and we sing those songs to remind us of what we are and in what age of the world we are living in, and what our work is.⁸

Stephens went on to discuss the issue of sentimentality in religious music. He questioned the wisdom of this, but emphasized that churchgoers like this quality, though he found a "tendency toward sentimentalism that is not exactly sentiment." He emphasized that the keynote to his work with the choir had been "to mean what you sing . . . to adopt beautiful sentiments, but always with a purpose to them, not to drift away and merely sing things contrary to our belief."

The Professor concluded his address by acknowledging that he was basically self-taught, but that he owed a debt of gratitude to the world's great composers from whom he learned, and was able to use his skills in expressing the principles of Mormonism through the singing of the Mormon people.

March first of 1918 was observed as Stephens Day in Malad, Idaho. As the Deseret News reported, Stephens's wry sense of humor was evident in his donning a bonnet and veil to sing "The Old Maid of Ninety-Five."

Rumors of Evan Stephens's impending resignation from his post with the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir first appeared in 1895, but at a meeting in the Tabernacle, the First Presidency effectively squashed the idea:

PROF. EVAN STEPHENS HONORED AT MALAD

Prof. Evan Stephens, returning from Malad, Ida., tells of an event there in his honor which he says he will never forget and which he avows he appreciates more than he can tell.

Last Friday evening, in the new stake tabernacle there, an audience that filled the building vied with the performers in enjoying every moment of the two hours or more filled with music and reminiscences. It was an "Evan Stephens night." A well-balanced choir of about 80 voices filled the choir loft, in front of which upon the stand were seated the stake authorities and a number of other leading citizens of the valley. Smiles, tears and laughter greeted the songs, according to the varied character of the numbers. Prof. Stephens, accompanying himself on the organ, faced the audience and sang old-time songs of characteristic and varied styles. He sang also in two duets, once with a young niece, Miss Merle Thomas, and once with a name-sake nephew, Evan Thomas. The choir rendered five selections in fine style. Directed by Assistant Conductor Richard Davies, Chorister Castleton being too ill to be present.

A brief address of welcome to Prof. Stephens was made by Chairman D. L. Evans and a biographical sketch of Prof. Stephens was given by a boyhood friend, T. A. Davies. Fifteen lads sang the chorus of "The Mormon Boy," and the ladies of the choir rendered the chorus, "We Ever Pray for Thee." Miss Merle Thomas sang the solo, "My Valley Home," and Mrs. Hatch recited, "The tender old ballad, "Kiss Him for His Mother," and others of like character, sung by Prof. Stephens, brought tears to many eyes in the audience and then in contrast, more fully to illustrate the old-time concert program, Prof. Stephens donned a bonnet and a veil and gave "The Old Maid of Ninety-five," the humor of which was fully appreciated by the audience.

Just before a rousing rendition of "America" the choir and audience, led by Prof. Stephens, a beautiful diamond tie pin was presented to the guest of honor, as a souvenir of the occasion, from the choir and audience. Prof. Stephens expressed great gratitude. All present voted the event the banner one of the year.

Tabernacle Choir

There was an unusually full attendance at the rehearsal of the Tabernacle choir last evening owing to the fact it had been given out that President Joseph F. Smith, President A.M. Cannon, and Bishop W.B. Preston would be present. There have been rumors for some time past that Evan Stephens, who has brought the choir up to its present degree of efficiency, and who conducted its work in the East at the time of the World's Fair, had intended retiring from the leadership, and it was expected that something would be said or done in connection with the subject. It is pleasant to know that if Prof. Stephens had any such design before, it was fully removed after last night's pleasant meeting. He confesses that he had felt something like discouragement over the support he received, and over the fact that the singers did not exert themselves to work as they did when preparing for the Chicago contest. Therefore he had been given to understand that the Tabernacle would hereafter be closed against concerts by the choir and he felt that it would be impossible to keep the organization up to a high standard without the incentive of appearing in occasional public events such as in joint concerts with foreign organizations. Prest. Smith, in addressing the choir last evening, spoke warmly of the work the singers had done and were doing, and said the First Presidency had no desire whatever to prevent the Tabernacle being used for the public performances of the choir. Encouraging remarks were also made by Messrs. Cannon and Preston, and an excellent feeling was evident on all hands, particularly among the singers who were notified by Prof. Stephens that there would be a new roll started, a reorganization effected and a general waking up indulged in.⁹

Here Stephens expressed concern over the support from choir members and the quality of their performances, which characterized many of his public comments in succeeding years. Apparently he had heard that the First Presidency disapproved of public concerts in the Tabernacle with outside organizations and soloists, especially where admission charges were made.

Stephens had been appointed as director in 1890 and had built the choir up to its highest state of perfection on the World's Fair tour in 1893. Lacking the incentives of such memorable experiences and performances, the members relaxed in their efforts and attendance at rehearsals and Sunday Tabernacle services, which vexed the Professor dearly.

The subject of the Professor's retirement arose again in 1901. Thomas Griggs noted in his journal, "At Tabernacle choir practice Stephens said his intention was to retire from conductorship at 50th birthday and give room for a younger man. The Choir had not come up to what he desired it to attain. He wanted rest."¹⁰ Stephens was then forty-seven years of age.

In 1904, as he had promised, Stephens offered a tentative resignation to the First Presidency of the church, telling them he would resign if they desired. But the resignation was not accepted and he continued in the post for twelve more years.

On the nineteenth anniversary of his directorship of the choir, Evan Stephens, in an interview with the *Deseret News* reviewed his work. He concluded his recollections by saying, "How long my work will continue I know not. I am ready to hand over the baton to a younger man whenever those who preside over us deem it wise or are willing; but until they give me an honorable release and a 'God bless you' to cheer me on in other paths or my retirement, I hope to be able to fulfill my mission worthily where I am, and to advance and not retard the community in its onward progress in the divine art."¹¹

Stephens continued in his efforts to improve attendance of the choir members, and had made some headway in reaching his goals, as evidenced by an article in the *Deseret News* of 7 January 1913.

The following announcement is made today by the Presiding Bishopric and Professor Evan Stephens, conductor of the Tabernacle Choir. Next Thursday night will be the first meeting of the reorganized choir and will be held in the Tabernacle at 8:00 sharp.

Again in 1915 the rumored reorganization of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir made headlines. On 19 October the **Salt Lake Telegram** printed the following story:

CHURCH WILL REORGANIZE TABERNACLE BIG CHOIR

Committee of Nine Chosen by the First Presidency
Is Ready to Make Its Report of Investigations

STEPHENS MAY LEAVE

McClellan Will Probably Be Conductor and the Organist Emeritus With One New Assistant. Reorganization of the Salt Lake tabernacle choir of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is impending, and members of the choir are, in many instances, uneasy as to the scope and extent of the reorganization.

As a result, it is said, of lack of interest in the choir work by a large number of the members, attendance at rehearsals and at stated appearances of the choir has been small during the last six months. This condition was pointed out to the First Presidency of the church about two months ago by a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and it was suggested to the First Presidency that an investigation be made to determine the causes for the failing interest and lack of attendance.

In order that this investigation might be made fairly and impartially, the First Presidency appointed a committee of two members from each of the five stakes in Salt Lake, and one from Granite Stake, to go as deeply into the matter as they deemed advisable. . . . This committee held sessions almost nightly for a month or longer, going deeply into the affairs of the choir, and sparing no one in their probe.

The result of the investigation was, it is said, that the committee learned that many of the members and former members of the internationally famous choir had become wearied of the music they were presenting at the regular services and at special performances, and had not been assigned enough new music to sustain their interest. . .

This story was refuted in an article in the **Deseret News** the next day, 20 October 1915:

PRESIDENT SMITH SAYS TABERNACLE CHOIR STORY IMAGINARY

In regard to the rumored reorganization of the tabernacle choir, President Joseph F. Smith today announced that the whole story was premature, that no decision had been rendered by the committee appointed to consider the matter and that the particular changes mentioned had never been contemplated by the Church officials or committee. He styled the whole story as imaginary.

DENY CHOIR STORY

Prof. J.J. McClellan, Edward P. Kimball and Tracy Y. Cannon have issued the following statement in regard to the article published on the tabernacle choir:

“We regret exceedingly the publication in last night’s **Telegram** of the article concerning the tabernacle choir.

“We affirm emphatically that we know absolutely nothing concerning the source from which the paper obtained its information; also we have no knowledge of the contents of the committee’s report having heard no member of the committee commit himself.

“With the exception of Mr. Cannon, we were in ignorance of the personnel of the committee until the names were published in last night’s paper. We feel that a gross injustice has been done to Evan Stephens and to ourselves by publication of this story and we wish to express in the most positive manner our determination to support him and to stand by him as conductor of the choir, and we shall take immediate steps to assure him of this fact.”

Then on 22 October the **Salt Lake Telegram** printed in its entirety the contents of a letter from Evan Stephens explaining the Tabernacle Choir investigation. The full text of the letter is included in the Appendix, but its salient points should be summarized here which support the efforts the Professor had made in the ensuing years to insure the quality of performance by the organization.

In the letter he stated that he had pointed out to the First Presidency over a fifteen year period the unsatisfactory condition of the choir with an urgent request that the causes leading up to the conditions be removed. He complained “that the choir members are so engaged in church duties (all good and praiseworthy) in their various stakes and wards that conflict with their regular attendance at the Tabernacle, that irregularity has become so prevalent as to destroy the effectiveness of our work. And my request was that proper ecclesiastical authorities remove this

obstacle that we might enjoy what every musical organization must have to do artistic work, a full attendance regularly from all the enrolled members.”

Stephens went on to mention that a meeting had been called of all stake and ward authorities concerned in the Tabernacle, and he had addressed them concerning the difficulties and his views on solving them. He pointed out that the said committee had been appointed by the act of the meeting, and not by the First Presidency.

Concerning the allegations of dissatisfaction with the music being programmed, Stephens pointed out that the irregularity of attendance “made it impossible for us to render satisfactorily anything but our simplest, best known selections.” He then proceeded to list the new music which had been taken up in the preceding three months and the stock pieces by such well-known composers as Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Handel, which had been prepared for public renditions, and used when sufficient attendance by the singers made proper rendition possible.

Stephens concluded his letter by stating that some of the material was “news” to him and that he had not received any official word from any source.

After the furor in the news media, nothing was published about a reorganization of the choir until the following year. Then Anthon H. Lund made the following entry in his journal on 13 July:

. . . Met with the Presidency and Twelve . . .
The matter of changing the chorister of the Choir was considered. Bro. Grant thought we better put it off till later. It was voted and agreed to reject the offer of Bro. Kimball to take the place of Bro. Stephens . . . Bro. McKay said of the many choristers in the State he looked upon A.C. Lund as the most proficient . . . Bro. G.A. Smith moved that Bro. Stephens be released and Anthony C. Lund take the place of leader of the Salt Lake Choir (Tabernacle). This was adopted unanimously.

The next entry in the Lund Journal regarding a meeting with

the First Presidency appears on 20 July 1916:

In the afternoon the Presidency wrote to Evan Stephens a nice letter telling him that as he had complained that the members of the choir did not attend as they ought to, and asked that the singers be called to attend, and committees had been appointed to consider the matter and they had never mentioned a change, we laid the matter before the Apostles and they had voted unanimously to change conductors and voted to ask A.C.Lund to succeed Bro. Stephens. We told him he had our love and appreciation for what he had done so well now more than a quarter of a century and told him we would show our appreciation in a more substantial way ¹² . . . I am afraid Bro. Stephens will take his release very hard . . .

In an entry of 25 July, Lund noted that, “Bro. E. Stephens came in to see the Presidency about his release. He seemed to feel all right.”

“Citing Stephens’s vague resignation of 1904, President Smith gave the conductor the option of resigning or requesting an honorable release.” ¹³

Professor Stephens then wrote a detailed letter to the First Presidency, which was published in the *Deseret News* on 27 July:

Presidents Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund and Charles W. Penrose:

Dear Brethren—Inasmuch as it doesn’t appear practicable or possible to have such action taken as I have desired to secure the attendance at the tabernacle choir of such a body of singers (regularly) as I have long felt was necessary to enable me to get the kind of artistic work I desired done, I hereby respectfully ask for an honorable release

as conductor, to take place as soon as may be, without causing any unnecessary inconvenience in the matter.

As President Smith may remember, informally my resignation has been in your hands for about 12 years, when I verbally requested that it be so considered, to take place as soon as you found a suitable and younger man to fill the place; and inasmuch as since then a number of such men with commendable energy, talent and ambition have proven their ability in this line of work, I feel that those conditions are now fulfilled, and that the musical work to which I have given the best part of my life can go on uninterrupted, and with more speed with younger hands at the helm, hence that you can now fully accept my resignation with profit to all concerned.

Now, dear brethren, your unvarying kindnesses and many expressions of esteem have been a great happiness to me during the almost 26 years I have had charge of the choir. These with the love and loyalty of thousands of my singers and other fellow workers shown and expressed in manifold ways, and, indeed a similar expression shown on numberless occasions by the community at large (both in and out of the Church to which I belong) all make it very pleasant for me to look back over my period of labor, and cannot but ever keep me free of any other feeling than that of gratitude to you all. Added to this I can assure you that my successor, whomsoever he may be, shall have my most ardent and best wishes for success.

And above all I shall continue to hope that the great musical progress of our people—with the Tabernacle Choir ever at the front—may continue

onward and upward steadily, and thus aid in fulfilling the great destiny of the work of which it is a part.

With best love and esteem, your brother,
Evan Stephens

Conductor of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir
since October 16, 1890.

Evan Stephens's inmost feelings about his release were summed up in a letter to S.B. Mitton in Logan:

. . . The entire trouble here is the growth of conflicting duties to which my singers are subject, and this impeded our progress to such a degree that I can rely practically on no results from our best efforts. I have tried hard to have something done whereby the choir should not be the one to suffer, but the local authorities of wards and stakes from which our singers are drawn oppose any action which may draw them from any activities at home. That the presidency feel they cannot afford to fight them over the matter. So we have all agreed to try the "new broom" idea to see if it will help to at least aid for the time being.

While it is a disappointment to me not to be able to get the material I needed for the sort of work I wanted to do, and there is a natural sadness in giving up one's life work as it were. Still it is a great relief to have many burdens removed, and to at least be released from trying the impossible. I expect to spend most of the fall and winter—perhaps in New York, just taking in the musical things of the metropolis.¹⁴

As the historian of the nineties focuses a ten-power glass on the many circumstances of Evan Stephens's release in 1916, he

will probably feel some measure of sympathy, but a much greater respect for the man of prodigious talent and charisma who was shunted from the limelight to quiet pursuits in his late years. Yet the contemporary chronicler has the advantage of having lived into the future which Stephens was projecting for himself and the church in the twenties, and can see that some of the Professor's goals have been met, though not in congregational singing.

Ironically the circumstances of release were stormy for five other conductors of the Tabernacle Choir. In August 1880 George Careless, in his letter of resignation to the choir said, "In conclusion I would ask you, as my friends, to deny the false report that my enemies are endeavoring to circulate, viz: that I have been dismissed from my position, such statement being entirely false and without foundation."¹⁵

Ebenezer Beesley was unhappy about his premature release from the choir in 1890 "because it took him away from the enterprise he loved most in this world, but also because it called for a complete shift in his vocational activity at a time when he was past his prime."¹⁶

J. Spencer Cornwall in September 1957 and Richard P. Condie in June 1970 were both released earlier than they had anticipated; and Jay Welch resigned soon after appointment in December 1974 for "personal reasons" amid circumstances which have not been made public. Each of the six had strong personal feelings about music which the choir should perform, and each had his critics. But in light of the spectacular growth of the church in membership and the continuing recognition of the choir, the controversies in the history of that body should be viewed only as a share of the unmitigated toll which progress ultimately exacts.

Undoubtedly Evan Stephens's Welsh heritage prompted his unflinching pursuit of his goals for the choir, just as the people of Wales have remained unswerving in their desire to maintain their own identity over the centuries. The music and poetry of Wales provided a major stimulus for Stephens's zeal for a career in music, even at his very young age.

Tabernacle

Stephens' Grand Testimonial CONCERT



Friday Evening
April 6th, 1917

Great Program

Three Great Choirs
Eight Best Soloists

*Tickets now selling at
Music and Drug Stores*
General Admission - 50c
Special Reserve \$1.00

*Stephens' friends and
pupils are all going
Notify Your friends*

Advertisement for Stephens' Farewell Concert. *Deseret News*,
April 2, 1917

Chapter 2

Evan Bach of Pencader

In the twelfth century England's Henry II led a military expedition against South Wales and stopped in Pencader, a tiny hamlet in Carmarthenshire county, shown only on the most detailed maps. This was the birthplace of Evan Stephens. There, according to the ancient historian, Giraldus Cambrensis:

... an old Welshman at Pencadair, who had faithfully adhered to him [Henry II] being desired to give his opinion about the royal army, and whether he thought that of the rebels would make resistance, and what would be the final event of this war, replied, 'This nation, O king, may now, as in former times, be harassed, and in a great measure weakened and destroyed by your and other powers, and it will often prevail by its laudable exertions; but it can never be totally subdued through the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God shall concur. Nor do I think, that any other nation than this of Wales, or any other language, whatever may hereafter come to pass, shall in the day of severe examination before the Supreme Judge, answer for this corner of the earth.'¹

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Today the Old Man of Pencader is memorialized on a modern stone monument. "So far the Old Man has proved right, and the Welsh identity has survived. Among all the minority people of Europe, swallowed willy-nilly into the authority of the great Nation-States, none have remained more distinctly themselves than the Welsh."²

In 1854 David Phillips Stevens with his wife, Jane Evans, and seven children made their home in Pencader. There had been nine children, with the firstborn, Elinor, arriving in 1831 or 1832. Then four boys and four girls followed at intervals of two or three years. Little Jane, born in 1847, died as an infant, and Rachel passed away soon after birth in 1852. Jane was now carrying her tenth child and still working in the fields to provide her share of their meager sustenance.

The Stephens house was probably typical of those found in small farm villages—a long-house built of local stone, with straw-thatched roof and dirt floor. The family's living quarters generally were divided from those of cows and horses by a single step and long corridor, and all of the occupants, human and animal, entered by a single door.³ The home had a small fireplace with a huge chimney "under whose tent-like spread all the family could sit around the fire."⁴

David and Jane's first child, Elinor, was born when the Old Poor Law was in effect. This statute placed a premium on marriage and resulted in young people such as David and Jane marrying at an earlier age and extending their child bearing period, resulting in larger families and even greater poverty.⁵ David was twenty-two and Jane nineteen when they married.

The young father had found work on a farm at some distance from Pencader, sometimes earning as little as twenty-five cents for a day's hard labor. His wife's wages from work in the barley fields was even less, with little more than a loaf of dark barley bread to take home to her little ones. Occasionally she would be forced to borrow a bushel of barley from a kind-hearted miller located at some distance, and have it ground into meal which she carried home on her back.⁶

The tenth Stephens child, Evan, born 28 June 1854 was his

father's "tithe", so David said. His mother called him Evan Bach from **backgen** meaning boy and **bach** meaning small. As an infant he was sickly, but seemed to improve in health as he matured, and was able to do heavy labor in Willard and Logan, Utah in later years.

A brief review of the chaotic history of Wales between 1838 and 1866 brings into focus some of the events which surrounded the Stephens family as their children were growing. Though there is no record indicating that David Stephens was an active participant in the political maneuverings, certainly the events were stimuli toward the family's acceptance of the message preached by the Mormon missionaries and the desire to emigrate to the United States.

Heavy rainfall in the summer and autumn of 1838 resulted in poor harvests and much dissatisfaction among the farmers. In October of that year a farmer was burned in effigy in his own yard to frighten him from expanding his farm ownership. Arable land was scarce. Then the next year a workhouse, where impoverished children and aged and disabled adults were forced to work, was burned. Finally, a toll gate on the road at Efailwen in Carmarthenshire was destroyed, and after being rebuilt was destroyed again by a crowd of up to 400 men, some of whom had blackened their faces and some dressed in women's clothes. This was the beginning of the Rebecca riots, named from Gen. 24:60: "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." The leader of each marauding group was known as "the Rebecca," and his followers as "her daughters."⁷

David Williams summarizes the underlying causes in his article, "Rural Wales in the Nineteenth Century":

In the decades after Waterloo, the intense depression kept the people there, for they had nowhere else to go. It was this intense depression which led to disturbances . . . The riots took the form of an attack on the tollgates; but their cause

was poverty, due primarily to a rapid increase in population with insufficient land to go round.⁸

The riots subsided for three and a half years, but broke out again in 1842. The toll gates of the Whitland and other trusts which controlled the roads were again destroyed, and the authorities used soldiers and London policemen to quell the disturbances. The result for the farmers, however, was positive. Some legislation was introduced which governed the trusts and simplified the tolls. And in 1847 a Poor Law Board was established and the provisions of the law were eased.

The decade commencing with the year 1840 is known as the hungry forties. During this period David and Jane Stephens keenly felt the burden of their growing family. As soon as they were able, the children worked in the fields to augment the family income. David E. Stephens, who was born 31 July 1850, wrote that he started to work in the family garden when he was three years old and continued until he was nine. Then he was put to work in the carding mill at 36¢ per week until he lost his job. The American Civil War curtailed shipments of cotton, and the weavers, many of whom starved, were thrown out of work.

In his history young Stephens wrote, "The next job I got was on a farm herding sheep through the summer and went to school for about four months in winter, for only one winter, which was all the schooling I ever had in Wales. Welsh was not taught as they were trying to wipe out the Welsh language. When I was 13 I took a job of general hand on the farm, hired for the whole year. I worked on that farm for the biggest part of four years."⁹

In the 1850's the railroads began to expand and came to Carmarthen in 1852, bringing this and other areas within reach of markets for their grain, wool, and dairy products. A new prosperity slowly emerged as the great industries, coal and iron, in South Wales expanded and required food for the growing number of workers. The railways made moving easier for families, and the excess of farm laborers was reduced, creating better times for those who stayed to work the land.¹⁰

For the Stephens family, not only were economic conditions

changing, but the role and composition of religion in their lives. The religious history of Wales has always been intertwined with political history. Even back in the 12th century, Giraldus Cambrensis attempted to achieve ecclesiastical independence from England for Wales, and to have himself appointed to the see of St. David's in which effort he failed, largely because of discrimination against all Welshmen.¹¹

In the early 19th century, dissatisfaction with the Anglican church was increasing, and the growth of dissenting chapels in Wales was rapid. Between 1811, the year of the Methodist Secession, when Thomas Charles ordained twenty-two laymen, and 1832, the year of the Reform Bill, the number of dissenting chapels had risen from 945 to 1,428. The Bible had been translated into Welsh in 1620, which had helped to solidify the Methodist Revival of the 18th century. The term **nonconformist** had been used since 1660 to describe those who dissented from the Church of England. The various sects included Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Unitarians, and also Quakers, the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army.

David and Jane Stephens were numbered among the Congregationalists at this time. David E. Stephens wrote, "On father's side there were quite noted ministers of the Independent church as well as noted writers. And on mother's side there were noted writers, too, who nearly always took first prize at the Eisteddfod,"¹²

The first Mormon missionaries to Wales arrived in October 1840 and began to proselyte in North Wales. The first missionary in Merthyr Tydfil, the growing industrial city of Glamorgan (the southernmost county) was William Henshaw, who baptized his first converts in February 1843. During the following three years he established several branches with a membership totalling nearly five hundred.¹³

In January 1845 Captain Dan Jones was called to his mission in Great Britain, traveling with Wilford Woodruff and Hyrum Clark, and upon reaching Liverpool was assigned to Wales. He labored in North Wales with disappointing results and was re-assigned to Merthyr Tydfil, after being called in December 1845 to preside over all Mormons in Wales. During 1846 nearly 500 souls

were converted, with just under 1,000 in 1847 and 1,700 in 1848. By January a total of 3,603 members resided in Wales.¹⁴

Dan Jones, a native Welshman from Flintshire who spoke the language, was instrumental in converting David and Jane Stephens and their family to Mormonism. However, they were not baptized until July 1849 after Jones had sailed from Liverpool on 26 February 1849 with a company of 249 emigrating Welsh Saints on the **Buena Vista**.¹⁵

Although Andrew Jenson's and Ronald D. Dennis's accounts differ in dates and details of Captain Dan Jones's conversion in America to the church, and his baptism, the bulk of the facts remain clear. Jones was the captain and owner of a little river steamer, "The Maid of Iowa," in which he brought a company of Saints (in charge of Parley P. Pratt and Levi Richards) to Nauvoo, Illinois in April 1843. At this time he met the Prophet Joseph Smith, who purchased a half interest in the steamer in May 1843. Captain Jones then commenced running the boat as a ferry between Nauvoo and Montrose, Iowa. In May 1844 Joseph Smith bought out his interest in the steamer.

Jones spent the night of 26-27 June 1844 with Joseph Smith in Carthage Jail, where he was told, "You will see Wales and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die."¹⁶ These words were a constant inspiration for Jones who had three narrow escapes from death during the next thirty-six hours and then made preparations for his mission to Great Britain.¹⁷

The captain was known as a dynamic speaker with an inborn charisma which enabled him to baptize and add to the church about 2,000 souls in Wales. His success in proselyting was due, in part, to the numerous pamphlets, some 1,500 per month and 1,200 copies of the **Millenial Star** which he published in Welsh, and a monthly periodical, **Prophet of Jubilee**, all printed in Merthyr Tydfil.

Jones wrote a number of letters which documented his successes in converting Welshmen and also the persecutions endured by the early members, based on the church's espousal of polygamy. Interestingly, the first issue of the **Millenial Star** in 1840 denied the practice.¹⁸

Alan Conway in his article, "Welsh Emigration in the Nineteenth Century" points out that the majority of Welsh emigrants spurned the English possessions and South American countries and "set sail for the United States, a nineteenth century combination of El Dorado, Utopia and the Promised land . . . The reasons why they left Wales are probably as numerous as the emigrants themselves but basically what America could offer them and Wales could not was the reason for their going."¹⁹ Conway adds, "If the Welsh sought Mammon [gold and sudden riches] in California, in Utah they sought God as members of the Church . . ."

The fever for emigration was spawned by letters such as the one from Brigham Young: "Let all who can procure a loaf of bread and one garment on their backs, be assured there is water, plenty and pure, by the way, and doubt no longer, but come next year to the place of gathering, even in flocks, as doves fly to their windows before the storm."²⁰

In only nine years since the first Mormon missionary had arrived in Wales, the East Glamorgan Conference in the industrial south had grown to become the largest in Great Britain. In his two sailings in 1849 and 1856 Dan Jones had taken to Utah nearly a thousand Welsh converts. Details of Jones's first company appear in a newspaper story sent to Orson Pratt:

EMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA— THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

On Tuesday last, Swansea was quite enlivened in consequence of the arrival of several wagons loaded with luggage, attended by some scores of the 'bold peasantry' of Carmarthenshire, and almost an equal number of the inhabitants of Merthyr, and the surrounding districts, together with their families. The formidable party were nearly all 'Latter-day Saints,' and came to this town for the purpose of proceeding to Liverpool in the Troupadour steamer, where a ship is in readiness to transport them next week to the glittering regions

of California. This good company is under the command of a popular Saint, known as Captain Dan Jones, Llangollen, the able disputant on the subject of 'Baptism' Amongst the group were many substantial farmers from the neighborhoods of Brechfa and Llanybydder, Carmarthenshire; and although they were well to do, they disposed of their possessions to get to California. It is their intention, we are informed, not to visit the gold regions, but the agricultural districts, where they intend, they say, by helping one another, to reside in peace and harmony, and to exemplify the truth of 'brotherly love,' not in name, but in practice. Amongst the number who came here, were several aged men, varying from 70 to 90 years of age, and 'whose hoary locks,' not only proclaim their 'lengthened years,' but render it very improbable they will live to see America; yet so deluded are the poor and simple Saints, that they believe that every one amongst them, however infirm and old they may be, will as surely land in California safely, as they started from Wales. Their faith is most extraordinary²¹

Cambrian

On the morning of 28 June 1854 Jane Stephens wearily trudged up a mile-long road to the potato field where she was to work, nearly overcome with the sultry heat and weight of her unborn child. But as she worked with her hoe, the words of a song which she had learned from the Mormon missionaries came to mind — "Come, Come Ye Saints," and she sang it softly in Welsh:

*We'll find the place
Which God for us prepared
Far away in the West.*

Elder Jones had talked so convincingly of the wondrous

opportunities in America, where she and her family could worship as they chose and find a rewarding life. That day would come, she was certain.

As the morning wore on, she realized that she was alarmingly weary and ill and must hasten home. As she approached the little house she called her daughter, Mary, who had just celebrated her twelfth birthday.

"Fetch Aunt Rachel," she gasped. "The baby is coming." With the help of fourteen-year-old Ann, who was tending little David, nearly four, baby Evan arrived and was tucked into a crib before Aunt Rachel appeared in the doorway.²²

While Evan was still a tiny infant, his parents were called to contribute donations to help build the Salt Lake Temple, the foundations for which had been started in 1853. Jane Stephens took the baby with her to the wheat fields and laid him in the shade of a tree. She was gleaning the field, and the wheat which she was able to harvest would be set aside for their contribution to the temple building. As she worked, again she hummed to herself:

*But with joy wend your way;
Tho' hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day.*

By no stretch of her imagination could she guess at that time that her son, lying in the field, would live to compose the anthem, "Hosannah," for the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple on 6 April 1893.²³

L.D.S. branch services were held each Sunday in the Stephens home as David Phillips Stephens had been made president of the Pencader branch. Evan Stephens said that the effect of the hymn singing by both children and adults was poetical rather than musical. The singing in unison was not very impressive, but he always noted the meter and could identify what tunes were suited to various meters.

One-part music did not stir the soul of the little boy even as much as did the rhythm of verses, a

circumstance out of keeping with the experience of most children; for nearly always a child is more affected by the simplest of musical sounds, than by the rhythmic motion of a verse; for the musical effect of metre is generally past the power of the mind of a small child to comprehend in more than a faint degree. The reason why a simple air did not rouse a musical enthusiasm in the soul of Evan Stephens was because his is a genius for harmony rather than melody.²⁴

This experience of Evan Stephens is contrary to the observation of Giraldus Cambrensis in the 12th century, writing of the Welsh:

In their musical concerts they do not sing in unison like the inhabitants of other countries, but in many different parts; so that in a company of singers, which one very frequently meets with in Wales, you will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers, who all at length unite with organic melody in one consonance and the soft sweetness of B flat.²⁵

Jane Stephens taught little Evan to read from the Bible in Welsh before the age of six. Then he followed his brother, David, at the village school where instruction was in English. He experienced difficulty in coping with the Queen's Tongue, being able to understand it but unable to converse in it. Then at the age of ten he was forced to quit school to work at herding cattle and sheep.

By this time Evan's older brothers had obtained work in the coal and iron industries where they were receiving cash for their labors in place of livestock or farm products.²⁶ One Sunday in the spring of 1863 Thomas came home to announce that he had saved the means to pay his way to America. But he was averse to leaving all of his family behind and confided this to his younger sister, Ann, who told him, "Tom, you have been enabled to do what we

have been praying for all our lives. Don't let the great chance pass by or it will never come again. If you do not feel like going now, let me have the money and I'll go."

Tom agreed to this and promised to follow in another year.²⁷ Ann sailed with determination from Liverpool on 30 May 1863 on the *Cynosure*.

After the departure of Ann to Utah, the family's neighbors in Pencader said openly that the girl "was foolishly going to destruction, let by a mad religious delusion."²⁸ Perhaps her mother found some consolation in the fact that her son, Thomas, three and one-half years older, had gone over the next year to look after his sister, who was employed in Brigham Young's household.

In 1864 David and Jane received word from their children in Utah that some funds were coming from them and also from the Perpetual Emigration Fund in Salt Lake City to enable them to emigrate soon. The amount was smaller than expected, and Jane was forced to borrow money from a friend to include young David with the family. This was a joyous prospect for all of them, as they hoped to find better, brighter days ahead.

Evan Stephens, now eleven, had been told from infancy that the family was going to Zion as soon as "the Lord would open up the way." He had been baptised on 19 December 1863 in a stream running through Pencader. All of the family had been baptised with the exception of Mary, who did not become a member until 1877, after her marriage in 1862.

Young Evan regarded the coming journey as a matter of course, although he was saddened at the thought of leaving his friends and his beloved countryside, especially his "mound castle" where he played, and a particular hillside garden where snowdrops, narcissus and primrose grew. He planted these varieties at his home in Salt Lake City some thirty-five years later.

He had learned at an early age to defend his faith against the taunts and ridicule of his schoolmates, who derisively called him "the little saint." His retort was "Better saint than sinner." The Stephens family was loved and respected in their small community, and so the severe persecution which raged in the larger cities was absent in Pencader, where only heated arguments for and

against their beliefs raged.

Now the young man took pride in reminding his friends that the family had always maintained that they were going to the Great Salt Lake and that their leaving was proof that their religion was right "and that the Lord can make things that seem impossible come to pass."²⁹ As the family boarded the train for Carmarthen the station was crowded with friends as well as curious onlookers. In Carmarthen the young boy stayed close to his mother, unaccustomed to the crowds of people and long rows of closely spaced houses.

Evan's older brother, John, a stalwart twenty, had left his work to meet the family in Carmarthen and then escort them the twenty miles to Llanelly. John obtained permission from his parents to have Evan accompany him on a side trip to visit a young lady whose cottage was about half the distance.

When Betsy arrived home from her employment, a dress-making shop, her mother prepared supper for them, and John's sweetheart accompanied them part way on their walk to the farmhouse where the boys would spend the night.

[It was a] mellow sunlit evening in May, the shining waters of the bay to their right, and the beautiful fern and wild-flower clothed hills rising upon their left, with the hawthorn hedge extending each side of the winding road and the soft green grass intertwined with runners of ivy, blackberry vines, and dotted with yellow primroses, daisies and wild pansies. The fragrance in the mild, moist air was enchanting, no wonder the Cambrian can never get over his love for 'Wild Wales'.³⁰

John's affection for Betsy was immediately noted by Evan, who assumed the role of "Puck" and assisted his brother in arranging a "chance meeting" with the young lady, as, next morning, they all walked the long road to Llanelly to attend a Sunday conference meeting. Custom for lovemaking in rural Wales at that time dictated that:

Everything must have a veil of secrecy thrown over it. If there was a meeting, it must be by 'chance.' They must, before folk, seem merely disinterested friends and no matter how intensely the flame of love burned, the thousand little devices and by-play this good custom gave birth to were half the charm of lovemaking to the lovers and decidedly so to the lookers on . . . the world seemed all a heaven of peace and love to the not over-discriminating imagination of Evan . . . He was not making love himself but he was playing his part in helping somebody else to. . . .³¹

After a tiresome train ride, the Stephens family arrived in Liverpool, the first large city Evan had ever encountered. As he said later, "Its babble of confusion and noise terrified" him. Evan could read both English and Welsh, but conversation was difficult and "he felt upon landing across the Mersey River among the great crowd of strangers as if he were thrown among wild savages."³²

A poignant account, written for L.D.S. Primary children, tells of the Stephens family's difficulties in Liverpool:

Two incidents of his Liverpool experience Evan Bach [Stephens] often thinks of. The day before the ship sailed, when the emigrants were being assigned to their respective berths, our little Welsh family found that no place had been reserved for them, and they were informed that they would have to wait two weeks for the next ship.

Evan threw himself upon some cotton bales that lay on the wharf and cried some of the bitterest tears he had shed up to that time. His crying prevailed, too, for rather than leave them so, arrangements were made to put them in the fore cabin on the upper deck. So they crossed the ocean up among the sailors, and were delighted.³³

The other mishap occurred upon the very day

the ship was to leave the wharf or platform. Evan and his brother, David, were running about the wharf in their happiness, and without knowing it crossed what is termed a draw-bridge, and when returning to their ship found a great gap with a stream of water flowing through it between them and their ship, the bridge had disappeared!

For a little time they were almost frightened out of their wits but presently to their amazement they saw the bridge slowly coming back to its place. The opening of the Red Sea to the Israelites was hardly more welcome or marvelous in their eyes than this modern miracle seemed to these two bewildered boys.³⁴

The Stephens family left Liverpool on 30 May 1866 on the sailing ship, **Arkwright** in a company of 450 under the leadership of J.C. Wixom. The journey took nearly five weeks, and the family was forever grateful that they were quartered on the upper deck with access to fresh air, which contrasted with the crowded conditions below where the more than 400 emigrants could barely stretch out to sleep in the fetid air.

As the **Arkwright** was pulled by two tugs down the Mersey river into Liverpool Bay, the Elders in charge of the company gathered all passengers together on deck and led off with hymns such as:

*O, Babylon, O, Babylon, we bid thee farewell,
We're going to the mountains of Ephraim to dwell. . .*

So joyously did the songs seem that one would have thought it was a big picnic party going out for a day's pleasure rather than a large company parting from the loved land.

Once out among the waves of the sea in the channel the spray began to throw great feathery lines from the front and sides of the ship whose

great white sails now began to spread like giantwings, and the ship is made to surge ahead, bravely mounting the sporting waves, all of which makes the heart beat faster with pleasure and the pain of parting is soothed to some extent.³⁵

No doubt Jane Stephens was troubled as the shoreline of Cardiganshire merged into darkness. The reality of her irrevocable decision to leave was painfully evident. She had been born in Felinllyswen in 1813, and her brothers and sisters in that area were being left behind, as were Evan's eldest sister, Elinor and brother, Daniel. Her son, John, would emigrate later. Her daughter, Mary, with husband David Jones and two children, along with Jane's Aunt Nannie and two sons were also among the emigrating company.³⁶

In an interview with **The Children's Friend**, Evan Stephens described the thirty-eight long days on the **Arkwright**:

When they were so far out that not a speck of land could be seen anywhere the wind would rise and the great ocean heave up into great mountain-like ridges or waves rolling wildly one after the other and carrying and tossing the big ship as if it were but a chip. Sometimes a gust of wind would rush into what sails were still spread until the great ship would be thrown so far over on one side that the tops of . . . the masts, would almost touch the water; and often a great wave would dash against the ship and breaking into a flood of spray on the deck would swirl madly over its floor and rush through the port holes . . . in the upper sides to let out the water that so often flooded the decks. Sometimes all the doors and hatches which were used as entrances to the compartments below the deck would have to be closed tight lest the ship should fill and sink, drowning everybody.

. . . At other times not a breath of a breeze

would be stirring and the ship would lie perfectly still all day like a big lazy bird on a great ocean of glass. On such days [he] would lie down in some corner and let his mind go back to Wales and his short life there.³⁷

Stephens mentions that land was sighted on 4 July 1866, and the company, excitedly lined up at the rail, could see fireworks in the skies above various towns along the shore where the inhabitants were celebrating the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The long sea voyage was over, but much travel remained. The next day the Stephens family and others were towed up the Hudson River, and in the steamy, hot New York sun they were landed for customs clearance at Castle Garden, where they underwent a doctor's check and baggage inspection.

Their dream had come true. After Jane Stephens received the money for their passage from Utah, she had walked twelve miles to confront a friend who had ridiculed their hopes of going. Today, after landing, she wanted to write to all of her friends in Wales to explain how her prayers had been answered and to express her gratitude for their new religion of hope.³⁸

A New American Anthem

Home land! Fair land, Lov'd land of freedom
My own America ever for me.
North, South, East, West one bond of union
Binds every free man's affections for thee.
Land of Old Glory, no song or story
Ever could utter thy charms for the free.

Broad land! great land, land of the Pilgrims
Blest land of refuge for all the oppressed.
Home of heroes, heroes who loved thee
Heroes who fought for the noblest and best.
Land consecrated, by God created
To be earth's Paradise fair in the West.

Home land! Blest land, from all oppression
God ever keep thee, and happiness lend.
Ever o'er thee, peace like a mantle
Of Heaven's protection in plenty descend.
Loved states united, forever plighted—
Home of the true and the brave to the end.

Evan Stephens

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Chapter 3

The Thousand Mile Walk

After passing through customs, the emigrant party from the **Arkwright** boarded a steamer the following morning to take them to New Haven, Connecticut. Evan Stephens described the boat as a “fairy palace” which was a welcome change after the crowded, low-ceilinged decks and sparse furnishings of the **Arkwright**. The group then transferred to a freight train which took two weeks to reach Chicago via Montreal, Canada. The coaches were little more than cattle cars with a few benches put in and no comforts for the sick and weary emigrants. At night the only heat was their own body warmth, and they huddled together on the floor of the cars.

David Stephens wrote, “The reason we had to go through Canada was that the Mormon church had contracted with the railroad to bring all the emigrants and they had to go there to connect up with the Grand Trunk Railroad. From Chicago to St. Joe [Joseph], Missouri we took the Illinois Central Railroad . . .¹

The train ride from Chicago was a delight for Evan Stephens. The cars had padded, plush-covered seats, which bore them to St. Joseph. From there they transferred to a three-decked river steamer which carried them up the Missouri River to Wyoming, Nebraska, which was not really a town, but a small center of scattered farms seven miles north of Nebraska City.

Evan's recollections of the river boat trip were vivid. The emigrants had been instructed to take provisions for one day, but the boat took extra time, resulting in most of them going hungry the second day. Evan and his brother, David, were so famished they explored the various decks and found a barrel where the cooks emptied bacon rinds and other waste from the kitchen.

They ate a large quantity and soon after, Evan became deathly ill, growing worse in the night until his parents despaired of his life. Additional trouble arose when the boat hit a sand bank and one man was thrown overboard. He was rescued from the shoals, but Evan was nearly trampled under the feet of the excited crew who came through the family's position on the lower deck near the boilers.²

Stephens was limp baggage when his father carried him from the river steamer to shore at Wyoming about midnight. No shelter was available for the company so they bedded down in the grass under the stars. The next day resilient young Evan was recovered, and he climbed the low hills to see the open country beyond the settlement. Unfortunately, the Welsh members of the company did not have places reserved in the wagons which arrived shortly to carry the emigrants west, and they were forced to camp at Wyoming for ten days awaiting the next group, a company of Danes.

Foodstuff and equipment for the travelers were minimal, following the advice of Erastus Snow, who had written:

My experience, derived from six journeys over the plains, enables me to know what kind of teams and outfits are wanted for the plains. One wagon, two yoke oxen, and two cows will be sufficient (if that is the extent of their means) for a family of eight or ten persons, with the addition of a tent for every two or three families. Of course with that amount of teams, only the necessary baggage, provisions, and utensils can be taken, and then the persons ride but little.³

During the long days while waiting for wagons and teams, the company took advantage of fresh milk and food which were available to strengthen them for the coming trek.

Most attractive of all, to Evan Bach, were the merry smiling teamsters from the 'Valley'. They looked so jaunty, hardy and good-natured as well as manly in their valley tan boots, jean trousers, broad, shapely shirt waists, with loose colored kerchiefs around their necks, and broad-brimmed hats crowning their tousled heads—a veritable army of Dustin Farnums. . . .

When darkness set in, and the stars or moon turned on their lights, a clearing in a flat space was selected and the man with the 'fiddle' or 'concertina' was called for to furnish dance music. Duly seated on boxes, or a box, if only one was available, he struck his tune while the boys laughingly urged the timid young ladies to join with them as partners for a 'cotillion' four couples to a 'set.' Several sets at times could be mustered and with the experienced teamsters not actually dancing, to help guide the newcomers through the mazes of the figures called out by the 'caller' or prompter, all were soon in full swing as the command of 'Balance all', 'Swing your partners', etc. was called out loudly and above the music.⁴

Late in July the wagons and oxen finally arrived in Wyoming to transport the Welsh saints to Utah. They departed the banks of the Missouri on August 1 under the leadership of Joseph S. Rawlins with a company of 400 souls in 65 wagons.

In the year 1866, some 3,126 settlers crossed the plains to Salt Lake City. Church teams numbering 10 captains, 456 teamsters, 49 mounted guards, 89 horses, 134 mules, 3,042 oxen and 397 wagons met many of the travelers in Wyoming, Nebraska. An additional 62 wagons, 50 oxen and 61 mules as well as provisions

were also sent to support the later companies.⁵

The Rawlins company, among whom nine souls died on the trip, was more fortunate than two other groups which left Wyoming on August 8. The Andrew H. Scott train lost about thirty of its members on the journey, while Abner Lowry's company lost many members from a cholera epidemic.⁶

Early pioneer companies were organized in a structure similar to the military, with officers in charge of each section and every able-bodied person assigned to specific responsibilities. Scouts riding horses went ahead of the main group, while the others walked and worked side by side of their double strings of oxen. At nightly camps the teams formed semi-circles with the trail running through the center; or sometimes they formed a complete circle to the side of the trail, inside of which all activities took place.

At noon they stopped for lunch and rest and the oxen were taken to water. Then the great beasts were led into the center of the circle and would go automatically to their places to be yoked up. "Nothing could more vividly illustrate the peaceable, kindly and religious character of this entire patient, contented, happy company of humans and animals than this orderly action that could so easily, without proper restraint, and kindness, have been a terrible bedlam."⁷

Except in emergency situations or where there were steep mountain passes to traverse or broad rivers to ford, the marching order of the camp remained the same each day. While the oxen were being yoked and hitched to their wagons, the able-bodied men, women, and children would start walking ahead of the wagons to escape the great clouds of dust which were stirred up on the trail by wagons and hoofs. Typical of late summer conditions on the prairie, there was little rain, and dust was always a hazard for all. Ahead of the walking company, the scouts searched for any dangers which might lie in store.

Evan Stephens stated that the company in which his family traveled was made up of many Scandinavians, and rather than gaining a better command of English on the trek, he acquired a speaking acquaintance with the languages of the north and learned to love and appreciate these people. Even as a boy of twelve,

Stephens's Welsh heritage, his life among a people steeped in old traditions where every peasant was a poet, came to the fore in his observation of the American prairie. He described:

How he would lift his face to the prevailing western breeze and romp along with the ever-distant, ever-nearing viewpoints looming up away off where the sun at sunset would drop out of sight as suddenly as if the string which for a moment held it at the very edge of the world was cut asunder. He would wonder and wonder where the Rocky Mountains could be of which he had heard; the air and sky seemed as clear as crystal, and he fancied that he could see the other end of the seemingly flat earth, but there was nowhere a sign of them in the far distance.⁸

In a talk shortly before his death, Stephens said, "The Pioneer trip across the plains, the emigrating trip from the old country here forms sort of a background for my life, as it interested me immensely." He said that he did his part in the pioneering work and walked all the way except across the Green and Platte rivers, which were too deep for him to ford.

He told his listeners, "The journey across the plains was such an experience of pleasure to me, that I found it difficult to sympathize with the pioneers who thought it a hardship. I find my mind wandering off now, and I can see myself . . . the first day I started across the rolling country. I was too elated to walk, so I would run ahead and then would stop and wait for the crowd. Of course I was a very young man."⁹

The image of this frail young boy of twelve, enduring with enthusiasm the heat of the prairie in heavy black woolen pantaloons with their row of buttons paralleling the waist (known as front-flap or railroad trousers), white drop-shouldered shirt and visored shako cap is truly heartwarming. Many of the poverty-laden Welsh emigrants came with little but the clothes on their backs, which were heavy woolens, home-spun from the fleece of

their own sheep on the hills of Wales, and unsuited to the torrid, humid days of July and August.

Stephens wrote of viewing the dim outline of Chimney Rock, Nebraska, which seemed to join the heavens above to the time-ravaged hills rising sharply from desolate sands below. When the company came to the hills above the North Platte River they had to maneuver their wagons gingerly through a series of ravines into the river valley. Evan's sister, Mary, had contracted what was termed "mountain fever." The boy added his slight weight to the wagon, fearing it might tip over and injure his sister, or mother, who had been forced to ride in the wagon to nurse her daughter.

Down in the river bottom Evan and his brother, David, found berries and wild grapes and were busy picking them when the call came to return to the camp. A band of Indians in war paint and feathers was approaching, and the terror-stricken boys and their elders sought the slight protection available in the circle of wagons. Captain Rawlins met the warriors with friendly greetings.

The Indians descended from their ponies, a peace pipe was lighted and soon all were seated on the ground in the center of the camp space. Then formally, in turn, a red man and a white man took a whiff at the pipe of peace and thus pledged each other to friendliness. Gifts of flour and other eatables were presented to the visitors and they departed in peace after making a very fine impression on their white friends and doing much to allay their fears for the safety of the camp, which proved to be justified for this camp.¹⁰

The next company, led by Andrew H. Scott, which had departed on 8 August was robbed of half of their oxen by Indians and suffered great privations from cold and hunger. These warriors may have been those who spared the Rawlins company.

The Platte River was shallow enough for wading. Evan Stephens was put into the wagon against his wishes, since his

brother, David, was to wade. The latter, either because he did not realize the dangers in crossing, or purposely to assuage his younger brother's feelings, ended up on the down side of his wagon, in danger from the currents, and had to be rescued. In his autobiography David didn't mention the incident. He said the river was two miles wide at the ford, with such a sandbottom that the drivers had to double their teams. The water in some places was up to his armpits. He went on to comment:

That night some folks from a near-by camp came and stole some of our oxen. The three night herders went after the other camp and made them bring the oxen back.

The next day we had to cross the prairie [sic], 20 miles, to the North Platte. That night on the North Platte they tried again to steal the cattle.

The night herder gave the signal of trouble, which was three shots, and half of the teamsters, according to rules, went out to help, while the other half and all the emigrants were to stay and guard the camp. There was one little Danishman who didn't understand the rules and when he saw the boys rushing out he grabbed a hatchet, the only instrument of war he could find and went out to help. This gave the rest of the crowd a good laugh.¹¹

A few days after traversing the river, Evan's sister, Mary, reached a climax in her fever, and her husband and mother were not expecting her to recover. The prospects of burying her alongside the trail in a lonesome grave, as was done many times in the years of prairie emigration, was saddening. But through earnest prayers and unwavering faith, Mary recovered and started a slow climb back to health.¹²

Soon the outline of the Rocky Mountains was visible in the far distance which raised the expectations of the company to jubilation. As the peaks loomed closer they appeared to grow in height but glistened with ice at their base.

One major obstacle still remained—the crossing of the Green River in Wyoming. Evan was again forced to ride in the family wagon as it forded the rampaging stream. Two of the company's wagons were carried downstream, but finally rescued after frenzied efforts. A September snowstorm also hit the Rawlins company, though not of the intensity of earlier storms which caught the Willie and Martin 4th and 5th handcart companies east of Green River in 1856. About 225 of nearly 1,000 emigrants froze to death or starved before rescuers from Salt Lake City reached them.¹³

As David Stephens described the wagons passing through Echo Canyon, "The sound echoes so that the noise of one wagon sounds like a dozen." In the little town of Coalville, Evan saw a Mormon bishop carrying a sack of flour on his back, which had dusted his trousers white. Accustomed to the frocked clergy of Wales, the emigrants were surprised to see the man without a coat or vest, engaged in manual labor. Finally the company made its last camp at Mountain Dell, and the next morning after sixty-one days en route, prepared to enter the "Valley of the Mountains" on 1 October 1866.

In his autobiography David Stephens wrote:

When we got to Salt Lake we drove into what was called the tithing yeard [sic], the teams were all released to go home, and our names were all taken. We were supposed to pay our emigration fee to the Emigration fund, which was a church fund used to help more emigrants come to this country. Those who could not pay at the time were to pay 10 per cent interest until it was paid. I paid mine three years later and it amounted to \$72.00.

Two pioneer songs were published by Evan Stephens in 1897 and 1918. One was the Teamsters' Chorus (dedicated to Peter Garff, who drove the Welsh oxen team in the company):

With a merry jog and a gay little song,
I trudge my way the whole day long. . .
Whoa, haw, Buck and Jerry Boy. . . .

Another was A Pioneer Campfire Song:

Gather 'round the campfire and sing a little song,
Just to soothe the heart, boys, and pass the time along.
Many bitter thoughts, boys, may vanish then away;
Songs may bring us visions of a brighter day. . . .¹⁴

The scene which met the prayerful gaze of all in the pioneer company as they descended into the Salt Lake valley from the east was described by Evan Stephens:

At last the sky space began to widen overhead and in front of them. Then the last turn in the road was really reached, and oh! the sublimity of the view that came into sight was indescribable. The wide, wide valley, lying below, made doubly impressive by contrast with the great flat prairies and the shut-in canyons through which their journey had led them for so many days. Afar in the distance shone, like a magnificent looking-glass, the waters of the Great Salt Lake lying peacefully at the base of its mountain-islands . . . and nearer, almost at their feet, lay the City of Salt Lake, its pretty houses dotted among the green foliage of its miles of fruit trees.¹⁵

The Welsh group was greeted by Henry Harris, whom they had known as a missionary in Wales. He invited them into his house where a home-cooked breakfast, served at a table, was a long-awaited treat. After the meal and a short chat they eagerly proceeded into the city where they had their first glimpse of the high arched framework of the New Tabernacle under construction.

On the street the company was greeted by hundreds of settlers, many with baskets of peaches which they were giving to the newcomers. When a lady insisted that Evan take three, he said, "Me no money." He hesitated to take the fruit, fearful of being arrested. But when no officer appeared he took the treat and

enjoyed it as any small boy might. Later that afternoon the entire Rawlins company was invited to a feast on the bank of the Jordan River where watermelons and other fruits were abundant.

The Stephens family spent the next few days at the home of Thomas Jeremy, an old-time friend, to await the arrival of Thomas Stephens, who was living with his sister, Ann, in Willard, Utah, located about sixty miles north of Salt Lake City. The two Stephens children were among the earliest residents of the town which was settled in 1851 as Willow Creek.

By 1866 Willard was still a very small farming community occupying a narrow terrace formed originally by prehistoric Lake Bonneville, along the base of a rugged and forbidding mountain range. Less than a mile west of the village cultivated fields dropped down to the shore of Bear River Bay. Some of the smaller homes were built of logs hauled out of the almost-impassible canyon behind the houses. There were a few stone homes which gave the town an aura of stability.

As the new arrivals came into town they were welcomed by a few milk cows grazing in pasture where the green was lost to the gold and brown of autumn. A single farmer was raising a ruckus of noise and dust as his ox-drawn wagon battled the rocks in Willard's main street.

The newcomers went first to the home of Richard Davies, whose house and farm were being occupied and managed by Thomas and Ann. Considering that David, Sr.'s resources totalled only fifty cents¹⁶, Thomas was fortunate to find them an abandoned one-room log cabin which boasted an open view of the lake to the west. Furnishings in the cabin were rudimentary—a home-made bed for the parents and a straw pile for the boys. Two packing boxes draped with flowered calico to conceal their spare contents of a few dishes, pots, and toilet articles, served as table, cupboard and dresser. A small stove installed by Thomas attempted to heat the room against the October chill. A couple of borrowed chairs and an improvised bench provided seating for the family's simple meals.¹⁷ Thomas and Ann had drawn from their own meager possessions to set up the family with the means of maintaining themselves.

Evan's father was forced to evacuate a nest of poisonous tarantulas which had set up housekeeping in the cabin. Rattlesnakes might be found under the bed or curled on the rough floor around the roof pole, or outside the front door. Upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1866, young Evan felt that the city was the ultimate paradise, but the discomforts of their first home in Willard brought him back to reality—especially snakes, which he feared more than bears or mountain lions.

In his autobiography David E. Stephens provided a graphic account of life in Willard, which was named in honor of Willard Richards, early church apostle. The entire populace lived within the confines of a fort, which was an area set aside for the settlement and had a dirt wall built around it to protect the settlers from marauding Indians.

Living in a Fort that way made it handy for people to get together for singing school or any other amusement. There was also what they called the Public Square, where the school house was and the children gathered there in the evening to play games and have good times in general. On the 4th of July, 1867, was my first big time at the Public Square. The boys and girls were all togged up in their best but nine of them had no shoes or stockings. I was awfully proud of my shirt. I was the only one who sported a brand new calico shirt. I had paid 65¢ a yard for it and the lady where I worked made it for me.

David Stephens stated that for amusement the settlers depended on dances, which were held once each week during the winter season, and upon literary societies. "The dances were run by the church and were opened and closed with prayer. They were held from eight o'clock to twelve, never later, and the price of a ticket was a peck of wheat, which was paid to the Bishop of the Ward who appointed a manager to run the dances." In the winter Willard was quite self-sufficient in amusements. Once in a while

an exchange visit with Brigham City would add variety and created a stir in the community.

Young David, after arriving in Willard, worked in a mill which made molasses from the sugar cane which nearly all of the settlers raised. The boy's job was to keep the fires going under the juice pressed out of cane which was heated in a ten-foot by five-foot vat, divided into four compartments. After the juice had passed through the skimming process in the third vat, it was again skimmed and cooled before storage in barrels.

Like Evan, David worked for his board and was not paid in cash. This was a hardship since he was trying to secure money to repay the man from whom his mother had borrowed to bring him to America in 1866. After David had written to the man that he couldn't get the cash, the lender agreed to take his repayment in such foodstuffs as wheat and molasses when he emigrated to Utah.

In the early spring of 1867, at the age of twelve, Evan was "... as untouched by the divine fire as if he had hailed from a land where music was unknown."¹⁸ The boy's first job in Willard was herding sheep for a family across the road. While watching the sheep he husked corn, and sometimes climbed to the top of an old shed to watch for strays among his flock. His pay for work on the farm was merely his board, as was customary in early times. If any of the animals strayed, he had to venture into the fields to locate them. Naturally timid, Evan dreaded meeting any of the older boys, with whom he couldn't converse in English. But he found them to be kind and friendly and soon developed lasting friendships.

Two incidents in Evan's boyhood in Willard illustrate the poverty which dogged him. He was invited to a wedding dance, but had no shoes to wear, so he purchased some black shoe polish and blackened his feet. A friend asked him why he didn't wear shoes, and he admitted he had none. Nevertheless he went to the dance in spite of his usual timidity because he was the only young boy invited.

The first time Brigham Young came to Willard to speak, the boys had been throwing rocks off the road to make a smoother passage for President Young's carriage. The choir was scheduled

to sing and Evan had no coat. He never wore one in the summer, and had no vest or shoes either. He blackened his feet and went to the meeting. After the service a banquet was scheduled in the bowery and Stephens went only as far as the door with a friend from the choir. Seeing the young man at the door, Brigham Young took his hand and said, "My boy, why don't you go inside?" Evan answered that he only sang in the choir and was not dressed well enough to go in. The President told him that it was perfectly alright and that he was among friends. But Evan stayed outside and cried bitterly.¹⁹

Prior to the incident with Brigham Young, the Stephens family had moved to a larger home, which had a cellar, two rooms, and a granary. The owners had moved to Bear Lake valley and David and his family were living in the house in exchange for working the farm on shares.

Sunday church services at that time were held in the school-house where the excellent ward choir was directed by a Welshman of twenty-three years, Daniel Tovey. At the first Sabbath meeting which Evan attended he was fascinated by the singing, and became attached to the choir leader as his hero. This first exposure to the Willard choir seemed to light a fire under the boy's musical inclinations.

In a letter written to Mable and Harold Jones of Malad, Idaho by Elisabeth Anne Stephens of Pencader, Wales, the writer commented about the renowned wit and good humor of her progenitors in the Stephens line. Her great-grandfather, Daniel Stephens was an excellent tailor who always sat on the table to do his work, telling stories to anyone who would listen. One story concerned his wife who had been ill. He received a bill from the doctor of "1 1s". He went to the doctor and said, "What is this? You have sent me a bill for one guinea?"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, "but you see, Daniel, I have repaired your wife for you."

"Repaired her for a guinea?" retorted Daniel. "Why, I could get a new one for 7s 6d."

Elisabeth Stephens added that her family was descended from the Phillips family (her great-grandmother was Ann Phillips),

who were cultured people and could sign their names on the marriage register and were well educated in 1770 when there were few schools.²⁰

Evan Stephens also said there was a strain of literary blood among his family, several of his maternal relatives having shown aptitude for writing both prose and verse. The boy was heir to this heritage which became evident at the age of thirteen, even though his farm labor and environment would not be expected to develop a talent, let alone a musical genius. All the Welsh emigrants were familiar with the great Eisteddfods in their native country, which encouraged the performance of music and writing of verse. These were important in Stephens's early life so that he undertook to stage them in Utah in later years.

As B.F. Cummings, Jr. wrote of Evan, "His case is one that strengthens belief in the theory that endowments acquired by a human spirit before it assumes a tabernacle of flesh, assert themselves during the mortal state, even under the most untoward circumstances."²¹

In the spring of 1867, Evan acquired a new farm job where he not only received his board, but at the end of the season, a new suit of clothes for his conscientious service. One of the Professor's strongest character traits was evidenced here—unselfish devotion to duty.

In his first summer in Willard, young Evan found the peaks behind his home mysterious and frightening, and he worried that he might have to climb the dreaded canyon with oxen and cart to haul logs as he saw other men doing. One day his neighbor, Shadrach Jones, asked him to go up the mountain in search of the oxen which he had turned out on grassy heights that lay north of town. The boy feared that the hollows and brush might harbor wild animals or snakes, but nevertheless was excited by the prospects of adventure.

As he reached a point about a mile above the settlement and looked back it appeared as a toy town with a streak of green fields between the mountain, the shining lake, and bowers of peach and apple trees. He peered nervously at the immense boulders on the mountainside which seemed to dangle perilously above the tiny



Willard Canyon, looking westward to community of Willard and farm land extending down to Bear River Bay.

Photo Courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

houses below. Though he had hiked for miles through brush and grass, he had not found the oxen. Suddenly small rocks began to roll down past his feet. He stared at the source and, as he wrote, “was almost frozen to the spot with terror as I saw the glinting eyeballs of a great snake shining above me in what seemed a head raised a foot or more above the ground. It was too far away to strike at me, and unless it took after me there was no danger, but the sight of the thing I most feared of all living things, fairly chilled my blood.”²²

He backed away and when he deemed it safe, turned and ran until he was winded, fortunately finding the cattle in a grassy ravine. Later as he took his father’s dinner to him in the fields, he had to cross a boggy meadow which swarmed with beautiful water snakes, some glossy black and some striped with yellow and red. Since he had no shoes and went about his duties barefoot, the snakes would glide out almost from under his feet. Evan found that after delivering his father’s meal he could avoid the meadow and snakes by crossing to the road through a wheat field. However, the owner suddenly confronted the boy and threatened to box his ears if he were observed coming through the planted field again.

Another day when the fear of the snakes was overwhelming, Evan ventured over the field again and was then met by the owner, who in anger struck him a full blow that staggered him for a moment. Stephens wrote, “It surprised me more than it hurt me. And it hurt me more than it pained me. I didn’t believe, though he threatened, that he would strike. I neither spoke, cried, or ran away, but waited for him to turn and leave me, which he soon did, without another word. I thought sadly: ‘The snakes I hated and mistrusted never struck me. The man I **trusted** did.’ And then sadly, too, went my way.” Later Stephens composed the little poem:

Be kind to the **Boy**—he’ll soon be a **Man**,
Your equal, superior to **love**, if he can,
Or **hate** if he **must**, and remember full sore
Whatever unkindness or ill-use he bore.²³

Edith McClurg, whose grandfather was John Edwards, a very close friend of Stephens, described in an interview in 1989 how young Evan would closet himself in the cellar of his home and fill milk pans with varying amounts of water, tapping on them to sound out the simple tunes with which he would accompany his own singing. Sometimes he would sing into a resonant pan which would add a bass quality to his boyish soprano voice.

One day Daniel Tovey came by the Stephens house and heard Evan in the cellar. The next rehearsal of the Willard choir was at the Davies home, and that evening Evan happened to be visiting the Davies children in the kitchen. Tovey, when he discovered the boy’s presence, coaxed him into the room with the singers and charged him with learning to sing alto under the tutelage of David P. Jones.²⁴

Brother Jones was attentive to his charge and stooped kindly down to sing in the boy’s ear, but the sopranos often carried the boy off from his part. There were not many copies of words or music, and the boy caught at the words as best he could, later he found that his version of the words ‘Come where my love lies dreaming, Dreaming the happy hours away’ was

*‘Come where my love flies dreaming,
Driving the happy horse away.’*

But then as now the words did not imply much with singers, the music was the thing.

Evan became the pet of the choir. The men among whom he sat seemed to take a delight in loving him. Timidly and blushing he would be squeezed in among them, and kindly arms generally enfolded him . . . he loved these men, too timid to be demonstrative in return, he nevertheless enshrined in his inmost heart the forms and names of Tovey, Jardine, Williams, Jones, and Ward. He seemed almost to forget his own family, always excepting his mother . . . in his intense love for these people, who had come into his life in the new world.²⁵

When Evan was fourteen, his idol, Daniel Tovey, with his family along with some other members of the choir decided to move to Malad, Idaho and offered to take the lad with them. Evan's parents refused, and this decision caused the boy to shed many tears. As he had worked with the Willard choir his love for music had grown and he became enamored with the idea of writing music of his own. As he said, "I seemed to be bubbling over with musical thoughts, which I could not even put on paper correctly."

David P. Jones, who had helped Stephens become an alto singer, took over direction of the choir. Evan quietly borrowed some of the choir books, and unbeknownst to the leader, studied the notes and was able to learn some of the simpler tunes. He was too bashful to ask for help, though Jones tried to aid his learning.

Stephens said, "He would sometimes seek to explain some of the mysteries of music reading to me, but theoretical study was beyond my comprehension. . . .I would say 'yes, yes' to his anxious questioning as to whether I understood what he was trying to teach me, while it was all Greek to me. Then I would run off by myself and renew my own efforts again . . . O such lovely melodies they seemed to me, when I first began to read the tunes in the choir books!"²⁶

In 1868 Evan's brother, John, along with Edward Woozley emigrated from Wales and brought some new music books which Evan was permitted to study. Woozley organized a band, but was disappointed when Evan refused to participate. This same year Evan had moved from his parents' home and was living with Shadrach Jones, a stone-mason who was the Willard choir's basso, and designed the town's stone houses with their narrow front windows in both stories, roofs sloping back, and single front steps.

John Stephens, who was already homesick for Wales with its musical feasts, would describe the great choral contests known as Eisteddfods held annually. Evan said this inspired him "to new and delightful efforts, and day-dreams of grand performances, though I really thought nothing of myself in connection with them; but my imagination reveled in such conceptions."²⁷

Edward Woozley took charge of the Willard Choir and taught a singing class which Stephens paid for with a gallon of molasses. Woozley's interests were in the music of the masters as opposed to David Jones's love of the simple and sweet in hymns and folk-tunes. The boy absorbed much from both sources and advanced rapidly in his understanding of classical music, and was placed in charge of the altos in the choir. He copied the alto parts and generally the whole selection, thus acquiring a taste for classical vocal music.

Some old books which had been stored in the Davis attic by John Parry, the first leader of the forerunner of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir²⁸ were loaned to Evan, which he discovered were the Handel Oratorios. When his brother, Thomas, purchased a little four-octave cabinet organ in 1870, from these books Evan began to practice the organ and soon mastered it to the edification of the musical people of Willard. He also practiced regularly on Abraham Harding's organ, one of the first in Willard.²⁹

Stephens's interest in the organ had been fostered when at the age of fifteen he had come to Salt Lake City "for the purpose of attending [L.D.S.] Conference [which] enabled me to hear the great organ and the Tabernacle Choir, and to witness a concert in the Fifteenth Ward under the direction of Thomas C. Griggs; also to become acquainted with the tithing yard as a fashionable resort, with its softly perfumed manure piles on which to slumber. It was many years before I sought any other stopping place in Salt Lake City."³⁰

In a talk given in 1930, Stephens said of the same incident, "When I came down to conference when I was fifteen years, three years after I came in [to Utah] there was, I should say, hundreds of loads of straw piled into a stack, and that was our hotel."

I was interested in the choir and naturally I wandered into the west door. Brother Careless was the choir leader, and he noticed me there in my shirt sleeves. He came up quietly and patted me on the shoulder and asked where my coat was. 'I have a coat but I thought I would not need it.'

'I think you had better go and get that coat,' he said. So I realized dress had something to do with it. I had fun over that.³¹

Some time in 1870 David and Jane Stephens decided to move to St. John, Idaho, which is about six miles from Malad City, where their sons, David and Tom, along with Louis Deschamp, Tom Davis, and Zathenal Jones had put in a grain crop to hold their homestead land. Evan's parents wanted him to go with them. But he declared that his friendship with John J. Ward was more important to him than his family association, and he remained in Willard to work the farm on shares, and live with the Dr. Will Ward family. Stephens's friendship with John J. Ward remained firm all during his twelve years in Willard. As he wrote in his "Reminiscence":

And the people across the way became like most others in Willard, sort of second parents to me. Their eldest daughter, the sweetheart of my best and only chum, John. . . Without 'John' nothing was worth while. With him, everything; even the hardest toil was heaven. What a treasure a chum is to an affectionate boy! From him I radiate to everything else during the twelve years of real life in Willard. Up at daylight, through work at dark, chores done, away to the meeting-house to choir, meetings, rehearsal, dance, Sabbath school. How we raced home together, both too fleet-footed for one to beat the other to the stackyard, where we shared the genial work of attending to the horses in summer, and the cows as well, in winter. That stackyard! There we slept in summer. I can hear him whistling a tune now as he returns from his sweetheart. I was always home first.³²

Evan characterized himself as a scrawny, pale-faced boy, whose daily toil on the farm plus hours robbed from his sleep time

for music undermined his health, never the most robust from birth. As he grew older, he suffered much because of this. At sixteen he had reached his full growth and had developed a natural baritone voice. But he could also sing a falsetto soprano with which he amused his audiences in later years.

In 1868 to 1870 while Stephens lived with Shadrach Jones and his wife, Mary, he was employed as a mason's tender, mixing mortar and carrying it and the stones to the mason. Very often, at age sixteen, a day's work for the boy meant rising at 4:30 a.m., attending to the home garden and orchard, getting his own breakfast, walking to the house under construction, and having mortar and rock ready for the mason by 7 a.m. Then getting his own dinner at noon and carrying mortar and rock until about 6:30; and preparing his own supper and perhaps attending a rehearsal or dance in the evening. Evan would always arrive on the job nearly an hour early, and so made a little time for his music study or reading between calls for "mort", "spalls", or "corner stones." When they rested, he and Shadrach would talk about Handel and music in Wales.³³

After Thomas's cabinet organ became available to him in 1870, Stephens found his enthusiasm for music intensifying, and he spent every leisure moment in reading, writing, or thinking music, and that winter, stayed at home for some months studying on his favorite instrument. One of the music books which he acquired contained the song, "Jerusalem, My Glorious Home" and one or two others which he knew. By using these as examples, he succeeded in picking out others and in that way learning the musical scale.

Even before the age of sixteen, Stephens began to fulfill his destiny as a composer with simple harmonies. Of these he wrote, "I had spoiled much paper in compositions of my own; grand choruses, like Handel's, only not properly put together; grand fugues, without . . . regular chords in them. But the little organ helped me to discover that there was something wrong, as they failed to sound well; though I have found much classical music in the same plight when I have attempted to play it."³⁴

Interestingly, Evan's parents and other family members told

Thomas that they would not be responsible for any damage to the valuable organ caused by the young musician. Even though they had experienced the joys of music in Wales, they could not conceive of Evan's becoming a musician.

In retrospect, they must have been unaware of the boy's internal conflicts, torn between his consuming desire to develop in musicianship and his equally strong need for friendships among his peers, topped with the ever-present need to work for his own livelihood.

Stephens spoke very little of his early schooling. In Wales he had learned to read the Bible in Welsh and attended school up to the age of ten, though his learning in English was difficult. He attended school in Willard spasmodically, mentioning in his 1917 "Reminiscence" how he walked or ran home hand-in-hand with Eveline from spelling school. He also paid tribute to the "ever energetic and encouraging schoolmaster, Charles Wright. What life and action he planted all around him!"

During the early months of 1872 Stephens labored on the road in Little Cottonwood Canyon, east of Salt Lake City. One report indicates that he also worked with crews bringing down blocks of granite from the canyon for the temple under construction in the valley. But he had ceased these labors in time to participate with the Willard choir as a singer with the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, directed by Professor George Careless at the October conference of the church.

Chapter 4

The Children Sang

In the summer of 1872, Professor George Careless, conductor of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, invited fifteen of the best choirs from outlying areas to join with his choir to sing at October conference of the L.D.S. Church in Salt Lake City. The Willard choir was included in the invitation. At this time Evan Stephens was in charge of the altos and was also singing in the juvenile choir which Edward Wozzley had organized. David P. Jones was conducting, inasmuch as Wozzley had moved to Malad, Idaho.

Mary Wozzley Jensen, his granddaughter said, ". . . My grandfather Wozzley was sent there [to Malad] to be music teacher and school teacher (by Brigham Young)." Speaking of her grandfather, she said, "He must have had a special gift because when he was in Wales he worked in the coal mines and they said that if there was ever a spare minute he used to write with chalk (that they marked the little carts that the coal came up in) and he'd always write music on it. He did quite a lot of composing."

Mrs. Jensen indicated that the Danish and Welsh settlers in Willard did not get along well, and so President Young sent some of the Welsh to Malad. She quoted Hy Hansen of Brigham City who said, "All the Danish boys went up to Malad and got the Welsh girls back."¹

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Evan's affection for the adults who had left Willard had been

transferred to the boys and girls, ages fifteen to seventeen years, who were singing with him. The youths had become a closely knit group following Evan's lead in participating in the two choirs and singing in the Sabbath school, and now traveling to Salt Lake.

Cash for train fare had been raised through the sale to the local store of wheat and other farm products. The girls had cooked pies, cakes and pans of rice pudding, and this plus other food, clothes and bedding had to be carried to the railroad tracks to accompany the choir. Upon arrival in Salt Lake City, each member of the company had to carry a sack or bundle to the Tithing Yard, where the boys were to bunk on the straw stacks as Evan had done previously. The girls were housed at the home of Daniel H. Wells.

After disposing of his burden, Evan hurried over to see the Tabernacle and organ, dressed in the coatless fashion of farm boys. At the west end of the building he was gazing up at the organ towers when accosted by the head custodian.

"Young man, haven't you a coat to put on?"

Evan gazed down at his feet. "Yes, sir, I have one over in the tithing yard. Do I need it here?"

"It would be best to wear it," the custodian replied, "especially if you are coming into the choir."²

Stephens's suit which he wore as a young man has been described as being made of gray moleskin³ which with his rough, thick hands and gangling physique identified him as a farm hand, and sometimes elicited snide comments from his more sophisticated associates. However, his enthusiasm for music and his authoritative manner of teaching and conducting revealed him as a charismatic master of his art and endeared him to the Willard residents.

In Salt Lake City, after an impressive morning session of the L.D.S. conference attended by nearly 12,000 persons, the combined choir of some 300 singers adjourned to the Council House to enjoy a lunch of vegetable soup and other good things.

On the third day of the meetings, rain forced the Willard choir to carry their bedding to the loft of the tithing house, which was a large, windowless room without any light source. Other participating choirs did the same and after attending performances in the

Salt Lake Theater or several chapels that evening, both men and women retired to the loft, lit only by the watchman's lantern, to bed down as a huge, but good-natured family, completely guileless.

The Willard choir returned by train to their homes the following day, cherishing the night's experience as the climax of a great adventure.

In a few days, Stephens went to Malad, Idaho to visit his family and friends who had moved to the area. He probably rode horseback but in earlier years had walked the more than sixty miles from Willard to Malad City, traveling all night with but a short rest in a shanty he had located on the route.⁴

As winter was about to set in, John Ward in Willard wrote to his friend, "Come back to Willard, live with us and help me do the chores, and we'll go to school together for the winter." Evan returned to Utah, but his schooling had to give way to the pressure of winter work on the farm.

Referring to his labors with John, Stephens said:

It was great fun to haul in the grain together, one pitching and the other loading the sheafs of grain, during the harvest time; helping each other do the chores, after a day at ploughing in the spring, or even hauling manure in winter, always the two of us, helping one another. . . . We were neither of us getting rich. In fact John was getting only his board and clothes—he was helping out his "Dad." And I, while getting a farmer boy's usual wages in those days, had but two or three head of cattle, and a hundred bushels or so of wheat . . . and my clothes, these were all my savings—pardon me, I forgot to mention what perhaps I treasured most, some music books, which had gradually accumulated year by year.⁵

With sixty bushels of wheat which he had stored, Stephens purchased a four octave cabinet organ, which, presumably, replaced the instrument which his brother, Tom, had loaned him. The only

available space for the organ was the loft of the tithing granary, where a board floor was improvised above the grain, and where Evan could practice late into the night without disturbing others. He undertook to give organ lessons to his friend, R. B. Baird, whose Sunday School songs were later used in hymn books of the church.

Evan and John tried to outdo each other in ideas for the promotion of music in their town, and finally organized a glee club of three girls and three boys: Gwen Davis and Mary Ann Ward, sopranos; Ellen Owens, contralto; R. B. Baird, tenor; John J. Ward, bass; and Evan Stephens, leader and organist. Baird and Ward would accompany their leader when he sang character songs.

Of their attic rehearsal hall, the Professor said, "It was doubtless giving a hand to those girls to climb the wheat bins that led me to do likewise to such queens of song as Nordica, Melba, Gadske, and others, apparently to their satisfaction." Stephens described how "we even learned some of the great Mendelssohn's part songs, and some fine Welsh glees. . . . Did we need new music suited for an occasion? If so, we made it. Did we fear criticism? Just enough to seek it. It was our habit to appoint three wise men to sit at our concerts and give a just judgement in writing to us on every performance."

At this time Stephens's little organ was the only one in town, and for choir practices, it had to be pulled on a little sled to the meetinghouse, and then hauled back to the "Mansion on West Street."

Stephens's friend, R. B. Baird was interested in dramatic arts along with music, and organized a dramatic association which included members of the glee club plus some other talented youth of the town. Stephens was absolute ruler at the choir or glee club but played whatever part he was assigned by Baird in the productions. Sometimes he was stage-manager or scenery painter, and acted in a variety of roles. His little organ added to the orchestra which played for the musicals as well as dances.

Of theatre the youthful composer said this:

The drama flourished as it certainly could not have since Shakespeare's time. With 'Bob' and me for authors and comedians, John for villain, aye, and all of us for scene painters, with Chandler, Cordon, Cook, Bruncker, Jones, Hubbard, and others for leading male roles, we could not outshine in the least our splendid talent in 'leading ladies'—Helen, Gwenn, Mary, Sarah, Annie, Mary Anne, and others. Our range of plays ran all the way from 'The Idiot Witness,' 'Old Honesty,' through 'Ingomar' and the like classics to the homemade article. . . . It is not all joy even in memory. **There are heartaching [sic] tragedies lurking among the happiness of it all.** (Bold Face mine.)⁶

Again for April conference in 1873, outlying choirs were invited to join with Professor Careless's group. Six members of the Willard Choir participated in "the singing exercises which were to be acknowledged to be the finest ever rendered at any previous gathering of the kind, and reflected much credit on Brother Careless, the conductor." Augmenting the 100 members of the Tabernacle Choir were 114 singers from outlying areas.⁷

Shortly before Evan Stephens's nineteenth birthday in June of 1873, David P. Jones, the Willard choir leader left for the summer, and Evan was called to take his place. About the first of July, a third invitation was received from Professor George Careless in Salt Lake City to join with the Tabernacle Choir at October conference. Music for twenty-five hymns and anthems along with the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's "Messiah" was included, all to be prepared in the three month period.

The choir first learned the Handel chorus, singing without organ, as this selection was too difficult for the young man to lead along with playing the accompaniment. The other selections were learned and polished before the choir boarded their wagons to travel to Salt Lake, as they had decided to forego the train in order to have some shelter in case of storms.⁸

Buoyed up by the success in Salt Lake City, Stephens, upon

approval by Bishop Ward in Willard, undertook to give a series of concerts featuring some of his own compositions in Willard and Brigham City to raise money for the purchase of a cabinet organ for the Willard choir. The plan was successful and the new organ in the meetinghouse eliminated hauling Stephens's instrument from the tithing granary for choir practice.

Evan Stephens undoubtedly had access to the **Juvenile Instructor**, circulated by the Sunday School organization of the church. On 16 August 1873, editor George Goddard published the first of a series of hymns which were to be prepared in the various Sabbath schools for the forthcoming Jubilee. That year one of Evan's early compositions, a glee entitled "Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Winds" was sung on 24 November by the Tabernacle Choir in the old Salt Lake Tabernacle during a benefit conducted by George Careless.

The Jubilee finally took place on 24 July 1874 in the Salt Lake Tabernacle with 8,000 children participating. Additional music by C.J. Thomas, T.C. Griggs, Joseph J. Daynes, J.P. Webster and Ebenezer Beesley was published in 1873 and 1874, and the songs were finally combined into a Jubilee Song Book which went through three editions totaling about 10,500 copies. This was the first book of music published in Utah.

No more music was printed in the **Juvenile Instructor** until after a call on 19 December 1874 for new hymns by home authors to be compiled in a new hymn book. "Temple Song" was published in the issue of 20 February 1875, followed by several more. Then on 21 August 1875, Evan Stephens saw his first composition in print, "The Gushing Rill," a quartette and chorus. His interest in harmony over simple melody is evident in this little piece. No doubt his success in publishing and the new opportunities available spurred him to compose with greater zeal.

Evan's brother, John, with his wife, Margaret, were still occupying a little two-room house in Willard. One room was constructed of adobe, the other of stone, with rough board flooring and a dirt roof from which wild weeds and flowers sprouted in the early spring. Since his brother was considering the idea of moving to Malad, Evan, not wanting to see the place fall into strange

hands, dreamed of buying it, though with his livestock and wheat amounting to less than a fourth of the price, even thinking of it seemed futile.

One evening, Aunt Melinda, who could be enticed into telling fortunes, chanced to visit, and Evan had his turn to have his secret wishes divined. He wrote, "Great was the glee of my chums when she announced the love part, saying, 'I see you married three times, two of the ladies are blondes, and one a brunette: I see no children; but you will be very happy—you will get your wish, a dark man is going to help you get it.' I at once made up my mind that the home was to be mine. But I questioned the three marriages, so it was to me "according to my faith."⁹

Evan's second great achievement in 1875 was securing possession of John's home after the brother and his wife moved to Idaho. He saved what money he could and was able to pay off the balance of \$300 due on the place in about a year. His peers christened the little home the "Opera House on West Street." Stephens said :

There could come to me now, in my own house, not only my best friends, but the glee club, and even the choir at a pinch or push, and children's classes gathered there later. . . . And my house became the central meeting place of the young people of Willard, almost rivaling the meetinghouse itself, in the social sense, but our meetings at the home were always preparations for the meetinghouse.

It was my big school house with myself as the school master, and pupil all in one.¹⁰

Throughout his teaching career, Stephens was known as a strong disciplinarian. He said his little home in Willard was "always a 'house of order' when work was on, though discipline was not insisted upon when lessons were over."

"As many as fifty youngsters would rehearse operettas here; the young people's singing class would study an hour and a half,

then spend another hour in pleasantries, even playing snowballing [sic] with little red apples, sometimes. The grand orchestra of five instruments perfected their work there. L.D. Edwards and R.B. Baird studied harmony, counterpoint, and composition there. The two old chums alternated between there and the old stackyard and the home of the bishop. Everybody came there when occasion required, and every child or young person between ten and thirty apparently considered Evan and his home their own particular property.”¹¹

Not a small part of Evan Stephens’s success was due to his intense interest in reading everything he could acquire. He subscribed to some musical journals published in the East and said:

I almost felt acquainted with all the great composers, players, and singers of the world. When a new composer like Richard Wagner created a great stir in the world, with his peculiar new style of music, I would not only read what the critics and thinkers had to say about him and his music, but as soon as I could afford it, would buy a copy of his operas, so much discussed, and then by reading them and mentally enjoying them just as if they were being performed I would form my own judgement of them.

I gradually became acquainted with the great music of Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavia, England, and Wales. And naturally tried to write my own music, too, after the styles I most admired. By giving the simplest of them to my little choir to sing I could, as it were, test them out.¹²

A few weeks later, Stephens was offered a new job as a section hand on the Utah Northern Railroad by his friend, R.B. Baird who had become section foreman. As the Professor wrote later, “It required a great sacrifice on my part, the ending of all my pleasant labor with John. But it meant cash pay, even if payday was rather irregular, and \$1.37 per day, requiring only ten hours real dai!

work, and I saw in it the fulfillment of Aunt Melinda’s ‘fortune party.’ I could buy the home, and have abundant time after work hours to study music, learn to play better on the organ and even to write harmony exercises, and compositions of my own, so did promotion come to me.”

As a railroad section hand, Stephens was required to work only until six o’clock in the evening which gave him time to care for the acre of orchard surrounding his home, to prepare his own meals, and to further his musical studies.

In the winter months, his crew would be transferred to the mountains between Salt Lake City and Cache Valley. When they weren’t shoveling snow out of the cuts to keep the trains moving, they worked on a gravel train used to strengthen the narrow tracks. Box cars had been fitted up with bunks and kitchen facilities where the men could live, eat, and sleep.

Of these years, Stephens wrote, “And as we were quite a musical little crowd it was decided to have my little cabinet organ taken along, of course this didn’t mean that I could put in many study periods, but it helped to keep me in a sort of musical atmosphere (to modify the effects of the tobacco smoke). But more than all the novelty, as it attracted much attention; so that when we might be stranded on the east side of the mountain in Cache Valley, there would be a demand from musical folks in the towns to hear the Box Car Player and his singing friends.”¹³

Since Logan, Utah was headquarters for the Utah Northern Railroad, Stephens and Baird were there frequently and were often invited to spend evenings with singers and church authorities. Many homes held cabinet organs, which preceded pianos as popular home musical instruments.

Among Stephens’s new acquaintances were Professor Alexander Lewis, conductor of the Logan Tabernacle Choir; Church Apostles Moses Thatcher and Marriner W. Merrill; and leading musicians of the area. Interest in Stephens, the Box Car Musician, brought him an offer to move from Willard to Logan and a new job.

Many times in his later life Evan Stephens talked of two occupations which he detested more than any others. The first was

following a harvester in the wheat fields where the dust burned his throat. The second was his employment in a blacksmith shop in Logan, where he was promised a higher wage and a better job. Here his impatience reached its zenith. He wrote that the better pay materialized "but through some mismanagement the job was no improvement." He went on to elucidate on the experience:

As I was placed in the Blacksmith shop to do striking for a very cross old blacksmith. The place reeked with soot and smoke. The fearful noises of six other forges, and anvils joined to the noises of great machines in the adjoining machine shop were such that it was a hades for me. And at the end of six weeks, disgusting experience—with the humiliation of having no better job, but the Tabernacle choir organist (which I had suddenly been promoted to be) was not the least irritating part of it to me—I applied for my old job back, and bade, as I thought, a long farewell to Logan, and its uninviting work.¹⁴

Stephens admitted that his incapacity to do the work contributed to the blacksmith's bad temper and to his dislike of the job. He said he "was not master of his arm beat."

Professor Lewis was disappointed at Stephens's leaving, and after a short time convinced some local churchmen to offer the Professor a full-time position in music, at \$60.00 per month which included a class of some thirty pupils and a promise of more teaching on a large scale.

The **Logan Leader** editorialized:

At the last quarterly conference of this stake the rendition by the Logan choir and Brother Evan Stephens, the organist, was such as to draw forth the most enthusiastic remarks. . . . Each month a marked improvement is noticeable, and a fair presumption is that very soon the choir of this city

will rank with the best musical organizations of the territory.

One lack, however, is especially to be deprecated—that of a resident organist who is competent to perform the duties required. . . . The services of some such man as Brother Evan Stephens should be secured if possible.¹⁵

Stephens accepted the offer, writing:

After some doubts and considerings, I decided to return and thus blossomed out as a full-fledged musical professor, wherein I was successful enough to win my way, give some of my musical dramas, and anthems—having the unique distinction of having the Logan choir (conductor and all)—perhaps the finest body of singers in the state at that time, enlisted in my choral and singing class. And I serving them in return by acting as their organist in the Tabernacle, and receiving loyal support from all quarters.¹⁶

Upon his return to Logan, Stephens boarded with Alexander Lewis, the choir director. Ruby Mitton, who as a child knew Stephens well, tells of an incident in Lewis's home. Lewis's daughter soon became infatuated with Stephens, and pursued him persistently. "He became tired of her attentions and decided to put an end to it. One evening upon his return home from work he pretended he was having a fit, and afterwards he pretended recovery, telling her he had these attacks quite often and had no control over them. This immediately put an end to the daughter's infatuation with him."¹⁷

Stephens, though working ten-to-twelve hour days in Willard and Logan, was never one to shirk his religious responsibilities. In an average week in Willard he played the organ at one rehearsal and on Sunday morning at Sabbath School; led the choir at one rehearsal and two meetings; and led the singing at one quorum

meeting. If concerts were scheduled, he presided at one or two rehearsals and directed the performances.¹⁸ His family had all moved from Willard by this time.

Perhaps his diligence was one of the many outstanding qualities which endeared him to Bishop W.B. Preston in Logan, who was later appointed Presiding Bishop of the L.D.S. Church. The latter became a constant and loved friend and patron during Stephens's life. Evan wrote that "This had not a little to do with my further activities in Salt Lake City, where after two very pleasant and successful years of service at Logan, I transferred my musical task. And where in less than a year I had under my direction over three thousand singers, young and old, all from having graduated from a rough railroad boxcar."¹⁹

Though complete particulars and manuscripts on Evan Stephens's early compositions are not available, the details which have been recorded confirm the tremendous range of creativity undertaken by one so young; and the unrelenting activity which he pursued. He began with simple children's songs and progressed rapidly to anthems, glees, plays and operettas.

His first classes were held in the old Tithing Barn in Willard with a few friends. Then his home, "The Opera House on West Street," accommodated larger groups in 1875, from which he moved to teach Sabbath School children in the meetinghouse.

A letter to the editor of the **Juvenile Instructor** of 20 November 1873 said: . . . I am happy to state that our Sabbath School continues to flourish and the number of attendants still increases. On Sunday the 16th inst. an examination was held, which many visitors attended, who were entertained with songs, accompanied with music from the organ of Prof. Evan Stephens, leader of the choir, and recitations, etc. from the pupils."

At this time a second dramatic company had been organized with Charles Cordon, president; Robert A. Baird, manager; John J. Ward, James Chandler, Norton Cook, Charles N. Hubbard, Fred Parish, Nephi Brunner, John A. Dalton, Ellen Owens (Ward), Mary Cook, Sarah Renshaw, Gwenn Davis Baird, Mary Ann Ward, and Annie Brewerton. Later Evan Stephens replaced Baird as manager.

John Henry Evans related the story how two young missionaries from Ogden chanced to preach at the Willard meetinghouse one afternoon and were fascinated to watch a beardless youth of eighteen leading the choir from the organ stool, playing with his hands and feet and conducting the singers with his head. One of the men, after the service, remarked to the other that Willard had a musical genius who probably wouldn't stay there long.²⁰ On another occasion George Goddard, a member of the General Sunday School Board, was speaking in the Willard Bowery. After the meeting, looking at Evan Stephens, he said, "You good people of Willard need not think you can keep this young man to yourselves. A wider field awaits him."²¹

An early article in the **Deseret News** of 12 February 1876 tells of a Sabbath School examination held in Willard where 400 persons crammed into a room designed to hold 200 to hear and participate in the proceedings. Between the questions and answers, 30 songs, 6 glees, 14 dialogues and 38 recitations "helped to make the entertainment amusing, interesting, and instructive." Undoubtedly some of Stephens's compositions were included. The large stone meeting and school house in which they met had been completed in 1873, replacing the old log building which was much smaller.

For a Fourth of July celebration in 1876, a second Quadrille Band had been formed with John Taylor, John C. Pettingill and Edward Morgan violinists; and Evan Stephens, clarinet and organ. This was unusual inasmuch as Stephens disliked bands as a boy. His brothers, Daniel and David E. Stephens played in Willow Creek's first band, which preceded the Quadrille Bands.

Later that year the Professor composed an anthem for the dedication of the L.D.S. Temple in St. George, Utah, entitled "This House We Dedicate to Thee," which was sung by the choir at the dedication of the first floor and basement on 1 January 1877 and at the complete dedication on 4th to 6th April.

Later in 1877, four of Stephens's songs were included in **The Utah Musical Bouquet** under the pseudonym "B Natural". They included "Beautiful Rain," "Ida Waltz" with words by Orson Pratt, Jr.; "Irene Schottische" and "Aggie's Waltz." All of these

varied greatly from his hymns, and were more closely related to his early Willard compositions.²²

As Stephens read of musical activities in New York and the capitals of Europe, he was attracted to the operatic form and began to work on several operettas and also some plays. First performances of these works were directed by him in Willard.

The **Deseret Weekly** carried an article in September 1878 regarding the Willard Harvest Home celebration which included singing by the Sabbath School of Stephens's new song, "To the West", along with the choir's rendition of his "Thanksgiving Anthem" and "Harvest Home." The professor also sang "The Village Blacksmith."

On 25 February 1879, in one of his continuing series of letters to the **Deseret News**, James J. Chandler wrote:

On Saturday evening, the 22nd, inst. Brother Evan Stephens and his musical class presented to the public a home production in the form of a musical drama entitled "The Innocent Saved," followed by songs, glees, jig dancing, etc., all of which was very creditable to the performers and amusing to the audience.

Chandler's letters and other news reports in 1880 and 1881 provide evidence of Stephens's continuing revisions of his music dramas and of the improving quality of the productions and increasing popularity in both Willard and Logan. He held separate classes for children and adults and wrote material for both groups. As an incentive, Evan gave the children who participated in the operettas free lessons in vocal music. At this time in Logan he was teaching as many as ten organ lessons per day and some 250 children and adults in his singing classes.

The following letter provides a graphic picture of recreation in Willard at that time:

Letter to **Deseret News** from James J. Chandler, 1 March, 1880:

Last Saturday evening the Willard Dramatic Association performed a drama, composed by Brother Robt. B. Baird, entitled "The Lost Relic" which, although not beyond the reach of criticism, possesses merit seldom found in the works of a novice. Thus you see home talent is being utilized, home production encouraged, and we are endeavoring to spend the time in a profitable manner.

Our recreations have consisted of dances, theatres, musical entertainments, etc., among which the following are worthy of special notice:

1st. Our Sunday School Jubilee.

2nd. During the evenings of the above named days, an operetta consisting of two parts, entitled "The Orphans of New York" and "The Old Maids," composed and directed by Brother Evan Stephens, was performed by the juvenile singing class in a very creditable manner [13 March 1880].

3rd. Subsequently, on the evening of the 21st, ult. another production by the same author, entitled "The Gypsy Maid" was presented to the public, by the adult singing class, in a manner, which to say the least, evinced great ability and careful training.

Evan Stephens said later that his Logan productions of the works which he had presented previously in Willard were given with greater satisfaction. Undoubtedly he made changes in the music and dialogue as he did with the titles. The "May Queen" was first presented as "An Innocent Saved." The next production was entitled "The May Queen—The Innocent Harvest" followed by "The May Queen—An Innocent Saved." "Gypsy Maids" was originally "Leonora, Gypsy Maid" while "Old Maids" was "Old Maids and Bachelors." Stephens also wrote three plays: "Lora Fremont," "Old Nick in the House," and "Quilting Bee."²³

The following review appeared in the Logan Leader on 30 July 1880:

On Saturday night of next week will be given in the Logan Theatre, the original operetta written and composed by Evan Stephens, Esq., entitled "The May Queen or the Innocents Saved." Last evening a dress rehearsal was enacted by the company and witnessed by several invited guests. We can truly say that all were impressed and delighted. No one, who had not previously known of the genius of Mr. Stephens could possibly have been induced to believe that such a production in poetry and music, could have been given to the world by a youth, comparatively untutored. But such is the case; and when the public have an opportunity to witness the presentation, all will agree with us in saying that the name of Evan Stephens will sometime shine as one of the brightest in the record of Utah's advancement toward a perfection of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

The **Logan Leader** on 13 August reported, "The operetta, 'The May Queen' was repeated on Monday Evening last, for those who could not gain admittance to the theatre on account of its being so full on Saturday night." This demonstrates Stephens's growing fame.

Not only did the Professor write and direct the theatricals, but also performed. An interesting note from the **Logan Leader** of 30 September 1881 indicates that in conjunction with a performance of *William Tell*" (which the reviewer said was rather below the average of home town performances) the classic farce, "Box and Cox" was staged with Evan Stephens as "Mrs. Bouncer." The Professor enjoyed playing female characters and used his falsetto voice to advantage in such roles. The reviewer said that the farce "went off better than did the play."

The same paper stated that the children's concert given by Evan Stephens, Esq. in the Logan Tabernacle basement the previous Saturday evening was a very enjoyable affair witnessed by a large audience. The chorus included 110 singers, all under the

age of 14 and a program of 25 new selections. The children, "tastefully dressed, with bright, eager faces, were a beautiful sight."

One other incident in Stephens's career in Logan illustrates the affection of his students. The adult singing class who participated in his opera, "Leonora, the Gypsy Maid," donated funds which, combined with the proceeds of the performances of the opera, enabled the purchase of about \$50 worth of musical works. The books included important references such as **Moore's Musical Cyclopedia**, biographies of Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, and copies of several standard operas. The **Logan Leader** commented that "this is conducting musical instruction on a somewhat novel but highly successful plan, both in a pecuniary and artistic point of view, and we congratulate Mr. Stephens and his class on its adoption and success."²⁴

Evan Stephens was not the first conductor to gather large groups of singers for a concert or church service. George Careless's grand choir consisting of fifteen outside groups plus his Tabernacle Choir in 1872 was the first to be heard in the Territory and attracted a capacity crowd of some 12,000 listeners. It had been preceded by the first concert given by the Deseret Musical Association in the Tabernacle in December 1862, featuring some 400 students.

A concert with 4,000 children singing in 1873 was given many compliments, followed by the Grand Jubilee of the Sunday School in 1874 with 8,000 young children performing.

On 4 February 1881 Stephens visited the Tabernacle Choir rehearsal in Salt Lake.²⁵ All these efforts convinced him that only with a large group of singers could he achieve the grandeur of sound and emotion that he desired. But by developing his own methods of teaching children to read music and sing in parts in the Willard and Logan classes, he advanced the concept to a divine art.

When he left Logan in 1882 to come to Salt Lake City for studies on the organ with Joseph J. Daynes, but was pressed into teaching, he was able to perfect his class methods and achieve astounding results in several cities along the Wasatch front.

On 3 March 1882 a long poem entitled "Thoughts on Leaving Logan" was published under the pseudonym "By A Wanderer," and unquestionably was written by Stephens:

THOUGHTS ON LEAVING LOGAN

By A Wanderer,
To his Friends and Pupils in Logan

Good-by, my friends, good-by! The words were said
While with a cheerless smile I checked a tear;
And with a beating, heavy heart I sped
From cherish'd scene, and friends I loved most dear.
'Tis scarce three years that I with dread approached
The very place I'm now so loath to leave;
Such are the changes wrought on human hearts
When love and friendship deign their spells to weave.

The happy scenes of innocence and mirth,
Where with sweet music many an hour were passed,
Where love and harmony made heaven of earth—
These scenes within my thoughts must ever last.
And when I've heard those little ones, a host
With voices sweet like angels from above,
Sing those sweet songs which pleased their fancy most
How could I hear and still withhold my love?

And then to know by looks and actions kind,
What place I held within each childish heart.
Could I be mortal, with a heart and mind,
And with these loved ones not be loth to part?
Ah! ye who pass the children proudly by,
As if unworthy of a look or smile,
Ye lose a treasure ye should value high
A child's pure love without deceit or guile.

This I have treasured; and 'tis worth to me
More than the gold I've earned with irksome toil;
'Twas this, O Logan, made me cling to thee,
And not thy wealth, thy palaces, or sod

And in thee, too, I've found two loving hearts,
Which seemed to beat in friendship with my own;
Who sought to turn aside the stinging darts
Which at myself or efforts have been thrown.

Such friends made life a highly treasured boon,
Which else had been but very scant of cheer;
They cooled my fevered brow in summer noon,
They warmed my heart when wintry days appeared.
And in the heart they warmed they still shall live,
Though I should absent be for many a year,
And all I ask of them is but to give
Place in theirs for him who holds them dear.

I thank ye not for gold or flattering praise,
For these alone would leave my heart a blank
But for each smile, kind act, or kindly phrase,
Each deed of love, for these my heart cries, Thanks!

WILLARD, March 1st, 1882.

Reprinted from the **Logan Leader**, March 3, 1882.

Chapter 5

Teacher, Student, and Impresario

In 1840 some of the Mormon apostles including Brigham Young were proselyting in Great Britain and welcomed the opportunity of attending theatrical performances, pageants and Protestant musical services. Young became enthusiastic about advancing cultural pursuits in Zion and spurred the new converts in Utah to progress in their secular learning. Several trained musicians emigrated in succeeding years, including C.J. Thomas, David Calder, George Careless and John Tullidge, and each, in his own way, worked to improve the public appreciation of good music, including the classics—to raise the level of public taste. Evan Stephens followed in their footsteps.

In his musical studies in the 1870's in Willard and Logan Stephens was inspired by the form of great choral works. He progressed rapidly in his composing from simple children's songs and rounds to anthems and choruses best suited for choirs and large groups.

As the **Deseret News** reported on singing at L.D.S. Conference in April 1870:

Music is destined to reach a high degree of perfection among the Latter-day Saints. Like most other professions here, this in days past has received

but little attention, and has not been studied scientifically, hence its interpretations have been crude, and have lacked finish and delicacy so necessary to the musical artist. Times are changing in respect to music; the taste of the people, thanks to the exertions of Professors Calder, Thomas, John Tullidge, Sen., Careless, and others, is improving, and the transition state now being passed through promises, before long, to be followed by one, as strongly characterized by taste, skill and proficiency as that of the past by a lack of these qualities.

Nine years later, George Q. Cannon voiced some of the same ideas. He pointed out that the Latter Day Saints found singing an essential part of worship, but he admitted that the assertion "that the Saints generally have no appreciation for anything in the line of music above simple melody, that the opera and oratorio possess no charms for them may be partially true. "To appreciate this higher class of music, it is necessary to understand it. The Saints in the past have not possessed facilities for gaining a thorough knowledge of music. In the midst of their poverty and drivings they have had neither time nor means to enable them generally to acquire this knowledge."

Cannon then felt that the situation had changed, that musical instruments were available at reasonable price and that there were now sufficient music teachers. He complimented Evan Stephens on his compositions already published or to appear soon in the **Juvenile Instructor** and said the young man "possesses a high order of talent as a poetical as well as musical composer."¹

The **Deseret Semi-Weekly News** was more critical:

Of late the 'divine art' has made such progress in Salt Lake that it seems impossible to enter a house where a musical instrument is not or at least ought to be heard. Musicians have increased correspondingly until 'Professors are as numerous as colonels after a war, and amateurs as thick as flies

in August. . . . The community is flooded with music teachers who, if not out of employment entirely might just as well be for all the pecuniary benefit they derive from the exercise of their profession. . . .'

Professors of music, go into the outer settlements and pursue your vocation for the refinement and education of the people who are waiting to employ you.

The article singled out Logan, saying "many of her citizens are daily deploring the fact that there are not more competent musical instructors to be found in their midst."² Stephens had created such widespread interest in musical activities that even with his large classes he was not able to teach all who were interested.

When Evan moved to Salt Lake City in March 1882 he stayed with the H.A. Tuckett family, all of whom were involved in musical activities. He indicated that several pleasant experiences buoyed up his self-confidence. While waiting for his friend to finish work at the Globe, a refreshment shop selling popcorn and cronk beer on Main Street, suddenly he was surrounded by a youthful band directed by Charles Barrell and serenaded with his own composition, "My Own Dear Mountain Home." The famed band leader, John Held, was among the players.

Stephens was welcomed as a singer and musician into the Home Dramatic Club which was presenting plays and musicals in the city. His singing served to advertise his talents and gain a hearing on his urgent goals.

They were to lay a firm, deep foundation for real and practical growth of a naturally musically-inclined community. . . . I realized that to lay a foundation I must have this music-hungry community, which was turning to me for aid and direction slant at the roots of things, and this must be done in a way not to repel them at the first. A compromise plan of beginners' work in the el-

elementary and advanced work in the performance, must be followed.³

A first report on Evan's work in the city appeared in the George Goddard journal on 3 April. At a meeting of the Deseret Sunday School Union in the Assembly Hall, Stephens sang two songs and "was followed by a universal clapping of hands, which I promptly [forbade] its recurrence." Evan's song was rendered in soprano voice, followed by an encore, "Come Back to Erin," with the verse sung in baritone and the refrain in soprano.

At that time Stephens proposed his plan to the board for establishing classes, which was accepted. Goddard wrote on 10 April:

At 7:30 pm I attended a meeting of the Superintendents and Teachers of Sunday Schools in the Council House . . . and decided to accept the proposition for Bro. Evan Stephens to teach 6 girls and 4 boys from each Sunday School gratis the elementary principles of music, and for him to have the receipts of an entertainment by the children as compensation, and he promises to give a second entertainment for the benefit of a fund for publishing tracts and for missionaries to distribute gratis while in their fields of labor.

An April 14 report enlarged on details of the music classes. Stephens had arranged to take a group of 200 or more Sunday school children and to teach them note reading. The various superintendents were to select from nine to twelve of the best voices—1/3 boys and 2/3 girls, not under six or over fourteen years of age, who were to meet at the Council House on April 18 for Stephens's instructions.

The simple admission requirements were good conduct, punctual attendance, and willingness to participate in a "grand entertainment" at the Salt Lake Theatre each quarter, the proceeds of which were to compensate their instructor.

The *Deseret News* noted that the program "will be a great assistance to the leaders in connection with the older members. . . ; they hoped to see each school sing as if the whole school was one large choir."⁴

On 19 July 1882 the first quarterly concert of Stephens's juvenile chorus convened on the stage of the Salt Lake Theatre. A review in the *Deseret News* concluded:

We state our unqualified opinion that they were the most brilliant and satisfactory performances as a whole of any kind ever given in this city. The selections were in excellent taste and what speaks strongly to Mr. Stephens's credit is the fact that about two-thirds of them were his own creations. . . . The 200 juvenile choristers sang with utmost precision and in the most delightful harmony they presented a lovely spectacle, being tastefully dressed, and as they filled the stage, reminded me of a bouquet [sic] of choice flowers.

Mr. Stephens's falsetto is immense, not being surpassed by any other voice of that quality ever exercised before a Salt Lake audience. Altogether he is a musical genius who will yet develop ability of the most brilliant character.⁵

Annie Wells Cannon wrote of this concert "which created a genuine sensation, owing, the leader thought then and thinks now, to the excellent part-singing as well as to the mutual love and cooperation that had immediately been evidenced between the conductor and his pupils."⁶

By 28 July Stephens's music classes had grown to more than 800 students. The Professor indicated that he would not take more than 1,000 till some of his present pupils were able to take over teaching duties. From time to time he scheduled benefit concerts for local hospitals as well as the Deseret Sunday School Union. One such affair on 11 August was reported by the *Deseret News*: "Mr Stephens's juvenile class sang delightfully and the 'Old Maid'

THE FORTHCOMING

GRAND CONCERT

STEPHENS' FIRST SINGING CLASS.

Will be the Grandest Event of the Season in all respects. The Most BEAUTIFUL SIGHT, nearly TWO HUNDRED Sweet, Pretty, Neatly Dressed CHORISTERS, placed on an Elevated Platform, among the most appropriate scenes in the

HAVERLY SALT LAKE THEATRE

The still MORE Sweet, Fresh, Pretty and CAREFULLY TRAINED VOICES, Accompanied by a

SELECT ORCHESTRA,

Will Charm the Listener even more than the Scene will the Beholder.



OUR FAVORITES,

MISS AGNES OLSEN and MISS NELLIE DRUCE

Will sing a beautiful SONG, each, also a Charming DUETT, together.

AND THE CHILDREN'S MAN,

MR. E. STEPHENS,

Will appear in full LADY'S COSTUME, and sing a Fine Soprano Song, as Prima Donna, Par Excellence.

Other Little Artists (to-day but little known, but who will ere long be the pride of our city as Songsters) will perform their respective pieces in a style creditable to themselves and their teacher, and to your delight and satisfaction.

Will the pieces be of the melancholy sort generally used in Concerts only? Oh, no! the PROGRAMME is carefully made up to PLEASE ALL but the low and vulgar. *The Music, while good and elevating, is of the bright, cheerful class, that makes one feel that 'tis "good to live after all," and be happy; all will go home smiling. For whose benefit? For OURS, the CLASS. We are going to raise a FUND wherewith we can meet all our class expenses ourselves without troubling our parents. But we ask for no donation; if you think our Concert will not be worth your money, please don't buy our TICKETS. Who are the Committee of Arrangements? Our Committee consists of nearly Two Hundred of us, with our Teacher as Chairman. We will, on receipt of the price of the tickets, bring them to you and have your seats reserved for you, free of extra charge. We expect to have every seat in the house reserved and bought three days before the performance, so there will be NO TICKETS sold at the door (a large number are already spoken for).*

A MATINEE?

CERTAINLY, and we expect to have every little boy and girl in town *who wishes to be present* pay their 25 cents and be present; Adults may come by paying 50 cents, and *THE OLD FOLKS OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE, we want them to hear us. BRING THEM, and they shall have the best seats in the house FREE OF CHARGE, and we will be proud of their company. When will it take place?*

SATURDAY AFTERNOON and NIGHT, MARCH 10th or 17th.

As near as we can at present tell, the management of the Theatre not being able to give a decisive answer.

PRICES—THE SAME AS REGULAR THEATRE RATES:

Parquette, \$1.00. First Circle, 75 cts. Second Circle, 50 cts. Third Circle, 25 cts.

REMEMBER, BUY YOUR TICKETS OF US!

Concert presented in Salt Lake Theater - 19 July 1882

by the gentleman, himself [in drag] was inimitable. He has a remarkable power of maintaining the falsetto voice on the high notes."

Advertised as the "phenomenal vocalist," he sang in soprano voice the Irish ballad, "Come Back to Erin" in a Home Dramatic Club performance of "Inshavogue" on May 3 with the George Careless Orchestra.

The next children's concert as part of the October 1882 L.D.S. Conference included 400 voices on Saturday 9 October. The juvenile songs were interspersed with duets by Misses Olsen and Druce, Evan Stephens and others, along with renditions by the Mendelssohn Glee Club. The New Tabernacle was lighted electrically for the occasion.

Price for the center rows and east gallery was 50¢ with the balance of the hall at 25¢. Receipts from the concert were to be used by the Deseret Sunday School Union to supply the various wards with reading and singing books.⁷

Even before Evan Stephens began to teach music in Salt Lake City, the activities of the Tabernacle Choir and Sunday Schools, including the cost of the conductors' services were financed by receipts from concerts. Out of earnings from an earlier concert the Union had published a first and second reader, two song books, and a variety of cards containing the words to hymns, which sold for 1 cent per card. The treasury now needed replenishing to meet growing demand for publications.

On 14 October 1882 Stephens's third and final juvenile class was announced with a quota of 125 boys and 75 girls. A recommendation from their teacher or Sunday School Superintendent was required along with a fee of 75¢ for thirteen lessons.

The size of the choruses in Stephens's juvenile concerts increased rapidly. At the program given on 30 November nearly 600 pupils participated before a large audience including President John Taylor and Apostle Wilford Woodruff.

Among the pieces rendered were: 'Now the Cheerful Singing' in which beautiful imitations of different sounding bells were given, making a pleasing variety. 'Bells of Freedom,' 'Happy Pair,'

'Good-Night' were sung by all the classes as a closing piece.

The exercises showing the proficiency of the scholars were exceedingly interesting. They consisted of pieces of music given vocally by Brother Stephens for the first time, written on the spot by the children, and sung offhand without [any previous] preparation.

In the writing exercises . . . little heads bobbed up and down to catch the sounds and down again to place the notes on paper, reminding one of a flock of little ducks burying their heads under water and popping up again. . . . Most of the music sung by the children consists of Bro. Stephens's compositions. President Taylor spoke a few appreciative and encouraging words expressing his pleasure at the progress that had been made in the 'divine art' by Brother Stephens's classes.⁸

George Goddard wrote in his journal, "The exercises of the children in writing and reading and singing music were really astonishing after such a limited tuition."⁹

Wilford Woodruff, in his journal, reinforced Goddard's opinion: "It was the Most interesting Exhibition X I ever witnessed in my life. He had taken this 450 Children who had No knowledge of Music and in 13 lessons they were able to read Music sing Music keep time & make Music and would soon turn out scores of [if] not hundreds of our Children who would be Capable of teaching Music."¹⁰

Stephens wrote of this concert in the Assembly Hall, that when he sang, "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls in soprano voice, the audience broke all rules by applauding heartily. George Goddard, in charge, tried to stop the applause but couldn't and turned to Stephens requesting another song quickly.

In her autobiography, Agnes Olsen Thomas chronicled a vivid picture of Evan Stephens's assimilation into the musical community of Salt Lake City:

There was a young man who came into my life at this time who became a very fast and dear friend. He had a nice voice and was a very fine musician. . . . A friend, Professor Tuckett, in whose home this young man was staying invited me to come over to their home one Sunday evening and meet this young man. His name was Evan Stephens. What a pleasant, interesting evening!

Musical evenings at the Tuckett home became very frequent. Many neighbors were invited, and I was always asked to sing. Soon Brother Stephens was playing my accompaniments. Many times he had his own compositions. . . . A small group of dear friends surrounded a small reed organ at which this genius was presiding. He could make the organ speak. Then all joined in song. . . .

Before very long, I received a letter from a former young man friend who had gone to Ann Arbor to study law. In the letter he expressed surprise at having heard that I was being seen with a very countryish-looking young man. Perhaps this was the description given Brother Stephens, for when he first came to Salt Lake he was dressed as a cowboy. It did not take him long, however, to dress as others in the city. He also was soon enrolled in the University of Deseret and worked hard to improve himself in every way. In all my associations with him he was such a gentleman and had a wealth of musical knowledge.¹¹

By the end of 1882, Evan Stephens had organized three large juvenile singing classes, two adult classes and a glee club, and was singing as a soloist and in the baritone section with the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir. The classes continued in 1883.

In March, Richard Ballentyne of Ogden announced that "a competent vocal musical instructor has been secured who can devote sufficient time to educate the children of those institutions

systematically." The instructor, of course, was Professor Stephens. "He commences with his pupils at the foundation of their studies, teaches them to read the music, and not to sing by imitation, or simply listening to the voice of the instructor."

Two classes of at least 150 children were to be organized at a price of \$1.00 each for three months. Stephens agreed that after that time the 500 children could perform concerts which would raise sufficient money to pay him for his services after the first quarter. Classes were to be held weekly in Ogden.¹²

Evan Stephens's first Salt Lake class celebrated its anniversary in March 1873 with two concerts in the Assembly Hall. The reviewer for the St. George Herald commented that Evan Stephens's characteristic good taste was reflected in the remarkably well-rendered choruses and the neatly dressed children. He cited "The Drum" chorus as the most attractive, along with two solos, "I'm Going to Write to Papa," sung by Carrie Goss, age three [her father was serving a mission], and "Peekaboo," sung by six-year-old Flora Pardoe.

In that first year the children had given seven concerts. The tuition for each child had been only 75¢, but the chorus had earned \$800 for the Deseret Sunday School Union, of which \$200 had been presented to Stephens for his labors. "Besides this, his pet class, he has today 1,000 other pupils following in their footsteps, besides the Normal class at the University [of Deseret] who are learning and adopting his method of teaching."¹³ Other Utah communities as far south as Springville were benefitting from his instruction.

Looking back today at the extent of Stephens's teaching, his achievements seem even more amazing considering the difficulty of transportation between the various towns and the scarcity of printed music materials. The Professor, in order to remedy that situation, published his **Primer and First Reader of Vocal Music**, printed by the **Juvenile Instructor** in 1883. In this text he espoused his own method of note reading which contrasted with the Tonic Sol-Fa system of Thomas McIntyre, which was used by some teachers in the area.

At a Sunday School Union officers' meeting in 1890, the

merits of Stephens's note reading system and the Tonic Sol-Fa method were discussed with the decision to have both proponents appear before the committee to help them decide which method to adopt for the Sunday Schools.¹⁴

On 31 October Cannon wrote:

[Stephens] in his labors depends a great deal on the inspiration of the moment, and generally blends the staff and Tonic Sol-Fa notation and finds the best results therefrom. [McIntyre] uses the Tonic Sol-Fa system exclusively and thinks it is superior to the staff notation or a blending of the two. The discussion was quite protracted, but we finally took the matter under advisement as a board.

Hymns were being published at that time in the **Juvenile Instructor** in Tonic Sol-Fa such as Stephens's hymn here illustrated. In 1899 the Sunday School Union officially began to publish all music in note form.

The Preface to his **Primer and First Reader** illustrates Stephens's practical approach to teaching children:

Treble	{	:s ₁	..s ₁		d	:m	..d		s	:s		l	:-		s	:s	..s		f	:-	..f		m	:d
Alto	{	:s ₁	..s ₁		d	:m	..d		s	:d		d	:-		d	:d	..d		t ₁	:-	..t ₁		d	:d
Tenor	{	:s ₁	..s ₁		d	:m	..d		s	:s		f	:-		s	:s	..s		s	:-	..s		s	:fe
Bass	{	:s ₁	..s ₁		d	:m	..d		s	:m		f	:-		m	:m	..m		r	:-	..r		d	:l ₁

{	r	:-	:-	:t ₁	t ₁	d:r	m		f	:s	:l	..t		d'	:-		t	:l	..l		s	:s	..s		s	:fe
{	God:	Thou	hast	made	Thy	children			mighty		By	the		touch	of	the	mountain									
{	t ₁	:-	:-	:s ₁	s ₁	:s ₁		s ₁	:f		m	:-	..r		r	:r	..r		r	:m	..m		r	:d		
{	long:	Thou	hast	been	our	help	in		weakness.	And	Thy	strength	has	made	us											
{	s	:-	:-	:s	s	:s		s	:s		s	:l	..fe		s	:fe	..fe		s	:d'	..d'		t	:l		
{	stands	As	the	guardian	of	the			loved	ones	Thou	hast	brought	from	many											
{	s ₁	:-	:-	:s ₁	s ₁	:l ₁	..d		r	..m	..f	..r		d	:l ₁		t ₁	:d	..d		t ₁	:d	..d		r	:r

An example of the Tonic-Sol-Fa method of musical notation as published in the **Juvenile Instructor**.

Nothing but a desire to follow out my **own** mode of teaching could have induced me to publish this little work. It seemed to me that I could not do my pupils justice by following other works (though they all have good points); so, in justice to them and myself, I commit myself to the mercy of the public as an 'Author,' fully prepared to bear both just and unjust criticism (if indeed the little book proves worthy of any notice at all). I shall use it for my **own** pupils, and if failure be the result, I shall only have myself to blame. I have sought to follow no other 'method' than what appears to **me** to be that of common sense, using what I believe to be the best means to gain the desired end. Should any fellow-teacher wish to use this little work, he will find, I believe, that each lesson will explain itself, if read carefully, and he can then impart the ideas to his class in his **own** way. Trusting it will be of use to the youth of our community, and especially to my many beloved pupils of both the present and past, I affectionately dedicate this, my first attempt to them.

The index to the compositions in this work includes his earliest children's songs and rounds, but also choruses for part singing written as the Professor gained in skill. Demand for this first publication resulted in Stephens's marketing a second book in 1884 entitled **The Song Garland, Second Reader of Vocal Music**. The Preface reveals the author's elation at the success of the first volume, but with his customary modesty:

In presenting this, my **Second Reader** to the public I cannot but express my surprise and pleasure at the demand which calls for it. It is but little more than a year since my **First Reader** made its appearance; it contained my own method of teaching vocal music—so different to the usual mode—I

dared not hope that other musicians would have received it so readily and used it with such good results which compel me to issue the present little work so soon.

The selections in the second volume include three duets, two trios, a quartet, a solo with chorus, several preparatory exercises, a dramatic chorus, "Song of the Besieged," and three rounds, along with some simple songs making a total of twenty. Stephens's wry sense of humor is evident in the novelty piece entitled: "Music As Medicine," Song and Chorus (Serio Comic) Dedicated to all Musical Quacks, by M.D., (another of the composer's pseudonyms). The last verse is as follows:

For 'horror of mirth' take a hymn to begin,
 Then one little song sentimental.
 By that time the patient will not deem it sin
 To list to a waltz (sentimental).
 'Bad temper' the victim must hum a short tune.
 Whenever his anger is bristling
 And if some bad words are affecting his tongue,
 The 'never fail cure' is whistling.

Chorus

Oh, a song is the medicine, take my advice.
 More music and less doctor's lotion,
 Will make you more healthy, good natured and wise,
 Cost nineteen twentieth per potion.

Shortly after the October 1882 Semi-annual Conference, the Deseret Sunday School Union announced a contest to encourage home talent in both music and poetry. A list of prizes for best compositions in some twenty classifications totalled \$200. In the music competition, Evan Stephens garnered ten prizes and dominated the contest. His awards illustrate the wide scope of compositions completed early in his career.

Hymns—music and words by same author: “Sacrament Prayer,” \$10.00 First Prize.

Hymns—music: “Song Praise,” \$2.50 Second Prize.

Songs—music and words by same author: “Why Did Mama Go to Heaven?,” \$5.00 First Prize.

Songs—music and words by different authors: “Come to Me in My Dreams,” \$5.00 First Prize.

Four Part Piece—words and music by same author: “Harvest Home,” \$10.00 First Prize; “The Bells,” \$5.00 Second Prize.

Anthem—words selected or original: “The Gathered Saints,” \$10.00 Second Prize.

Duet with accompaniment: “Let Us Clamber Over the Hillside,” \$10.00 First Prize.

Male Quartet with accompaniment: “The Lover’s Good Night,” \$10.00 First Prize; “Song of the Mormon Battalion,” \$5.00 Second Prize.¹⁵

The varied activity of Stephens’s early choir is shown in an account of a musical picnic at the mouth of Echo Canyon. Three hundred persons took the trip, enjoying their lunch in a grove belonging to James Bromley. After lunch W. Foster, C.R. Savage, Agnes Olsen and Evan Stephens sang solos, accompanied by Professor Ebenezer Beesley’s orchestra. The choir rendered an anthem and then the group enjoyed football and other games while the anglers fished.¹⁶

In 1884 Stephens was approached by Dr. John R. Park of the University of Deseret to teach vocal music. When he recovered his composure, Evan told the educator, “My language is too poor, I make too many mistakes in grammar.”

Park explained, “I don’t want you for grammar. I want you to teach music.” Stephens then accepted.¹⁷

The Annual of the University lists him among the faculty for 1884-85. The course description is indicative of the importance attributed to singing:

Vocal music is taught with special reference to the Normal Department. While the student receives instruction in the principles of the art, he is thor-

oughly drilled in their execution, so that with a moderate natural endowment, he may be able to read music readily at sight, and to write it as well from sound.

A primary object in the course is to make him so proficient in his knowledge of the subject as to be able to teach the elements himself. He is made familiar with both of the popular methods of expression, the old notation and the tonic sol-fa.

Care has been taken to secure talent specially suited to giving instruction in this branch.

The University of Utah catalog of 1894-95 specified that vocal music was a required class in the second year of the Normal course. A total of 412 students was mentioned.

Stephens enlarged the University choir during his early tenure there and it became featured at many special events including student gatherings and commencement exercises. When he formed his grand opera company in 1888 some of his students became soloists and chorus members.

In 1891 a men’s glee club was organized and functioned for a year or so; then was revived in 1893. In 1896 some forty students met with Stephens and organized a chorus, feeling that they had neglected the kind offers of their music teacher for too long. They said, “Why not wake the echoes of the old University of Utah halls with a full chorus now and then. It will stir up patriotism more than any thing we know of.”

When Dr. John R. Park established a full department of music in 1888 Stephens was listed as principal, with Orson Pratt, Jr., piano and organ; William Weihe, violin; A. Andre, guitar, mandolin and banjo. L.D. Edwards and Anton Pederson were added as instructors for 1890-91, but the department was reduced to the original size in 1891-92 and abolished after that year. J.J. McClellan succeeded Stephens in 1900-1901.¹⁸

An announcement of Stephens’s “3rd monster concert” in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on 7 April 1884 indicated that he would then retire for a while to pursue higher studies. “Everybody knows the

benevolent manner in which he and his pupils have aided in all worthy objects ever since he came here and should remember the meed of praise and encouragement with which they should reward his pluck and perseverance, as he retires for a time to prepare himself for greater usefulness.”¹⁹ The gas lighting for the Grand Concert was “a magnificent spectacle, superior to the ghostly brilliance of the electric light.”

The Professor continued his activities the following year until he left for Boston, 9 September. Publication of his song and chorus, “My Valley Home” was announced on 10 January. “The words are full of sentiments of affection for our homes in these peaceful vales, while the music is in Stephens’s happiest vein, sweet and melodious, with easy yet effective accompaniment. . . It is printed in excellent style by Daynes and Coalter, of this city, and may be had of them or the author, on receipt of price, 40¢.”²⁰

Stephens met his adult singing class as usual at the Social Hall on 19 January, where they surprised him with a watch and chain and written expression of respect and appreciation. After he voiced his gratitude the entire group adjourned to the Seventh Ward where a band was waiting to play for dancing. On 19 February the Professor’s university class presented him with a diamond pin.

Then, in April an announcement was made of a chorus of about 300 who were meeting every Monday to practice, under Stephens’s direction, a program composed of sixteen of his compositions. Singers from fifteen counties and eight different nationalities were represented. A children’s choir of 200 was meeting at another time and place and also rehearsing for the Stephens’ Farewell Concert to be given 25 May 1885 in the Large Tabernacle.²¹

The church’s Presiding Bishopric had volunteered use of the Tabernacle to replace the Salt Lake Theatre where this concert was originally scheduled. The smaller seating capacity and limited stage area would not accommodate the large number of participants. Bishop Preston had suggested in a letter to Stephens that the program be composed of his own compositions and rendered by his pupils and chorus members, which was agreeable to the Professor.

AUTOGRAPH ALBUMS, PHOTO ALBUMS, FANCY BOX WRITING PAPER,
 ENVELOPES, DOLLS, TOYS, GAMES, CIRQUEF & RASP BALL, GOODS, go. to DWYER'S Old Stand.

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 44 S. MAIN STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.
 Have a large number of new suits and colored shirts, which they will sell at cost, 10 percent discount will be given on all other goods for spot cash. Call and see us. Bates & Co.

PROGRAMME
 —FOR—
Stephens' Farewell Concert
 —TO BE HELD IN THE—
LARGE TABERNACLE,
 On MONDAY EVENING, MAY 25TH, 1885.
 Every Number Composed by E. Stephens.

PART I.

Procession March, **JOS. J. DAYNES**
 Composed Saturday May 23. Performed on the great organ.
 Chorus, Welcome (composed in 1872) **FULL CHORUS and ORGAN**
 Chorus, **Gipsy Life**
 The opening chorus of a new musical drama, entitled "Leona, the Gipsy Maid," written 1875. In the play the chorus is sung by a merry band of gipsies returning from a fair, and is accompanied with tambourines and clapping.
 Solo, **Mrs. NELLIE DRUCE PUGSLEY**
 From the same piece. It is sung by Leona when about to be exiled from her tribe.
 Duet and Chorus, Hail to the Maid, **ADULT CHORUS AND OTHERS**
 The closing piece of the same, representing the general joy after the clearing up of Leona's troubles and sorrows.
 Duet, Let us Chamber O'er the Hillside, **Misses ALICE and SUSAN ELLIS**
 Composed 1882. Won first prize at the late Sunday School Union competition.
 Song and Chorus, Papa's Pet and Mamma's Joy, **LITTLE MRS. FLORA PARDOE**
 Chorus by the Children's Class. Written March 12th, 1885.
 Chorus, with Solo, The Gentle Spring is Here, **Miss A. STROMBERG and CHILDREN'S CHORUS.**
 The opening chorus of a Cantata, "The Seasons and the Flowers," begun in 1884 and yet finished.

PART II.

Chorus (in the fugue style), Undaunted Courage, **ADULT CHORUS**
 This is the last movement of No. 5 of an unfinished Oratorio, commenced in 1881. Subject taken from the Book of Mormon. The piece is supposed to represent the determined feeling of the Nephites when, after consulting their course to God, they march upon the foe.
 Duet, Parting and Meeting, **Miss ANNIE PEDERSEN and LOUIE POULTON**
 Composed about a month ago.
 Song and Chorus (by request), My Mountain Home, **E. STEPHENS and CHORUS**
 Song and Chorus, My Valley Home, **Miss CAIRIE THORNE and CHORUS**
 (Companion to the last.) Composed in 1884. Published lately by Daynes & Coalter.
 Anthem, Song of the Redeemed, **PORTION OF THE CHORUS**
 Composed for and sung at the dedication of the Logan Temple. Pub. by the *Utah Herald*.
 Song, The Maid's Request, **Mrs. NELLIE DRUCE PUGSLEY**
 Composed in 1884 for, and sung by Mrs. Nellie Druce Pugsley.
 Duet, Parting Friends, **Miss BESSIE DEAN and Mr. E. STEPHENS**
 Finished May 21st 1885.
 Glee, Good-night, **ADULT CHORUS**
 Composed in 1884 for the Deseret University Singing Society. Published by the Author.

Conductor, **E. STEPHENS** Accompanist, **JOS. J. DAYNES**

Admission, Free of Charge. Parents will please keep their children under 12 years of age with them and leave before at home. Gates open at 7:30, and will be closed after performance begins at 8 o'clock.

After to-night's feast of music, get yourselves prepared to go with the GRAND EXCURSION, given by the SIXTEENTH WARD BRASS BAND to FAYSON & PROVO, next Saturday, May 30th. Grand Ball at Z. C. M. I. Hall, on Saturday Eve. Gather at the grove and meet your friends at the Stake Conference. Fare to Provo and return: \$2 00. Via U. C. Ry. To Payson: \$2 75. Tickets good for 3 days. For sale at Daynes & Coalter's and C. R. Savage's.

Program for Evan Stephen's Farewell Concert
 25 May 1885 before leaving to study in Boston.

Music had been copied and printed and the numbers rehearsed when bad news came:

All was going on merrily when one fine morning I was rather stunned by the receipt of a most kindly worded note informing me that a telegram from Washington had been received stating that under no condition should the Tabernacle be used in which to render any kind of program for which an admission fee was to be charged. It was a bolt of lightning from a clear sky. Such a thing had never before been heard of . . . I must either dismiss about two-thirds of my singers, or drop the concert.

The concert was finally given in the Tabernacle, free of charge. Of course this at once turned my benefit into an expense. But we were ready to give the concert, and give it we did, with wide open doors, and an audience crowded the building and its outside surroundings.²²

Restriction on the Tabernacle's use for paid-admission events was a result of the Congressional debates which evolved into the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Bill, designed to destroy political and economic power of the church.

A review of the concert indicated that "Those who attended . . . enjoyed one of the richest treats in the musical line that has ever been offered to the public." The audience was estimated as between 10,000 and 12,000 persons. The reviewer commented on the variety of numbers, gay and lively, pathetic, lofty in sentiment, and one captivating in simplicity. The latter was "Papa's Pet and Mamma's Joy" sung by little Miss Flora Pardoe.

During the intermission, three different parties, unbeknownst to the others, had arranged to take up a collection for Stephens as a token of their esteem. He was surprised and somewhat annoyed at this action, but his friends presumed upon his good nature and proceeded to raise "a handsome sum"²³[over \$200].

On the day following the concert Stephens published a "Card of Thanks" in which he expressed his gratitude and also explained that owing to the heat in the building from the gas lamps and packed audience the singers were unable to do their best. He said that the massive front moulding kept the sound from the singers in front and suspected that some of the organ pipes were also disturbed by the heat.

Stephens closed his letter with a short verse:

*I thank you not for gold nor flattering praise,
For these alone would leave my heart a blank;
But for each smile, each kindly act or phrase,
Each deed of love—for these my heart cries
. . . THANKS!²⁴*

On 24 July Stephens also conducted the 1885 Sunday School Jubilee for which the **Jubilee Songster** containing the original music had been published. The children sang his "The Pioneers" and "Sowing", and his "For the Strength of the Hills" and quartet and chorus, "The Children Are Praying For Me" were also rendered.

Evan Stephens left on the DRG Railroad for Boston on 9 September 1895 to enroll in the prestigious New England Conservatory. As he said in some pencilled notes, [I] Took leave of absence for one year from all my work—leaving over 3,000 class members and students—to have a general review of the studies I had made of books and experiences with the leading musicians of the country as teachers. Was offered very fine positions there before returning; but all my heart was set on my home work in Utah, so in 1887 I returned. . . Stephens served as a special correspondent for the **Deseret News** to keep his friends informed as to his progress.

A Private Letter from him published 9 October stated:

I have been saved one course of four terms by passing a successful examination in 'Harmony,' at the end of the first term. I study voice training and

the piano also under an excellent teacher; have comfortable lodgings, and am feeling quite well. I have many a little chat about 'Mormonism' with young men, students and others, and I invariably let them know that I am proud to be a Latter-day Saint, and why; and they never seem to think less of me when our chats are over. If they did, I would only be sorry for them, and not myself.²⁵

Official records at the Conservatory indicate only that Stephens studied Piano, Voice, and Counterpoint (under G.W. Chadwick) during the first term; Voice and Counterpoint in the second; and Voice in the third session. He said he was passed in harmony and counterpoint, etc. until he "was well among the fourth-year students; and while receiving many high comments for my compositions, was reproved quite frankly for tendencies to follow too closely the instructions of the text books I had eagerly swallowed at home, as well as having for my ideals the old classic masters rather than the modern models of free writings." He received many offers to remain as a composer and teacher, but chose to return to the Utah he loved, with realization that there is as much difference between the Mormons' needs and ideals in music as there is a difference of religion in comparison with others.

Stephens said, "Music should be a consistent and faithful servant to the Church and neither its master nor its slave, but always consistently harmonious with its aims, sentiments, and spiritual emotions and feelings."²⁶

There is no mention on the prize lists for 1885-86 of Evan's winning an award for composition. However, Annie Wells Cannon wrote that he entered a competition with music composed to words of a song by Emmeline B. Wells, but concealed his name on the work, in typical Stephens fashion.

This song was awarded the prize as the best; and the master, in holding up the sheet of music before the three hundred or more pupils, asked the

author of the piece to raise his hand. Then he added: 'It has been stated that America has no distinctive school of music. If we had more such work as this, and plenty of it, we could refute that accusation.'²⁷

A *Deseret News* report in 1886 indicated that Stephens planned to return to Utah early in May and was sending ahead some \$150 worth of musical works for further study. Some of his songs were being published in Boston, a song and duet being issued that week. He had written a solo for the American prima donna, Emma Nevada, who had been kind to him and allowed him to use her name on the piece which was to be published. The famed Ruggles Street Quartet which sang at the Ruggles Street Baptist Church from 1877 to 1901 had been given exclusive rights to sing one of his compositions.²⁸

J. Spencer Cornwall maintained that Evan Stephens had left the New England Conservatory abruptly because his mentor, G.W. Chadwick, had come to class with the smell of liquor on his breath. No mention of this incident is found in Evan's writings.²⁹ Chadwick was director of the institution and a widely recognized composer. However, a scathing criticism of Chadwick's work by Rupert Hughes³⁰ raises a question of whether Stephens found his instructor's teaching not to his liking. Hughes said of Chadwick, "But to me he must remain a man of much talent and industry, and little of the sacred fire of genius."

Upon returning to Salt Lake City, Stephens made a new offer to the Sunday Schools, which was accepted. He would train 30 children under fifteen years of age from each school in the city to "sing parts in a number of pieces selected by the various leaders of singing and himself, provided that the singers, music and place of meeting be furnished him." The use of the Assembly Hall was tendered and the choir leaders were given the responsibility of selecting the children and having books ready so that all 600 could begin their labors on time.

Stephens specified that: "The result must be a great improvement in the singing in our Sabbath schools, as the thirty new

singers become able to join their present choirs in harmony. No reading or other special instruction will be given at these meetings; other classes will soon be formed for these purposes, to which a small admission fee will be charged...³¹

A note on 6 October describes how a hundred children under fifteen gathered in the Fourteenth Ward assembly rooms to join Prof. Stephens's singing class. In the evening nearly a hundred joined the class for older pupils. An intermediate class was also organized to provide a review for previous students, and a more advanced class was also put together. All totalled, Stephens was instructing about 900 pupils each week.³²

On 4 April 1887, 400 members of Stephens classes demonstrated their skills before a large audience. Reading and time-keeping exercises were gone through in a "distinct, unhesitating manner that demonstrated beyond a doubt their ability to read from the notes in perfect time and tune. The teacher offered to let them read from a blackboard in all keys (flats or sharps) and a competent musician could come and see that the lists were genuine."³³

In 1888 and 1889 Evan Stephens embarked on a rigorous schedule of composing, and produced and directed many concerts by large groups of singers. He had been appointed Music Director of the YMMIA and prepared music for the annual 1888 June Conference. Included on the programs were the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, Zion's Choral Union, his juvenile class, the Stephens Opera Chorus, a selected male choir, and a number of soloists and a quartet.³⁴

Upon returning from Boston, Evan Stephens had found that the Tabernacle was closed, owing to enforcement of Federal laws involving the possession or confiscation of church property. He was unable to continue the children's concerts which had brought him his livelihood, so now his work had become centered on children in the district schools and with adult students. While in the East he had witnessed a number of opera performances, and his enthusiasm for this genre of music had increased greatly. He began to recruit the community's finest musicians for his choral group which evolved into the Stephens Opera Company.³⁵

The first vehicle for the company was Balfo's "The Bohemian Girl," performed twice on Saturday 9 June and on the evening of 11 June 1888. This was the first opera to be staged by home talent in the community. A portion of the *Deseret News* review is reproduced:

A great success has been scored by home musical talent in the rendition of Balfe's beautiful and romantic opera, 'The Bohemian Girl.' It is scarcely too much to assert that the event marks an epoch in the musical history of the community, on account of its effect in demonstrating the quality of the home talent we have, and what that talent is able to accomplish, and in the impetus which it has given to the study of music in our midst. . . . The immense chorus; the thorough drill it displayed; the rich costumes; the animation and precision shown by all who took part, in entrances and exits, as well as in singing; the grouping; the mechanical effects; all these were marked and highly effective to what was in nearly all other respects, the **finest presentation** of the opera ever given in this city.

The reviewer was mildly critical of a few aspects of the acting, but conceded that since only two of the cast had "ever appeared on the stage before, this attempt at grand opera is marvelous." The performance was repeated on 1 January 1889, with a change of female lead.³⁶

Stephens's second opera to be staged was "Daughter of the Regiment," performed in the Salt Lake Theatre 28, 29, 30 March and 1 April 1889. The reviewer for the *Deseret News* wrote: Mr. Evan Stephens has scored one more musical triumph in his production at the Theatre of the charming opera, 'Daughter of the Regiment.' The artistic and thorough manner in which it was presented on Saturday is a credit to him and to the performers."³⁷

The last of Stephens's trio of operas was Flotow's "Martha," staged on 1 and 3 June and again on 8 and 9 October 1889. The

reviewer said, "We advise our friends to see it. They will be greatly delighted. The music is most beautifully rendered, and the opera played with artistic skill throughout. It is the best thing of the kind ever done by home talent."³⁸

After Stephens completed his three operas, he directed a concert for relief of the Galveston Flood sufferers, bringing together the best vocalists of the city to organize the Salt Lake Choral Society of 400 voices. So when P.S. Gilmore made arrangements for his mammoth Musical Jubilee to appear in the Tabernacle on 31 October 1889 and requested a chorus to sing with America's finest band, Professor Stephens was ready with a singing group of 400.

Gilmore asked Stephens to conduct the numbers with the chorus and band. The latter said, "No, I don't want to do that" even though, in his heart, he wanted to. He was afraid he'd be talked about. But Gilmore didn't relent.

"Oh, but I want you to. I always insist that when I do have a young conductor who is doing work of that kind that he lead." The younger man finally agreed on condition that he didn't have to put on a dress suit. Gilmore replied, "That is all right, my boys are all in uniforms and I shall be there and I won't be in my dress suit; it will be quite likely the singers will be in dress suits, but that is perfectly all right. You do it your own way."³⁹

The advertisement for the concert listed the Wonderful Military Band, Famous Instrumental Soloists, Renowned Vocal Artists, Ringing Steel Anvils and Electric Artillery of Six Guns; plus Stephens's Mixed Chorus of 500 Voices plus 1200 Children's Voices from the Salt Lake Public Schools. He used these resources to advantage in his next major achievement of 1890, the planning and organization of Salt Lake's first Musical Festival, held 30 and 31 May. He asked Thomas C. Griggs to assist him.

Stephens received a letter signed by many local leaders requesting he secure the Salt Lake Tabernacle to do justice to the festival. He then wrote a letter to Wilford Woodruff in which he guaranteed that the festival would consist of "the noblest, highest class of music" with "nothing trivial to desecrate the House of Worship." Proceeds after expenses were to go to charitable

projects including music books for the district schools.

The request was granted on 9 May, though an exception to current church policy. Two evening performances were to be given, along with one matinee in which Stephens's chorus of children would participate.⁴⁰

... The first night the Choral Society of 300 voices fairly carried off the first honors—two of their numbers being re-demanded (something almost unknown hitherto in chorus work here). Next in favor were Miss Bertha Bayliss and Miss Thomas; and a beautiful duett, sung by Miss Bessie Dean and Mr. Easton, (one of Prof. Stephens's own compositions). W.E. Weihe's violin solo was glorious; and Mr. Pyper sang the solo in the 'prison scene' in a way to fairly surprise his warmest admirers. ... The orchestra did its best work in connection with the Choral Society; and the great organ, under the masterly control of Prof. Thomas Radcliffe, added a grandeur to the whole ... The afternoon concert presented a spectacle too beautiful to describe—twelve hundred children on the vast elevated platform. ... When they sang, the effect was electrifying; some could scarcely refrain from weeping, while others were almost boisterous with delight.

The second night's performance included a solo, "Ernani," by Heber S. Goddard, followed by a scene from "La Traviata". It was followed by a clarinet solo by Mr. Kent and an aria from Rosini's "Judgement." The final number consisted of selections from the oratorio, "Elijah."⁴¹

This program certainly demonstrated Stephens's enthusiasm for opera and the oratorio, acquired from his extensive self-study in the classics and his brief ten months in Boston. In this concert the Professor was not the "Commoner in Music" which John Henry Evans labeled him.⁴²

In 1889 Professor Stephens marketed two more books of songs. The first was the **School and Primary Songster**, containing “Songs for public schools, Primary Associations, kindergarten, etc. all especially composed and arranged to suit children’s voices.” It also could be used as a reader of vocal music, and contained a few repeats from his prior books. This 106 page work was published by Coalter and Snelgrove and reprinted by Daynes Music Co. The second, also edited by Stephens, was the **YMMIA Missionary Hymn and Tune Book**, published for use in the Southern States Mission and containing many of the editor’s hymns plus songs from the Hymnal and Sunday School Song Book and a sampling of Ira Sankey’s favorites.

The first edition of the long-heralded **Latter-day Saints Psalmody** was published by the **Deseret News** 19 July 1889 after two years of labor in typesetting and printing, and four years in gathering and editing. The committee in charge included Ebenezer Beesley, Thomas Griggs, Joseph J. Daynes, George Careless and Evan Stephens. Among the 330 numbers, most were written by Careless, Daynes, Thomas, Griggs and Stephens, the latter having nineteen. There were none of the usual gospel songs by non-Mormon composers, but a few classics by Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Rossini. The **Psalmody** continued in a slightly revised second edition with 352 compositions; and four more unchanged printings. The first edition was the largest and most costly musical work yet published in Utah.

In 1890 President Wilford Woodruff of the Mormon Church issued the “Manifesto” “which declared an end to the contracting of plural marriages in the Church and called upon the members to obey the law of the land.”⁴³

On 25 October T.C. Griggs wrote, “President Woodruff issues a Manifesto on plural marriage—it makes me sad. . . Going to be a change in conductorship of Tabernacle Choir.” Previously on 10 October he had written, “Evan Stephens appointed leader of Tabernacle Choir. Pres. C.W. Penrose presented his name at the choir’s rehearsal.”

Ebenezer Beesley was released 1 November 1890 from the post, leaving Stephens the most logical choice for the appointment

considering his tremendous accomplishments in composition and teaching the fine art of singing to both children and adults.



Twelve Hundred Public School Children and the Great Tabernacle Organ.
Salt Lake City. May Festival 1890. Prof. Evan Stephens Conductor. Photo. by S. & J. Copyright 1890.

The great May Festival of 1890 which featured 1200 public school children in concert in one program. Other programs featured the 300 voice Choral Society, orchestra, and soloists.

Photo courtesy Library-Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

**STEPHEN'S
GRAND OPERA CO.,**
Will perform the favorite English
Operas,
THE BOHEMIAN GIRL!
AT THE
SALT LAKE THEATRE
ON
Saturday Afternoon & Evening,
JUNE 9th.
And Monday Evening,
JUNE 11th.
WITH THE FOLLOWING CAST:
Count Amheim, (Governor of
Prussia) — **H. W. Goddard.**
Theresa, (A Proscribed Pole) —
R. C. Easton.
Florestin, (Nepew to the Count) —
J. F. White.
Devilhood, (Chief of the Gypsies) —
J. D. Spencer.
Captain of the Guards, — **St. J. Walk.**
Artise, (Daughter of the Count) —
Nettie Deane Pugsley.
Queen of the Gypsies, — **Henrie Deane.**
Bude, (Artise's Nurse) — **May Robinson.**
Chorus of 100 Voices.
Theatre Orchestra Enlarged
— USUAL THEATRE RATES.
Prices for Maize, 30c., 25c. No extra
charge for reserved seats.
E. STEPHENS
Teacher and Conductor.

Stephens' Grand Opera Company
— WILL PERFORM THE FAVORITE —
MILITARY OPERA,
THE DAUGHTER of the REGIMENT
— IN THE —
SALT LAKE THEATRE,
On Saturday and Monday, **MARCH 30 & APRIL 1.**
— COSTUMES NEW AND ELEGANT. —
Grand Saturday Matinee—2 p.m.
Usual Theatre Rates. Box Office Open Friday, 10 a. m.

THEATRE!
— THE —
STEPHENS' OPERA . . CO.
Will present their Latest and Greatest Success,
MARTHA
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8,
— AND —
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9.
SECURE SEATS EARLY ON MONDAY. REGULAR RATES. SALE OF
SEATS, BEGINS MONDAY.

Gilmore's Mammoth Musical Jubilee.
SALT LAKE TABERNACLE,
Thursday & Friday Evenings,
OCT. 31 and NOV. 1,
AND FRIDAY AFTERNOON.
P. S. GILMORE'S
Three Grand Festival Concerts,
Presenting the Finest and Most Spectacular
Compositions of International and
Local Talent ever assembled in the
Territory. **— Entire change of Pro-
grams at each concert.**
— **Wonderful Military Band.**
— **Famous Instrumental Soloists.**
— **Renowned Vocal Artists.**
— **King's Royal Artillery.**
— **Electric Artillery (6 Guns).**
Grand Chorus of 500 Mixed Voices!
At Each Evening Concert. **Extraordinary**
Course of
1200—Children's Voices—1200
At the Festival Matinee on Friday, from
the Salt Lake City public schools, espe-
cially trained for this occasion by Mr.
E. W. WATSON.
Also the **Colossal Tabernacle Organ.**
Only Two Evening Concerts at 8.
Only One Matinee, Friday, at 2.30.
Reserved Seats in Children's Seats House.
PRICES—15c., 75c. and 50c. Children 25c.
Reservations made at all retail stores from all
points. Apply to your nearest agent.
E. W. WATSON, Tabernacle.
J. W. CLAWSON, Treasurer.

Advertisement for three operas
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Bohemian Girl, June 1888.
Daughter of the Regiment, March
and April 1889.
Martha, June and October 1889.

Left:
Advertisement for sensational
Gilmore Concerts in
Salt Lake Tabernacle,
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Chapter 6

The Tabernacle Choir

In 1850 Brigham Young requested Welsh convert John Parry to organize a small choir to sing at the April General Conference in the old Bowery in Salt Lake City. Parry enlisted some of his Welsh friends as a nucleus of the group and unofficially, from that quiet beginning, the Tabernacle Choir evolved over the years, singing first in the Old Tabernacle and then in the new, larger building which is used today. Since that time the choir has served the church well, and contributed much to missionary efforts worldwide through radio and television broadcasts and many concert tours, including the Soviet Union in 1991.

Many names should be mentioned as conductors of the choir: George Careless from 1865 to 1880; Ebenezer Beesley 1865 to 1890; Evan Stephens 1890 to 1916; A.C. Lund 1916 to 1935; J. Spencer Cornwall 1935 to 1957; Richard P. Condie 1957 to 1974; Jay Welch 1974; Jerold Ottley 1974 to the present writing. A number of assistant conductors have also served including C.J. Thomas, Robert Sands, John J. McClellan, Horace Ensign Jr., and many others.

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Ebenezer Beesley directed the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir during one of the most difficult periods of its history—the bitter crusade of the Federal Government against the Mormons involved in polygamy. As Beesley completed his term in the fall of

1890: "The older members of the choir were moving away, and a lot of the male members were in jail. Quartets from the choir used to go to the penitentiary to cheer them up. Those who weren't incarcerated were either in hiding or on missions. Many of the ladies, having to raise families, were unable to continue their singing careers.¹

The decline in choir membership contributed to what the First Presidency recognized as a deterioration in quality of performance, and prompted a change of conductors.

Ebenezer Beesley was keenly aware of the insufficiencies of the Tabernacle Choir, and in this connection experienced the customary delicate dilemma of the leader of nearly every Church choral group: How to harness and blend those very willing, but less than artistically professionals, without hurting their feelings? To those less discerning, and not musically sophisticated, the choir, as a whole, was splendid; but to the true music critic, it was not peerless.

After the April 1884 Annual Conference, Beesley wrote some of his feelings about the choir's performance. He called it an ordeal because the choir was required to furnish too many selections with insufficient rehearsal time. He felt the singers kept well in tune, due in part to changes made in the Tabernacle Organ. Their deficiency in execution he felt was due to the incapability of some members who had been recommended by other members but were not of adequate proficiency. He determined to henceforth test the voice and capability of each new applicant.²

According to John James, a writer for the *Deseret News*, in 1890 he and Heber Goddard had praised the skill and enthusiasm of Evan Stephens to Apostle Moses Thatcher of the church music committee and suggested that he should be named choir director. Stephens was unhappy that the two men had recommended him because he wanted his work, alone, to represent him, rather than someone's "boasting" about him.³

As he said in 1895:

Musically, my chief delight would be in composition did my many duties give me leisure to follow it. Were it not for my great love and admiration for musical works, in the rendition of which I take delight, conducting and chorus training, and teaching generally would be unbearable to me. I believe I have no love for public work, and quite often has personal attachment to my singers been the only means of tiding over a spell of strong desire to withdraw from public labor, and devote myself to my own musical thoughts.⁴

Despite his personal reservations, Stephens accepted the call from the First Presidency and assumed charge of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir 1 November of that year. As Ebenezer Beesley's successor, he became a magnet for the younger generation, many of whom had been in his classes and who were not involved in the struggle over polygamy.

As Stephens approached his new assignment, he was quick to realize that his first task was to increase the number and quality of singers. He felt the needs of the church and community would be met only through the organization of "great choirs, massive choral societies, male choruses, ladies' choirs, children's choruses numbering thousands, musical festivals, musical contests, schools of music, music taught systematically in the State and public schools, great congregational singing of Latter-day Saint music and songs, not only by the people at home, but eventually by the world at large."

He visualized "all the world streaming through the land of Zion to enjoy and admire, as foreseen by the older prophets: 'The Songs of Zion' to become something more than a name." In 1890 he could scarcely dream of having his singers travel from coast to coast giving concerts and attracting favorable comments for his church.⁵

Beezley's problems with membership persisted through Evan

Stephens's years with the choir, but as a strong disciplinarian he made tremendous strides in solving them. Within six months after assuming control of the choir, he had almost doubled the number of singers to 300.

Thomas Griggs wrote in his journal of 27 October 1890 that he had been to choir practice and that Evan Stephens was "in full control and vigorous." Apparently the Professor had started to conduct even before his official date of the first of November. He continued with his teaching of children's classes and conducted the Choral Society along with some participation in commercial business over the next few years. Remuneration for directing the choir was not sufficient for a livelihood, and had to be supplemented.

Ebenezer Beesley, Stephens's predecessor, after his parting from the choir "could not but help feel a little blue about his release . . ." He had devoted his life to music, but found that maintaining an income was difficult without his conductor's salary. Teaching was his only alternative. The same problems faced Evan Stephens in 1916 upon his release.⁶

Continuing his feverish pace of activity, in January 1891 Stephens published two anthems, the first a vigorous choir number, "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy," which he had composed for the Logan choir, and which makes use of a quartet in the second part. The next, "Grant Us Peace," is even more pretentious, encompassing a quartet accompanied by full chorus in a devotional prayer to the words, "Grant Us Peace, O Lord." followed by a stirring chorus with soprano solo and then a duet for tenor and soprano or contralto. The *Deseret News* said, "Stephens has never written a sweeter bit than this." It was also composed for the Logan choir. In this article the *News* then announced plans for publishing a series of home composers' best anthems and concert pieces for use of choirs generally.⁷

By the latter part of April 1891 Stephens had enlarged the Tabernacle Choir to 375 voices. Tickets were being sold for a gala concert on 28 April including five of the conductor's own compositions. The variety is noteworthy: "Youthful Hearts," a women's duet; "Mother's Lullaby for a young women's chorus, The Cecelia Club; "Vales of Deseret" for the Tabernacle Choir, quartet and

organ; "The Wife to The Husband," soprano solo; and motet, "God of Israel," for three soloists, choir, quartet and organ. The balance of the program included two operatic arias, instrumental numbers by the Salt Lake Mandolin and Guitar Club, a string quartet and violinist W.E. Weihe.⁸

As the Choir grew in size, Stephens determined that the west end of the Tabernacle would need to be remodeled to accommodate more singers. The First Presidency was supportive of the project, and under direction of Joseph D. Young, the church architect, additional seats were installed, financed jointly by the church and from funds raised by the choir through concerts. The acoustics of the building were improved in the process so that the hanging acoustical decorations could be removed. A side organ was still used on occasion to keep the choir in tune with the large organ which the singers could not hear well. Ebenezer Beesley used a small orchestra for this purpose.

Musical growth in Utah in the nine years since Evan Stephens had moved to Salt Lake City was enumerated in an article clipped from the Brooklyn, N. Y. *Eagle* and reprinted in the *Deseret News*. Of course one man did not achieve this by himself. There were many prominent musicians working toward the same goals, but Stephens was the catalyst and major influence with church authorities. The long article stated in part:

A Salt Lake man informs the *American Art Journal* that they may be Mormons out there, but they are not Philistines by a considerable majority. He says there are four music stores where more guitars are sold than in New York, two drum corps, a mandolin club of forty, a band, a big organ that when rebuilt as it will be shortly, will be the largest in the world, a choir of 327 voices, a chorus club of 300, a May festival with De Vere, Whitney and Thursby . . . an orchestra of forty, an organist who used to officiate in St. Paul's London, a violin soloist, a women's musical society, an Apollo club and a public that plays on pianos and goes to

operas and concerts. Evidently the **musica domesticus** does not fasten itself on Salt Lake City with any great avidity.⁹

Early in 1892 Evan Stephens devised a plan to stage a huge benefit for the choirs of the city, which the **Deseret News** called "A Grand Union of Choirs." The plan received the wholehearted endorsement of the church authorities who placed the Tabernacle at the disposal of the choir conductor. It was scheduled for the Monday night of the April conference, "the proceeds to be devoted to aid the choirs taking part." Between eight and nine hundred dollars were turned over to the choirs, included in the more than four thousand dollars raised from concerts given by Stephens in the ten years he had worked in the city.¹⁰

The Chicago World's Exposition in 1891 offered a challenge to the world's great choirs to enter the Welsh Eisteddfod competition to be held during the fair in 1893. Evan Stephens thought little of the offer. While his Tabernacle Choir was experienced in singing great classical music, he felt it was too young and inexperienced to compete with long-established choirs which would enter.

Not long after, a visitor from Wales during a Sunday Tabernacle service heard the choir singing "Worthy is the Lamb that was Slain" from Handel's "Messiah." The Welshman had heard this number sung many times in competitions in his own country, and expressed his opinion to many that the Mormon choir should enter the contest. Some singers laughed, but others took the idea seriously.

At the close of April conference that year, a member of the Twelve Apostles approached Stephens to inform him that he was authorized to enter the competition and to start preparations. Stephens was aghast. He could see no way to finance the travel for 250 choir members to Chicago, but was told that the cost had been considered and his task was to prepare the choir to win.

The fair was more than two years away, but he began to choose the best singers and start to drill them. This assignment plus preparation for the Temple capstone laying in 1892 and Temple

Dedication in 1893 plus preparation of the June, 1891 Festival of the Salt Lake Choral Society, and his Grand Union of Choirs concert in 1892 would have overwhelmed any other conductor. But Stephens proceeded calmly to train his 400 voice choir plus his other groups.¹¹

After the musically successful 1890 Festival of the Salt Lake Choral Society and Stephens's children's chorus the Professor had appointed a managing board of directors of the Society to include H.G. Whitney, Dr. Vincent, J.D. Spencer, George D. Pyper, plus other officers including Stephens as conductor, Thomas Radcliffe, organist, Mrs. Hamilton, asst. organist, and E.H. Pierce, secretary and treasurer. The officers, in planning a June 1891 concert, began corresponding with famous artists, and were successful in securing the services of Myron W. Whitney, a great American basso, and Emma Thursby, the popular American soprano. The concerts on 5 and 6 June 1891 required an outlay of \$4,200, but Professor Stephens was confident that the public interest would produce more than that amount in revenue. His confidence was justified as sales were over \$4,700. Two of Stephens's songs were heard, "He Loves No More" and "My Western Home" with a full program of selections both vocal and instrumental from some nineteen composers of opera and oratorio.¹²

In October 1891 he conducted a children's choir for the Sunday School Union which netted nearly \$750. This fund was used for publication of 1,000 Book-of-Mormon charts and 20,000 sets of cards for teaching use. On 3 April he had conducted 1,000 Sunday School children singing "My Country Tis of Thee," and served as Master of Ceremonies at a musical contest in the Tabernacle. The most important award was for choir rendition of "Comrades In Arms"—a \$250 prize presented to the Salt Lake choir directed by Prof. C.J. Thomas. Stephens also took time to write a letter of recommendation to the Board of Education for Anton Petersen to serve as an instructor of music. [He was not hired]

An article in the **Deseret News** of 2 January 1892 whetted the interest of the musical community by publishing details of all of the vocal music competitions in Chicago and quoted Stephens as saying he was considering entering the contest for a cantata.

GRAND

Choir Festival

IN THE
LARGE TABERNACLE,
Monday Evening, April 4th, 1892

Chorus, 600 Voices. Orchestra, 32 Pieces.

VOCAL SOLOISTS:
Agnes Olsen Thomas, Bessie Dean Allison, Lonie Poulton,
Little Ethel Conely, R. C. Easton, Geo. D. Pyper, H. S. Goddard,
Moroni Thomas, and the Harmony Glee Club.

INSTRUMENTAL SOLOISTS:
W. E. Weibe, Violin, Madam Gaylord Bell, Harp,
Prof. and Mrs. Harman, Zither.

EVAN STEPHENS, Musical Director,
Jos. J. Dwyer, Accompanist, Anton Pedersen, Orchestral Conductor.

Gates open at 7 p. m. Performance begins at 8 o'clock.
Admission, 50c. Children in Arms, \$5.00.
This Festival is in aid of the Ward and Tabernacle Choir of this city,
and all who appreciate their labors will purchase tickets.
Purchase your tickets in advance at Coalter & Snelgrove Co., 74 Main St.

COALTER & SNELGROVE CO.,
THE SALT LAKE MUSIC DEALERS. General Western Agents for ESTEY ORGANS, 250,000 in use.

Weber Pianos,
Pure, Rich and Sympathetic
tone, with greatest power.
Mandolins, Banjos, Flutes, Etc. Etc.

We offer the best prices
and terms of any music
house in Utah.

Cualter & Snelgrove Co.



Estey Pianos,
with new repeating action,
furnished in Rosewood, Oak,
Ebony, Walnut, Mahogany,
Bitternut, etc.

Guitars, Violins and Bases.

74 Main Street.

Program for Stephens's
"Grand Union of Choirs Festival"
in the Salt Lake Tabernacle
4 April 1892
for financial benefit of
Ward and Tabernacle Choirs.

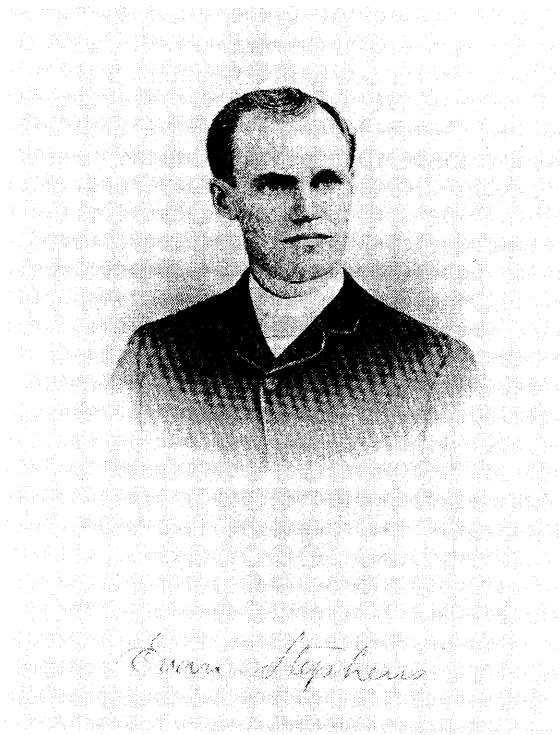
A long dissertation on "Music in the Sunday Schools" was written by Stephens for the September 1892 conference, but likely as a result of his illness, the talk was read by Supt. Griggs.¹³ Professor Stephens composed the anthem, "Prayer," which was sung by the Tabernacle Choir at a funeral for the son of Pres. George Q. Cannon on 14 November. He also directed the combined chorus composed of the Tabernacle Choir, Salt Lake Choral Society and Utah County Choral Union, totalling a thousand voices, at the Columbian Concert featuring an address by Chief Justice Zane on 21 October 1892.¹⁴

For the Temple capstone laying, Evan composed a duet, "Grant Us Peace, O Lord" in 1892; and the famed anthem, "Hosanna" in which the audience of thousands sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning" along with the choir singing the first composition. The Professor conducted music at sixteen sessions of the dedication service in April 1893.

In the midst of the many musical events plans were still proceeding slowly for the Chicago trip. Stephens wrote that the church was feeling the effects of hard financial times, and that the wisdom of the heavy expense was doubted by many people.

Because of the previous independence of the Mormon economy, the Saints had been much less affected by the national panics of 1857 and 1873, although the gentile economy of Utah had suffered during the latter depression. By contrast, the total economy of Utah and the Mormon Church itself reeled under the impact of the depression of the 1890's. Production declined, businesses and mines failed, cash became scarce, and unemployment soared.¹⁵

The church took specific and drastic measures during this period to establish some new businesses, discourage emigration, and embark on a program of deficit spending. Only after Lorenzo Snow became president in 1898 did the church start to reverse the trend by stimulating tithing collection and applying profits from church investments to debt reduction.



Evan Stephens about age 34.
Etching made about 1888.

Photo courtesy Archives,
Harold B. Lee Library
Brigham Young University



Below: Admission
ticket for
Salt Lake Temple
Dedication
April 6, 1893

Stephens said about the proposed excursion:

Finally I was sent for, and consulted, as to the idea of asking the singers to individually put into a fund three or five dollars monthly to help pay their own way [to the World's Fair in Chicago]. This I declined to do, explaining that many of my best singers were poor, hard working people, some of them women whose meager earnings made it impossible to set aside anything in addition to what might be needed for clothing and other expenses.

A decision in the matter was delayed for another year, and the suspense was hurting morale in the choir. Finally the Authorities said to cancel the trip. However, Stephens challenged his choir to learn the contest numbers and he felt they mastered the most difficult one well. But then the eastern choirs succeeded in having that selection changed, and so Stephens's work on it was for nought, and he was content to work on the Temple dedication music early in 1893. The burden on the choir members that summer was heavy. T.C. Griggs wrote on 9 July, "Have a great many rehearsals to attend. Stephens is working hard but intelligently, industriously, interestingly & successfully."

Somewhat annoyed at the situation, Evan asked for a leave of absence to visit the Chicago exposition and then sail for Wales. He had been to Idaho to bid farewell to his family there, and upon returning to the city, found the singers in a state of great excitement. A committee of three had been sent by the Chicago contest officials to induce the church to send its choir. They attended the Sunday meeting in the Tabernacle and were impressed with what they heard. A meeting was held at the church offices that afternoon to decide whether the previous decision would be changed. Stephens wrote later:

I remember well President George Q. Canon, putting first to the strangers, then to me, the specific question, 'Do you think our choir has a fair chance to win?'

Their answer was to the effect that while they could make no promises, their impression was that if the choir could sing at the competition as they had done at the Tabernacle no doubt we would stand an excellent show to win.

When I was turned to for my answer I said, 'No, not under present conditions. The time for preparation is now too short. The other choirs are already well up in and rendering all the pieces, while we have only the hot summer to prepare in. I do not think we can win the contest, but we can make a fine impression in general, especially at the concerts which we can give in the various cities on the way. . . .

In spite of the difficulties mentioned by Stephens, there was an optimism and a hope that the way would be opened through the sacrifices of the leader and singers and that great honor and credit might accrue to the church. The First Presidency gave the go-ahead.¹⁶

Evan Stephens had copies of one of the contest selections and telegraphed for the others. The choir began learning and practicing each separate part at once. Their conductor said his work was continuous, every day and evening, and at the end of two weeks he had no voice left.¹⁷

Today when global tours of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir are commonplace, envisioning the excitement that accompanied the preparations for the choir's tour to the World's fair in 1893 requires the reader to imagine himself in the position of a choir member of that era. More than likely the singer had no training beyond Stephens's children's or adult class; he or she probably had not traveled outside of Utah; and a long train trip to the midwest promised to be the adventure of a lifetime. Securing a proper wardrobe for the big city would have been a challenge for many. And the leaving of children and spouses plus the daily grind of farm life might have posed many problems. No doubt the city here was a "beehive" of activity.

A committee consisting of W.B. Preston, John T. Caine, H.B. Clawson, H.G. Whitney, C.S. Burton, W.C. Spencer and James Jack was appointed in June to coordinate rail transportation and fund raising.

Though finances were a problem, committee members felt it was not insurmountable. Some businesses had promised contributions. The railroads agreed to a special rate. The choir members assented to selection of 250 of the best members who would serve without salary if their expenses were paid. And the choir expected to raise a considerable sum from concerts enroute where admission would be charged. All concerned voted to accept the conditions.¹⁸

An estimated \$25,000 was budgeted for the trip. Choir members had raised \$700 at one meeting. Two concerts were to be given before departure, one at Saltair and one on Sunday evening with 50¢ admission. Ministers of the city churches were asked to dismiss their services in time to permit attendance at the Tabernacle by their congregations. A contract with the railroads was concluded 18 August, providing for a special train with first class Pullman sleepers.

The **Deseret News** ran a story on 2 August with the headline: "Six Thousand Children to Drill with the Juvenile Choir for the Saltair Concerts." "Of all the grand spectacles which Professor Stephens has planned, the one that will be given by the Juvenile Choir at Saltair next Monday will be the most grand, for it will bring together 6,000 children in grand parade concert work. Nowhere in this region than in the big Saltair pavilion would it be possible to bring together such an array of young choristers and it will be a sight worth seeing." The article then invited all children in the Salt Lake area to meet at the Tabernacle grounds to drill in grand parade and National Anthems, free of charge, with the Saltair Band.

Evan Stephens and assistant conductor Horace S. Ensign had arranged to travel to Chicago to check on conditions at the hall. Stephens reported:

Upon our journey to Chicago, we narrowly escaped death in a railroad wreck. While rushing

along at full speed through some portion of Iowa, our train ran into a stray flat car that had rolled out from a side track. Our engine went headlong into a ditch, killing the fireman. The first four or five cars landed in as many directions, one directly across the track. . . . The sleeper we were in held to the rail, and the shock merely aroused us to our danger.

At Festival Hall in Chicago Stephens determined that the platform intended for the choirs would be separated from the conductor and the accompanying pianos by about thirty feet, making intimate control of the singers difficult. The Professor suggested that the choirs occupy the lower platform, but the management insisted the eighty-piece orchestra needed the space. Stephens then pointed out that 250 singers standing close together would take up no more space than the orchestra, and he won his point.

After returning from Chicago Stephens discussed the agenda with his choir members at rehearsal on 18 August. Of the meeting, Thomas Griggs wrote: "The question of the Tabernacle Choir's going to Chicago has been one of doubt owing to the hard times, but the foregoing [article in the *Deseret News*] is quite assuring. At the practice tonight Bro. E. Stephens spoke very wisely and sensibly of the proposed trip. We should be careful of our conduct and creditably represent Utah & etc."

In Zion, the finance committee failed to bring in more than \$400 from subscriptions by businessmen. The choir had to solve its own problems, first with \$1000 from a children's concert to carry the expenses of sending soloists to the exposition for Utah day. The two local concerts raised \$6000, half of the total expense of transportation, before the choir boarded their train on 29 August. The party included 250 choir members and 150 friends and family members including the First Presidency of the Church, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith.

That day the *Deseret News* ran the names of the 418 persons including 99 friends who were making the trip. The railroad had

placed the private car, "Pickwick" at the disposal of the First Presidency. With eight Pullmans, a day coach and baggage car, the train totalled eleven cars.

The Pickwick was described as being of walnut and mahogany finish of rarest workmanship, with an observation room in the rear, a large parlor in the center, bay windows, dining room and kitchen with six upper berths and a full section of upper and lower births, bathroom facilities with hot and cold water. The Pullman cars were the largest ever used west of the Rockies, some completely new.¹⁹

The first concert was at Trinity Church in Denver, where 500 people were turned away from the packed house. The *Denver Republican* heralded the concert: "Never was the attractive power of song more strikingly illustrated than in the concert given by the celebrated Mormon Tabernacle Choir at the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church last night. . . ."

In Independence, Missouri the First Presidency and other dignitaries visited the temple lot; and the choir sang in the Josephite Church in the afternoon and evening. A very successful concert in St. Louis before an audience of over 3500 people grossed \$2,150 of which the choir received \$1,500. The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* commented:

There was what is often lacking in concerts of professional people, a spirit of enthusiasm among the singers . . . But where to the skill of the professional is added the enthusiasm of the amateur, the result is perfection. Such a result, comparatively speaking, was the musical work of the Mormon choir.

There was a lack of conventionality in the concert that both surprised and pleased the hearers. The leader read the program in an old-fashioned style that both interested and amused the people; he pulled the conductor's stand from the platform with an energy that showed he was accustomed to wait on himself; he forgot to bow on entering and

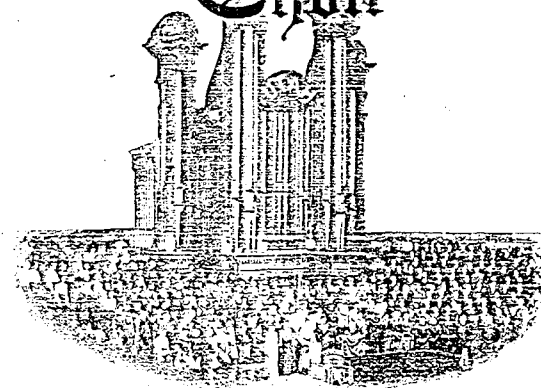
on leaving, and generally exhibited unfamiliarity with the tricks of a professional conductor. But so far from being offended, the change was evidently agreeable to the audience, and they applauded his old-time ways . . .

A dispatch to the **Deseret News** from Chicago announced the arrival of the choir on Sunday morning, having left St. Louis immediately after the concert. "The success there was astonishing and almost bewildered the choir. The reception at the Merchants' Exchange and the praise uttered there for the singing gave enormous impetus to the box office. . . . The chorus was applauded when it came on stage, applauded when it rose to sing, and applauded thunderously after the opening number. . . . Mr. Stephens had been asked to lead the Halleluiah chorus by all the combined choirs. He was also specially invited to furnish the music for the dedication of the Liberty Bell on Saturday, immediately after the celebration of Utah day."²⁰

Stephens indicated that the choir arrived in Chicago quite weary, with some complaining of throat problems as a result of change of climate, sight-seeing and the doubtful quality of food and accommodations near the crowded fairgrounds. He assumed his rivals were similarly handicapped.

When the eventful main contest day arrived we modestly had many doubts, but also a firm resolution to do our best. As we gathered in the basement under the great organ at Festival Hall, in drawing for places, our turn came second, being preceded by a choir from Scranton, Pennsylvania. We were to be followed by a rival choir from the same city, mostly Welsh, and the second reinforced by pre-winning choruses from old Wales itself. At my request, my singers remained in the basement . . . and when left to themselves . . . we quietly grouped together, and joined our hearts humbly in prayer.

Extraordinary and Unique Musical Event
Tour of the Celebrated
Mormon Tabernacle
Choir



The Largest and Most Celebrated
Regular Church Choir in the World
200 Voices Selected for this Tour

Conductor Evan Stephens Organist John J. McClellan
Management Geo. D. Pyper.

Will Appear at the
ORCHESTRA HALL, Chicago, Thurs. Eve., Oct. 26. ONE NIGHT ONLY

Advertisement from the choir's
1893 World's Fair tour to Chicago, Ill.

Our turn having arrived . . . I led, and took my place on the conductor's stand, and was followed by my singers, the ladies dressed in pure white, and the gentlemen in plain black. As we appeared and charmed the great throng with our modest, clean, orderly sight, a great wave of applause greeted us from every part of the house, and surely no one could feel the least sign of enmity from either audience or rival singers, two thousand or so of whom crowded the singers' gallery above us, while possibly about eight thousand people sat and stood below us.

Our first chorus, 'Worthy is the Lamb,' went splendidly, and we received a real ovation at its close. Our second, 'Blessed are the Men Who Hear Him,' went evenly and fair, but requiring a softer tone quality, the hoarseness of some of the singers made it more difficult to control, and render the more tender passages just as we should have done. Our third piece went very well indeed, so far as the tremendous rushes . . . but the silence of devastation, represented by eight pages of extremely soft singing threw us off key a little at the very ending, which meant a full point against us.

And the guesses and 'bets' were generally in our favor as winners. However the three adjudicators gave our singing the second prize, awarding the first to the second Scranton Choir, whose conductor, Professor Hayden Evans, and myself were each awarded the Conductor's Gold Medal, a fifty-dollar gold piece which had on one side a bust of Christopher Columbus surrounded with the words: **1492, Christopher Columbus 1892-93**. While on the reverse side in the Welsh language was . . . **World's Fair Competition, Chicago; The Truth Against the World**. 'Evan Stephens, 1893.'²¹

On the way home the choir was scheduled to give a concert in Omaha, Nebraska. Through a misunderstanding by the Rock Island Railroad officials, the choir's train was delayed and they did not reach that city until 9:30 o'clock. Their audience at the opera house waited for them to appear at ten o'clock, and they were generously applauded.²² Stephens was presented with a floral harp ordered by James Dwyer of Salt Lake, after which the group enjoyed a midnight supper. They left for Denver at 1:00 a.m. where the train divided into two parts, meeting again in Salt Lake City.

After the decision in Chicago, considerable comment appeared in the local press by various individuals who claimed that the adjudicators' decision was unjust. The winning Scranton choir had recruited Welsh singers from other choirs both in the United States and in Wales, just for the competition. Many claimed this was unfair. But Stephens felt the comments were unwarranted. In a very positive letter to the editor, published in the Deseret News on 25 September, he said:

It is my duty to correct through the press an error in which, however innocently, many of our friends have fallen, because it is nevertheless a gross injustice to a committee and a nation, both of whom are above reproach and deserving of our highest gratitude rather than suspicion. I have reference to the idea and sentiment going around that the Tabernacle Choir did not get its full award of merit, because they were not Welsh. That the adjudicators were either Welsh or in sympathy with the Welsh and naturally joined them are misunderstandings that have led to this error.

The three men chosen to be adjudicators for the contest in which we took part were selected with the greatest care and accepted by each of the choir leaders long before the contest took place, as men the most free from prejudice, and able to take upon themselves the entire responsibility of decid-

ing upon the merits of each choir and rendering a just verdict. . . .

Professor Stephens felt that while they were given only the second cash prize of \$1,000, they received most of the glory of the first, and the event placed them in the ranks of the world's great choirs.

Later Stephens said, "It was the **first** and in some respects the most important of seven different touring musical excursions to the outside world which it was my good fortune to lead my good singers forth in, and return blessed with safety and success."

Press comments for the entire tour were uniformly excellent, with two of the most critical papers, the St. Louis **Globe-Democrat** and Chicago **Inter-Ocean** giving the heartiest words of commendation. The only major negative occurrence came in the form of a tirade by the president of the Independence, Missouri branch of the Josephite church. In the Sunday evening meeting in the same building where the choir had performed, he launched a violent attack on polygamy. In a letter to the **Deseret News** of 4 September, an observer in Independence said Robinson's remarks were "neither eloquent, logical, nor truthful."²³

After the choir's return, a group of 42 community and business leaders wrote to Stephens and the other members of the Tabernacle Choir committee, suggesting a benefit concert to help raise funds to pay off the indebtedness from the tour.²⁴ The Tabernacle was secured for the event, and the choir and soloists with the exception of Bessie Dean Allison all appeared in their tour costumes and badges, with remarks by the Governor and Mayor and Evan Stephens.

In an earlier interview before the benefit Evan Stephens commented very candidly about the whole experience. He felt the trip was glorious for all, yet filled with labor and anxiety for him personally. He complimented their never-tiring business manager, H.G. Whitney; he gave a glowing report on the concert in Denver, saying: "It almost made us feel that were were ill-treated at home, as we thought of the many vacant seats at our Tabernacle, and recalled the annoyance of people leaving the building while we

rendered the closing choruses (a detestable practice peculiar to Tabernacle audiences)." He spoke in glowing terms of the choir's reception in St. Louis with an audience of nearly 4,000 people, and their complementary ride in a steamboat on the Mississippi.

Stephens commented on the errors in shading, enunciation and timing by the winning choir which were noted by the judges, in comparison with none of the Tabernacle Choir's faults being specified. "Every word of the verdict as rendered by Dr. Gower they could not help but construe in our favor and against our competitors, until the final sentence which was rendered hastily and nervously without comment or reason: 'We award the first prize to No. 3 [Scranton] and the second to No. 2 [Salt Lake].'

"I am, notwithstanding this unaccountable decision of the judges . . . entirely satisfied with our work as a whole. I never expected even a second prize. I have learned but one thing of my choir. They can do themselves justice under fire, and I am proud of them. We are pushing upward and onward, and we are ever now a credit to any community. We realize how much higher it is possible to attain, and when we have singing like the South Wales male chorus gave us, we realize it is even possible to attain an ideal height."²⁵

The tour business manager, H.G. Whitney, made some additional observations. He expected that the \$5,000 prize would be divided between the Salt Lake and Scranton choirs, and was disappointed in the judges's decision. Whitney said he had talked to the chairman and secretary of the competition about the padding of the Scranton choir with singers from Wales, but was informed it was perfectly allowable. "We thought it better to smother our feelings rather than risk inciting a prejudice by protesting and giving the idea that we were afraid."

The business manager concluded that the Tabernacle Choir had won a moral victory because the competition had to "combine forces from all over the world to beat the Utah folks." Financially there was a disbursement of about \$22,000 for fares, meals, hotels. Gross receipts from concerts in Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and Omaha were \$5,200. By singing in Kansas City and Chicago at free concerts they sacrificed another \$1,000. The prize

money was \$1,000 plus a small profit on the sale of a number of excursion tickets. With the funds the choir had built up from concerts and excursions there was only a small deficiency, which was made up from the benefit concert.²⁶

After the furor died down concerning the World's Fair competition, Stephens announced a major series of training classes for present and future choir members, consisting of three divisions plus a reorganization of the juvenile choir. The first was a ladies' chorus, to make a study of the music of the masters for ladies' voices, and to be open to those most advanced musically and possessed of good voices.

Next was a male chorus taken from the tenors and basses. Both choruses would work in conjunction, aiming at more advanced work in shading, voice culture, dramatic expression, and a study of the characteristic music of the great masters. Stephens planned a series of "nights with the great composers," the main feature of the season's work. Less advanced members would have a preparatory class "no less interesting than the others, but to be in the form of a mixed chorus." This class would study mainly operatic choruses. New prospective members of the Choir could join by paying an entrance fee of one dollar, Classes would bring free to choir members.

Reorganization of the juvenile choir was to take place at the Assembly Hall the next afternoon. Former members could enroll by attending. New members would be charged a fee of 50 cents.²⁷

Certainly an understanding of Evan Stephens's prodigious output of compositions and his equally impressive record of Tabernacle Choir concerts and tours in the years 1890 to 1916 is essential to knowing him as the giant in Mormon musical history that he was. But another side of his accomplishments is revealed in his organization of classes, contests and festivals for the Deseret Sunday Union and Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations as well as the Relief Society and Primary auxiliaries and his extensive travels in Europe.

Some of these events took place concurrently with the Choir tour organization and preparation, such as the contests in the years 1891 through 1894. The rapidity with which the Professor moved

from one event to the next in a matter of short weeks is amazing. A detailed discussion of these will be found in chapter 8. However the most important occupation in these peak years of his career continued to be the seven Tabernacle Choir tours, which served to bring to the church a growing prestige and certainly a lessening of the adverse comments stemming from the practice of polygamy before the Manifesto in 1889. The Choir had become the church's foremost public relations representative to the world.

Chapter 7

The Choir Travels

At the closing exercises of the L.D.S. College on 5 June 1895, the honorary degree, Bachelor of Didactics in the Art and Science of Music, was conferred upon Evan Stephens by Dr. James E. Talmadge, former principal of the college and member of the Church Board of Education. In that era, this was a great honor for the Professor and a recognition of his unselfish service to musical development in the church and state. ¹

Not content to rest on the recognition earned in Chicago, Stephens had continued with his usual frenetic activity. Early in 1894 he had proceeded to disband his juvenile choir, which caused some repercussions in the community. He published a detailed statement outlining his reasons, in which he said he had organized the juvenile program with the general encouragement of the Church Authorities, but not by specific request. It was intended as a training ground for the Tabernacle Choir and purposely kept within the financial range of all parents with musically-talented children.

In assuming charge of the Choir, he had given up the training classes from which he had earned a livelihood, with the understanding that classes would be organized within the choir and supported by funds raised by that organization. Three years previously a class had been started with two hundred members

and had grown to one thousand. A concert had raised over a thousand dollars which, of necessity, was devoted to expenses of the Chicago tour in 1893, rather than to the classes.

Stephens indicated that his reason for disbanding the Juvenile Choir was apparent apathy on the part of parents.

They have seemed to conclude it to be an affair almost entirely between the children and the teachers rather than their own. If the little ones wished to go, all well and good. If not, it made no difference. That and the request that touches the purse seems to be about all that impresses them . . . We have called once for fifty cents assessments, with which nearly half the number then in attendance replied. Why did we not expel the rest? We did suggest it, but not wishing to make any payment obligatory we hadn't the heart to do it.

Stephens pointed out that their request for each pupil to sell one 25¢ ticket to each of the two concerts brought in only \$180 out of the \$600 needed. He denigrated the popular conception that the classes were a money-making project for him. He said that the first concert brought in some nine hundred paid admissions, contrary to press reports of an audience of 2,000. Expenses included \$80 for prizes to the juvenile contestants, \$45 for advertising, \$60 for other expenses leaving, after the second concert's losses, about \$80 for two music teachers to share for six month's teaching of from 800 to 1200 students including up to five rehearsals each week. He said that he took on the work of his own choice and was leaving it of his own choice. "The whole matter summed up is that to make a juvenile choir a success the support, financially and otherwise of the parents must be had. For we can neither afford to give of the entertainments necessary to keep their ambition alive at our own risk, nor wear out our health, strength and existence to get results from children that their own parents will not take the trouble to be present to enjoy when such results are publicly exhibited."²

Another grand concert with a 450 voice chorus and the famed Sousa Band was presented on 1 May with disappointing patronage of only 1,600 people. The receipts were \$1,134 out of which the choir would keep a small sum for its depleted treasury. Hard times in the community plus a squally night were partly to blame for the poor turnout, but as the reviewer stated, "This city has grown so accustomed to entertainments on the mammoth order, that it now takes something far beyond the ordinary to attract attention . . . Our singers themselves have never before attained such a pitch of excellence . . . they sang last night as they never sang before." The great organ was not heard inasmuch as the damp weather caused the pitch to go up while Sousa's was half a tone lower. But the band requested that Joseph J. Daynes play a solo, which he did to warm applause.³

After the Sousa concert the choir waited only five days before giving another benefit concert in the Salt Lake Theatre to aid the Pioneer Library. The program featured an address by James E. Talmadge on Pompeii and the choir's singing Stephens's "Hail Bright Abode."

On several occasions in the spring of 1894 Thomas Griggs wrote in his diary of Stephens's lecturing the choir on various topics relating to their deportment and indicating some growing impatience. The practice of choir members bringing their friends into the choir seats was not to be tolerated, nor leaving early from rehearsals. The conductor was also concerned with the indifferent support by the public in both interest and financial patronage.⁴

In a talk given at the 3 September 1894 conference of Salt Lake Stake, Stephens presented a rosier picture of the Tabernacle Choir, saying that some seven hundred members had been enrolled in the choir in the past four years, of whom five hundred were still active. Attendance at rehearsals averaged three hundred, which he said was a remarkably good showing. The expenses of the choir were being met by voluntary contributions and proceeds from concerts.

Referring to the World's Fair trip, he said that rather than jealousies being caused by selection of a limited number of singers, the choir's unity had increased, and their work had improved. The anniversary of the contest was to be celebrated at Saltair on 7 September.


FIRST GRAND
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
 Tabernacle Choir Winning the Prize at the World's Fair.
SALT AIR
 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th, 1894.
Two Grand Concerts and Ball.
 COMPLETE CHOIR, (500 Voices.)
 WORLD'S FAIR CHORUS, (250 Voices.)
 MALE CHORUS, (60 Voices.)
 CHRISTENSON BROS. ORCHESTRA & PIANO.
SOLOISTS
 NELLIE DRUCE PUGSLEY. AGNES OLSEN THOMAS.
 R. C. EASTON. G. D. PYPER.
In + Favorite + Selections.
 EVERYBODY INVITED. NO EXTRA CHARGE. CONCERTS
 3:30 AND 7:30.

 JAMES A. VOLING, Job Printers, 49 & 51 Corn. St.

Program for the First Anniversary Concert of the World's Fair Chorus at Saltair, 7 September 1894.

On 25 October, Stephens told the choir that he might not be conductor much longer. He said he had devoted his services largely to the benefit of the choir at a pecuniary loss to himself. On 22 November he talked with Griggs about the necessity of doing something for the cause of music and suggested that a large class of young people again be formed. But when he went to the Assembly Hall to rehearse a children's chorus for the Sunday School conference, he found so few there he dismissed them. Finally, in early January 1895 he told the choir he felt they were "non-progressive and decaying and unless they are more individually interested he will quit."⁵

On 24 January 1895 one of Evan Stephens's major goals for the choir was achieved during the visit of President Joseph F. Smith, President A.M. Cannon and Bishop W.B. Preston to the choir rehearsal attended by an unusually large number of singers. Thomas Griggs summarized the meeting in his journal:

Pres. Smith announced that [we] should regard our musical labors in the choir as a mission; the choir had [been] and were doing much to remove the prejudices that have existed against us, and the First Presidency were expecting that the whole of Bro. Stephens's time would be employed in advancing the musical attendance of the choir and community. By this meeting music has received a recognition from the authorities not heretofore accorded it.

Abraham Cannon noted in his journal of this date that: "It was decided to increase the salary of Evan Stephens from one to two thousand dollars per year and then engage all his time in the service of our Tabernacle Choir. It was also decided to give him all possible help in his efforts to bring the choir to a high state of perfection."

Stephens enlarged on this in addressing a Salt Lake Stake Conference in March. He said that the action had been taken to avoid a clash between the ward duties and the musical duties by

choir members, calling them to a mission in the work of the choir. Rehearsal nights were set for Mondays and Thursdays, with special rehearsals other evenings.⁶

Before the General Authorities' action, Stephens had threatened to resign his post, faced with many singers missing rehearsals in favor of Ward obligations. Now, the **Deseret News** commented, "Musical people in Salt Lake almost feel like taking a long breath of relief to know that the danger of Mr. Stephens resigning the leadership of the Tabernacle Choir is past."⁷

Later that month an announcement was made of a choir concert 6 April presenting Maude May Babcock, a pioneer professor of theatre at the University of Utah, in some readings along with Stephens's new "Springtime."⁸

A 30 March concert was to include an organ solo composed by Stephens entitled "Return of the Victors," the first mention of his composing for the organ. This was to be played by Joseph J. Daynes at a benefit concert, half the proceeds of which were to inure to the choir's music fund and the balance to the Wyoming Coal Mine sufferers.⁹

On 20 April Stephens left for the West Coast for some rest and recreation, missing the opportunity of serving as a judge at an Eisteddfod in Pennsylvania. Joseph J. Daynes conducted the choir in his absence.

A dramatic announcement was made 1 June 1895 of an Eisteddfod, a Welsh musical festival, to be held in Salt Lake City under auspices of the Tabernacle Choir in October. Prizes were to be awarded in twenty-one categories including grand chorus, military band, vocal and instrumental solos, poetry, prose, recitation, and compositions. Prizes would total up to \$2,000, and arrangements were being made to secure the participation of prominent Welsh artists from many states. Evan Stephens and a committee of eight other Welsh musicians and political figures were in charge.¹⁰

As produced on 3, 4 and 5 October, the Salt Lake City Eisteddfod ranked next to the Chicago World's Fair competition in size. The grand finale was presented before an estimated 12,000 persons in the Tabernacle. The choir, under the leadership of Evan Stephens,

concluded the program with the "Hallelujah Chorus," as a finishing touch to the "greatest musical event in the history of Utah." Utahns took a majority of prizes, including those for best poem, and best band. The prize for best elocution was divided between two Utah ladies. Utah contestants also received awards for best contralto solo, church choir, ladies' chorus, male quartet, soprano solo, piano solo, male chorus, and libretto suitable for a cantata on "The Utah Pioneers." The latter award was won by Evan Stephens, writing under the pseudonym of **The Author**.

On 10 October at choir rehearsal, "Stephens spoke on the bickerings caused by the Eisteddfod and of the uncharity of the accusations made concerning himself. [He] did not favor these contests. Set up an ideal and let all try to attain it..."¹¹

Just before the end of 1895 Stephens and a companion entrained for San Francisco to make arrangements for the choir's next concert excursion to California. The plan evolved into giving five concerts in San Francisco, one in Oakland, one in San Jose and one in Sacramento in the month of April. Stephens wrote to the **Deseret News** indicating that they were very cordially received and offered generous assistance in locating facilities for the performances as well as hotels. He invited all the singers in the city to come to the first rehearsal for the choir.

In reporting on the highly successful excursion, commencing 14 April 1896 in Oakland, California the Professor listed pleasure as the most important factor in promoting the tour:

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, has been a full reward to me for the financial risk so narrowly run and the extra work of training for nearly a year. . . .

The second morning found their train in a snowstorm in the Sierra Nevada mountains, with many on board feeling squeamish. But the beauties of the western slope "kept the crowd in each of the seven 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."

They presented a concert in Oakland, after which some crossed the bay to San Francisco and the rest slept in their Pullmans and were ferried across Wednesday morning. Sight-seeing occupied much of their time. The owner of the Sutro Baths broached the possibility of a concert there, and Stephens admitted that the absurd idea held some charm, as he compared the lush setting there with the bleak pier at Saltair. Audiences for their five concerts in San Francisco increased each night, with a packed house on Sunday evening.

Reception in the press was generally good, with some criticism of the soloists. In his report to the *News*, Stephens was more frank than he had ever been. He said the choir was ranked "at once in a higher sphere than we lay any claim to. The entire choir are amateur; but the West has unanimously placed them well in the ranks of professionals and demanded the solo work to be criticized from the same standard. . . I humbly dissent from all of this, however, and believe I know where we stand better than they."

Their program was criticized as not being sufficiently classical. Stephens said that on a pleasure trip they sought to give pleasure in return, and included his duet and lullaby along with "Annie Laurie" and "Robin Adair" on a popular program because the public preferred them.

However, the authoritative *San Francisco Music and Drama* review was ecstatic: "It is impossible to describe the precision of attack—the general fidelity to key or the noble manner in which the singers responded to the slightest movement of the leader, who plays upon them as if they were mechanical.

"The concerts must be heard by chorus singers themselves to be fully appreciated for certainly nothing approaching the perfec-

tion in choral work exhibited by the Tabernacle Choir has been heard on this coast before."

In San Jose, the Metropolitan Hall turned out to be a "barn" with gales blowing across the stage. A Mormon meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, to which Heber J. Grant, then an apostle, came at his own expense to speak.

A choir member said, "One could see the expression on their faces [the non-members] as we sang and he preached. Surely he was inspired, and we choir members thanked God for him and that we were partakers of that memorable occasion."

On the way back to Utah they presented a concert in Sacramento. The *Sacramento Bee* commented, "The singing of the choir was indeed a revelation to lovers of choral music and an event long to be remembered."¹²

Early in June, Stephens set the choir to work on what T.C. Griggs called the "Carnival Music," which was intended for a concert in the Tabernacle as part of a July 4th celebration. He said there was a big crowd of singers at the June 25 rehearsal, and that he assisted Stephens with the concert program on 2 July. The Carnival was a major celebration involving four parades with floats and a concert on 2 July at which cash prizes were awarded to the three best bands. The carnival queen and her escorts headed a grand procession into the Tabernacle, followed by a chorus of 600 persons bedecked with flowers. Evan Stephens directed the band concert and chorus which accompanied a patriotic tableaux.¹³

After the celebration Stephens and John James left for Denver to make arrangements for the Tabernacle Choir's third out-of-state tour to the three-day Eisteddfod in that city commencing 1 September. The requirement for the choral competition was a choir of no more than 150 voices, and Stephens decided that instead of breaking his 300 voice group into two parts, he would rather schedule them to sing at concerts but not to compete for prizes. Consequently, arrangements were made for the full choir to offer some numbers at each of the six sessions.¹⁴

The Denver Cymrodarics had put \$11,000 into erecting a pavilion seating over 10,000, and were guaranteeing \$5,000 more in prize money. The committee agreed to pay \$500 of the transpor-

tation cost of the choir and the greater cost of entertaining the 300 members. The singers were to pay \$1500 and about the same amount was raised by subscriptions and concerts, the most important of which was a program at Saltair 21 August.

Members of the touring group were to be housed in both hotels and private homes in Denver, as the local people had done for the Colorado singers who participated in the 1895 Eisteddfod in Salt Lake. The Knights of Pythias band, directed by Professor Anton Pedersen, also was going to the Mile High City to compete against the Colorado State Band. The tour to Denver remained in doubt until 22 August, when a sufficient number of tenors and basses had signed up. Many of the choir members found that their employers would not allow them to take the required ten days vacation. One man said, "I tackled my boss (a well known merchant) and he said, 'Yes, a trip to Denver would be very nice, most enjoyable, go by all means, only don't come back.'"

The total number of singers was less than originally planned. A group of 421 left 31 August—the choir, the Knights of Pythias band of 45 men, and friends of both groups. C.R. Savage served as correspondent and reported on the daily activities. His description of the first day on the train is nostalgic:

We left Ogden at 11:25 a.m. and with three engines we went with rapid strides up Echo Canyon, reaching Evanston at 2:15 p.m. Five minute wait at that place; tune by the band in front of the hotel; grand scramble for the lunch counter; two pockets picked—and the scream of the locomotive caused a terrific rush for the cars. This time, no one was left.

The contests in the first afternoon session included those for lady soloists, male quartets, literary compositions, and bands. The Salt Lake band won a \$300 first prize and gold medal. The choir sang the "Soldiers' Chorus" from "Faust" and "Vales of Deseret."

John James, president of the Utah Cambrian Society and a member of the choir reported: "... When Judge Edwards announced

that the great Mormon choir would sing, the house broke loose into the wildest enthusiasm. The modest Stephens responded with bow after bow. . . . They never did better work. The audience arose, and cheer after cheer went up for the singers."¹⁵

Savage wrote of lack of interest among the masses in Eisteddfods, and also commented on the dullness of some of the solo competitions. He said, "I noticed that when the zero mark was reached in dullness, the great Tabernacle choir always came to the rescue. One of the local papers said they sang as no other choir can sing, which is a circlet of honor for them. Many of Professor Stephens's selections had a strong Welsh flavor, but few if any of the grand sacred pieces, the acoustic properties of the huge tent [not favoring] the rendition of the glorious anthems."

The final event of Friday night was a concert. The correspondent wrote, "This will be the last of the literary and musical conventions. It is in every way admirable; its aim is the cultivation of music and poetry, two of the purifying influences to keep mankind elevated in thought and action."

On the return trip the choir requested a stop at Glenwood Springs, presumably for bathing in the hot pools, which made them too late to sing at the Tabernacle services that afternoon.¹⁶

Whitney issued a report on the financial aspects of the tour. He said the fund started with the \$500 prize won in the Eisteddfod by the younger members of the choir, and was increased with receipts from concerts. It was still more than \$2,000 short of what was needed, but Evan Stephens guaranteed the balance personally. "They took on the excursion 268 adults, 8 children and Charley Johnson; made up the \$2,000 deficiency and came out with a small balance. . . ."¹⁷

In between excursions the choir remained busy singing at special events, giving concerts, and furnishing music for the regular Sunday services in the Tabernacle. A highlight of the season was the appearance of Mme. Nordica and three other soloists from the east with the choir on 29 January 1897. As the **Deseret News** reported,

When Mme. Nordica reached the platform the

long pent up enthusiasm of the great audience burst forth in tumultuous applause . . . When she sounded the first note of the Hungarian aria a great hush fell upon the people and not a sound was heard until the last note—which was high C with echoing trills—was sounded in their ears and they realized they had listened to one of the greatest renditions of which the human voice is capable . . .

On 1 July 1897 at the laying of the foundation stone for the Brigham Young monument, a group of singers from the choir sang “Ode to Brigham Young” and “America” with band accompaniment, before a crowd of 6,000 onlookers.

On 12 July at choir rehearsal, Stephens took the community to task, as T.C. Griggs recorded in his diary:

To Tabernacle choir practice. Straight talk from Stephens—we are wanting in interest in our own historical affairs! Special music and words composed for our Jubilee but who are learning or singing them? Do not have home singing enough of such and other home patriotic pieces. What are the young folks doing?

This is another manifestation of Stephens’s growing dissatisfaction with the condition of musical affairs in the church and community.

On 15 July the full choir entertained delegates to the Trans-Mississippi Congress on Public Lands with vocal and instrumental music in the Tabernacle. This was the choir’s rehearsal night, so the concert didn’t begin until 9:30 pm. When William Jennings Bryan and his wife arrived, the audience arose to welcome them with applause and waving of handkerchiefs. After an introduction in the audience to Bryan, Professor Stephens invited him to the choir stand where the visitor seized his baton and began beating time, to the amusement of the choir and spectators. Bryan then faced the choir and addressed them, paying no attention to calls

from the audience for a speech. He requested the choir sing “Utah We Love Thee” then handed back the baton and stood among the singers.

Stephens announced that the choir would sing his prize composition, “Pioneer Ode,” and noticing the author of the words, O.F. Whitney, in the audience, at the suggestion of a choir member, W.D. Bowring, the conductor had Whitney read his poem, followed by the chorus.¹⁸

Willam Jennings Bryan, who had campaigned for the presidency in 1896 but lost to William McKinley, nevertheless won a great victory in Utah with more than eighty percent of the popular vote. He was popular in the West because of his continuing campaign for free coinage of silver. He had been invited to address the Trans-Mississippi Congress convention and also spoke at the July celebration.

On 20 July as part of the Semi-Centennial celebration the choir sang the “Ode to Brigham” from the portico of the Hall of Records when the statue was unveiled. They sang again in the afternoon at the Tabernacle. Bryan delivered an oration in Calder Park. In the evening the choir sang before a packed Tabernacle audience, which joined in the National Anthem with the organ and Knights of Pythias Band. As a finale, a chorus of 1,000 voices joined the choir in Stephens’s “Pioneer Ode.” The Tabernacle was elaborately decorated for the occasion and a queen, Miss Emma Lunt (secretly chosen) with her attendants was honored.

A major feature of the 50 Year Jubilee was an electrical parade, the first of its kind in the West, and probably viewed by a hundred thousand people. Some floats had moving figures, such as the jaws of a crocodile in the act of swallowing a fisherman. Other floats were as fanciful, but some captured prominent features of Utah such as salt crystals in decorative displays.¹⁹

In December 1897 a delegation of sisters requested permission from the First Presidency of the church to use the Tabernacle in March for a testimonial of appreciation to Evan Stephens. They planned to charge 50¢ admission but the Authorities said that was out of reach for many families and presumably the concert was free of charge. At choir rehearsal on 12 December a letter of

appreciation was read to Stephens and the sponsoring group asked for his permission for the event. Evan suggested 27 February 1898, the seventh anniversary of the first concert given in the Tabernacle under his direction. The program on 28 February included all Stephens's compositions and was heard by an immense audience.²⁰

On 4 January 1898 the **Deseret News** published a letter from Conductor Stephens. Excerpts from the text reflect his dissatisfaction with the choir's discipline:

Tabernacle Choir Members, New Year's Greeting: Fellow Workers in the Divine Art—The new year is here to remind us of the renewal of all things. Many of you through the press of other business and various causes have, for some time past, been lying dormant, and it becomes my duty, as the present gardener in charge, to send you greeting. The time has come when you must awake and again send up sap. Let the buds of attendance break forth to show that there is still life within, and the promise of future bloom and fruit. . . . Failure of either will be taken as an expression of your having no desire to continue as an active member. .

We call to you the bolder that we are not in sore need so far as mere members go, but that we need the united training of the 'noble six hundred' who claim membership to do work worthy of the 'noble six hundred.' Otherwise it would be better far to reduce the army even to one half if need be. . . . There will be a Revival Rehearsal in the Tabernacle at 7:30 Thursday night. . . .

A bulletin from the First Presidency outlining the conditions for the Tabernacle Choir was also published.²¹ Four requirements inherent in the call were described in detail. In essence, the memo stated that members of the choir were acting as missionaries and

needed to give sufficient time to the cause; all other work of a public nature should be secondary to choir requirements; all those called should be faithful in attendance and give hearty and cheerful aid to their conductors; all movements of importance will be sanctioned and encouraged by proper church authorities.

A concert with Stephens and the Tabernacle Choir on 11 August entertained visitors from the International Association of Fire Engineers of the U.S. and Canada. Obviously the L.D.S. Church was happy to have such groups come to Utah to witness the cultural progress of the state.

Another major event was held in the Tabernacle in October 1898—the 3rd Western Eisteddfod. This time the Tabernacle Choir entered the competition and won the chorus contest as well as sang at the opening and closing of most of the sessions. Dr. Joseph Parry of Wales, who had composed a cantata, "The Pioneers of Utah" and inscribed it to Professor Stephens and the choir was the adjudicator.

Previous to the Eisteddfod Stephens had published a letter to choir leaders encouraging them to band together to enter the competition. He said, "It will be a delightful pastime for your singers during the summer months to drive to different points for rehearsals. It will bring singers throughout the Stake together and form many new links of goodwill and friendship."²²

Back in February at a meeting of the First Presidency a letter from one J.S. Leerburger addressed to H.G. Whitney proposed a tour for the Tabernacle Choir as far east as Chicago. Evan Stephens had been shown the letter and suggested that on such an excursion they should go all the way to New York. The decision was made to have him enter into negotiations, provided the church would not have to provide financing. Frank D. Higbee of New York was the promoter backing the scheme.

Stephens called a meeting of members of the World's Fair chorus on 30 June to meet in the choir's Richards Street practice hall and explained that the proposed tour included principal cities of the east and midwest and would last six or eight weeks. If successful, a journey to Europe would be undertaken in 1900. All expenses would be paid, with the choir sharing forty per cent of the

profits. Those at the meeting were unanimous in wanting to go. Higbee addressed the group and was very complimentary about their work.²³

The choir honored their esteemed conductor on his forty-sixth birthday, 28 June 1899, at Saltair. Members of the children's choir and many friends were also invited. In the afternoon the children sang, and in the evening the choir and ladies' chorus provided music. A balloon ascension was also booked for the early evening to take the more adventurous for rides over Great Salt Lake.

In July, on another vacation trip to California, Stephens wrote to the *News*: "I fear I sometimes forget I have a choir, and a heavy load of responsibility awaiting me on my return. But no, I do not forget. I only forget to worry . . . for I seem to fall into thinking that all will be well, and that it may be the crowning event of our career up to this time. I have now reduced my list of 365 singers down to 175 . . . It is sad to leave at home so much good material as I shall have to this time . . ."²⁴

On 1 July Stephens closed a contract with Higbee in which he agreed to furnish the former 150 first class singers including instrumentalists and soloists. The promoter would get sixty percent of the proceeds with the choir the remainder, with all expenses including transportation. An offer of \$12,000 for one week of concerts in New York had been made to Higbee, who refused it on the grounds that he could get more from others.

The proposed tour was to have begun in October, but by 10 November nothing more had been heard from Higbee. "According to Professor Stephens the choir was never producing such effective music as now. Should the entire project fail he says it will still be a better organization than if the proposition had not been considered for the reason that it has been aroused to that point where the highest possible excellence is freely and industriously sought for."²⁵ Higbee sailed for Paris and was never heard from again.

In view of the choir's eastern tour being cancelled, Stephens asked the First Presidency for a leave of absence commencing 5 February until September 1900 to tour Europe. The request was granted and on 2 January the choir, at their rehearsal, voted for T.C. Griggs to conduct during Stephens's absence. Griggs, how-

ever had not returned from his mission and Horace Ensign, the assistant conductor, continued in the post. When Griggs returned, he graciously bowed out and left Ensign in command.

On 10 October 1900, Stephens, through an article in the *Deseret News*, again appealed to the choir members to be more diligent in attending their rehearsals and performances. He said, "Glorious possibilities are ours, musically, and religiously by properly attending to and training for our work in this organization."

For some six months, he had been planning a second tour for the choir to California. Originally he had anticipated performing at paid concerts as a money-raising project. But because so many of the best singers were unable to leave their work, the itinerary was changed and all of the concerts were given without charge. A group of 580, including 140 members of the choir, left via Oregon Shortline rail 14 March 1902. Totalling fifteen cars, the special train was run from Ogden in two sections.

Going through the Sierras the train encountered a blinding snowstorm, with the rocking cars and miles of smoke-filled snowsheds causing large numbers of the passengers to become ill. A wreck of a freight and a work train five miles above Colfax and a wreck of two freights in Nevada caused the train to be more than two hours late. It was scheduled to stop at Sacramento for a half hour and then arrive in Oakland at 3:00 pm., with the group ferrying across the Bay to San Francisco.

Two services were scheduled at Metropolitan Temple on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Some two thousand persons were turned away from the packed facility in the evening. Between numbers by the choir, Dr. James E. Talmage discoursed on the Articles of Faith. A few of the choir members were unable to make their way through the crowd to sing with the choir.

To quote the comments from San Francisco to the *News*: The choir was rapturously encored even though it sang to an organ whose discordant notes and leaky pipes at times sounded like the echo of a feline chorus in the backyard, and which grew worse as the evening progressed. Prof. Stephens wanted to buy a ticket for 'No Man's Land' at once and Prof. McClellan was in sad need of

a doctor when he turned around to face the audience. . . . There is general regret that they should have been hampered by an old and untuned instrument."

One of the crowd-pleasing features of the tour was a solo by eight-year-old Millie Williams, a member of the juvenile choir who sang "The Holy City" in a powerful voice.

Monday was devoted to sight-seeing at the many attractions around the bay, followed by a tour of Chinatown that evening. With friends added to the party, the tour group totalled almost 800, which rather overwhelmed the shopkeepers, who rallied to do a brisk business in souvenirs.

A complimentary ferry tour of the Golden Gate bay (from Southern Pacific Railroad) accompanied by hundreds of music-loving Californians and an orchestra on board occupied the next morning. Then in a heavy rain, 3,000 people came to cheer at a concert at the University of California in Berkeley. Then more sight-seeing down the coast followed by an emotion-packed concert at Stanford University filled Thursday. Friday and Saturday the group toured Pacific Grove and San Jose, leaving Saturday evening for home.

Summing up the tour, Evan Stephens declared that they had sung for 20,000 people and that delightful as their former tours had been, this one surpassed the others. The successes were marred by the death of the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Beesley, who returned to Salt Lake with the casket; and several illnesses, along with news of a fire in his shoe store that sent President Newman, of the board of education, home. Stephens was impressed with the choir's accompaniment on the great organ in the chapel at Stanford, and by orchestras in California. But he concluded that "their standard of choral work is not up to ours."²⁶

Late in October 1902 Stephens again returned to California to make arrangements for a third tour of the Bay Area as a pleasure excursion without the expectation of giving any series of concerts. He returned to Salt Lake 5 November, weary from the long train trip, but enthused by the reception he had received from railroad officials, hotels and even waiters at the restaurants where the choir

members had eaten earlier that year. His companion had been Noel Pratt, who was most enthusiastic about seeing the west coast for the first time.

Eighty members of the choir made the trip. Their leader rented the Alhambra theatre where they gave a sacred concert to an audience of over three hundred Mormon church members and a large crowd of citizens of other faiths. The choir appeared in their traveling clothes at this informal concert. The **San Francisco Call** reported, "It was a graceful tribute to San Francisco when the choir rented the Alhambra and generously threw open the doors to the public that once again the excellent voices might be heard rendering the great choruses and part songs for which the choir has become famous. . . . The religious exercises were conducted by Elder Joseph E. Robinson, who in the course of the evening gave a lucid and interesting explanation of Mormonism."²⁷

For a September choir rehearsal in 1903 Professor Stephens had made a special effort to invite the members to attend, who filled the "seats and aisles in the choir section of the big building in a manner not equalled for some time." The occasion was a farewell for Lizzie Thomas Edward, who was leaving for the east. The conductor presented her with a gold watch in behalf of the choir and surprised everyone with the announcement that cars were waiting at the south gate to convey them to his new home on South State Street. There they found fruit and melons and enjoyed music from a select quartet. They were transported home in the cars, the ladies voting the Professor "one of the loveliest men that ever lived."²⁸

Mme. Nordica paid a return visit to the city in October, 1903 and was featured at a well-patronized concert in the Tabernacle with a chorus of nearly 500 and an orchestra of 55 pieces, conducted by a Mr. Duss. Two other soloists also appeared in Nordica's company, a violinist, Franko, newly appointed conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, and a contralto soloist, Mrs. Fisk. Arthur Shepherd reviewed the program, which he said was somewhat heavy for popular taste in Utah, but nevertheless enthusiastically received. Shepherd was somewhat critical of Conductor Duss, mentioning that he had been denounced as

maintaining his position through high social standing rather than achievement.²⁹

Thomas Griggs, in his diary, wrote of Evan Stephens's high regard for young Shepherd who made his mark in Utah in composition and conducting. Later he moved to New York and left the Mormon Church.

In 1906 the importance of the Tabernacle Choir in the church missionary efforts and public relations was reinforced by a visit of the First Presidency to a rehearsal. The visitors were greeted with a hearty round of applause by the choir as they entered. They then requested the choir continue with their singing, and heard Handel's "Hallelujah", "Gog and Magog," "Peace be Still," and the "Soldiers' Chorus."

President Joseph F. Smith took the conductor's stand, and in a feeling and earnest address told the singers how much their efforts were appreciated; how important their services were to the church; how the fame of the tabernacle choir and organ have spread the world over, and how necessary it was that this good name be preserved and lived up to, that the thousands of strangers who visit us yearly and come with great anticipations be not disappointed, nor think our good reputation not well earned. . . . We realize the sacrifices you make in giving your labors here, and appreciate and commend you for it. . . . President Smith then admonished them that this duty could only be performed through constant punctual, and regular attendance to both rehearsals and meetings . . .³⁰

Apparently Evan Stephens's frequent lectures and comments to choir members and in the press regarding punctual and regular attendance had moved President Smith and his counselors to make another effort similar to that made in 1895 to improve choir morale.

Since the days of the Salt Lake Choral Society Stephens had

recruited and selected choirs of various sizes for the Tabernacle concerts and tours and Annual and Semi-annual Conferences. As the members came into and left the service, his choirs were fluid in membership. But in 1907 he had gathered a chorus of 200 of the best talent in the city for a gala concert with the Chicago Symphony of 50 performers conducted by Alexander von Fielitz, and a roster of soloists. Professors Stephens and J.G. McClellan had been rehearsing the chorus since the first of the year. Manager Graham indicated that the festival would surpass any similar event ever given in the city, and that a growing public interest insured that expenses would be met.³¹

Press reviews of the three performances were detailed but intelligently written—less effervescent than those of earlier years, but revealing the growing maturity of musical appreciation by the city's critics and musicians. The opening lines in the *Deseret News* review are quoted:

Salt Lake is revelling in the luxury of a music festival in all ways worthy of the name. In the old days when the town had half its present population, such events were not uncommon. We used to know what it meant to import singers like Emma Thursby and Myron Whitney to head our solo forces, and great Eisteddfods were worked up which excited the rivalry of the whole west. But the mad business rush and the rage for comic opera, vaudeville and burlesque has of late years turned the public taste in another direction; the present festival, therefore is a welcome and delightful harking back to the grand old standards, to better things in music, which we all hope may not be with us only for a day.

The reviewer went on to congratulate Stephens on the perfection with which the work was rendered considering the chorus had only twelve weeks of rehearsals. Featured number was J. Coleridge Taylor's "The Death of Minnehaha," which the Professor had

heard in London and anxiously waited to perform in Salt Lake City.

On Tuesday evening Handel's "Messiah" was presented, the first performance since George Careless's rendition in 1876. The chorus's "Worthy is The Lamb" received almost as great a reception as the final "Hallelujah." The reviewer stated "It is a matter of pride to say, and to be able to say it with impartiality—that the honors of the evening were carried off again by the chorus."³²

Sousa's band returned in November for two programs in the Tabernacle, which drew small turnouts. Stephens's juvenile chorus of some 300 youngsters was featured at the matinee performance, exhibiting great enthusiasm on "Hail Columbia" and then singing parts of Sousa's encore, "Stars and Stripes Forever," waving their flags with both Sousa's and Stephens's direction.³³

After lengthy negotiation, the Tabernacle Choir and their friends embarked on the sixth tour under Stephens's direction to the Eisteddfod at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. On 21 August 1909, 450 people left in "elegant Pullman sleepers," stopping at LaGrande, Oregon to give a concert.

The first part of the program included compositions by Stephens and Prof. McClellan, ranging from "Hosanna" to "God of Israel." In the second part some master works were sung along with two contest pieces by a ladies' quartet, which some of the audience had heard at the G.A.R. Encampment in Salt Lake City. One reviewer commented, "Stunned—if music and its effects can properly be termed thus—by the greatness of it, more than a thousand attentive listeners last evening at L.D.S. Tabernacle sat spellbound during the wonderful renditions of the organization that is truly what has been said of it."³⁴

A grand reception for the choir was given at Portland, probably with some informal singing by the group. They arrived in Seattle on Sunday, 200 strong plus friends and family members. The choir members were guests at a reception given by Seattle musicians at the Washington State Building on the fairgrounds before the scheduled singing competition.

When the choir came to enter the Exposition Auditorium, they were confronted by the Eisteddfod Association demanding sev-

enty-five cents admission from each person. Stephens refused and the choir did not enter the competition. Apparently, according to Hugh T. Williams, treasurer of the Association, the officers had decided to charge everyone the admission, including all contestants.

The **Seattle Post-Intelligencer** exaggerated the situation, saying that Williams had to order the security guards to disperse the singers gathered on the steps. E.H. Peirce of the Choir Committee disagreed on the facts. He recorded that Williams came down to Stephens and Bishop Smith and said loudly, "You pay or you don't sing. Before he could say more, Bishop Smith said, "All right, we don't sing then." Williams proceeded to voice a tirade against the choir and all connected with it.

Peirce reported that he said to a member of the Association, "It cost us \$10,000 to get here; it cost our competitors the price of a street car fare; where is your equality?"

The man replied, "That's right, why don't the little fool shut up. No one has authorized him to talk like that."

Evan Stephens made a statement that night that the choir had assumed as a matter of course that they would not be required to pay admission. Griffith Davies of Seattle had offered to pay the admission charge, but as a matter of principle and also because the choir members had already dispersed, Professor Stephens declined his offer.

After the fiasco on Thursday, the Exposition Committee offered the choir \$500 to sing a concert in the natural amphitheater on Sunday evening, along with Ellery's Royal Italian Band. Evan Stephens accepted, and the concert drew a vast throng of 17,500 persons seated and another three to four thousand standing. Fully twelve thousand were turned away from what was "unquestionably the most successful musical event of the kind that that has yet taken place at the Exposition."

The review in the **Seattle Star** of 31 August was most interesting:

An unexpected feature of the big concert last night, a feature that aroused the wildest enthusiasm, and brought forth applause that lasted for fully ten

minutes, was the singing of the Tabernacle Choir as the last number on the program of 'Seattle, the Beautiful,' . . . written expressly for the occasion. . . . The song followed a splendid rendition of the 'Star Spangled Banner' and 'America' by the Tabernacle choir and Ellery's band and served as a fitting ending to one of the finest concerts Seattle has ever heard.

The weather was absolutely perfect. Starting to the left of the stage-setting picture, the moon in its fullest glory and rotundity, moved its great searchlight slowly across the waters of Lake Washington, from north to south, in a strip of light a quarter of a mile wide, until its last golden reflection died with the last note of melody that had filled that concert place for ninety minutes.

Upon his return, Evan Stephens indicated his gratitude to the choir. "Am I satisfied? I cannot be otherwise. A nicer, more faithful lot of singers never sang together than my two hundred proved to be. Not one absentee at any concert during the trip (only by permission when we had no room for them.) I have nothing but love and gratitude to them, one and all."³⁵

Arrangements for the seventh and last tour of the Tabernacle Choir to be directed by Evan Stephens had their beginning early in 1911 when a contract was signed for the choir to sing at the American Land and Irrigation Exposition in New York City from 3 to 12 November of that year. To increase the exposure of the choir to the public and to raise needed revenue to pay for the heavy expenses, the committee in charge decided to schedule a number of concerts en route in twenty-five cities.

George D. Pyper, who was chosen to manage the tour, kept a day-by-day record from which he wrote a series of articles entitled "Six Thousand Miles With the 'Mormon' Tabernacle Choir" which provides an intimately detailed description of the concerts, the people, the traveling experiences; and the reception by public officials and the press. He wrote of his feelings at the outset:

I fully sensed the tremendous responsibility of chaperoning two hundred and fifty people on a six thousand mile tour through the United States. To arrange for their appearances in twenty-five cities; look after their comfort; direct their movements; exploit the advertising in such a way as to redound to the honor of the state, and at the same time give to the members individually an opportunity of getting all the educational advantages that the wonderful tour afforded; to keep the young people from dangers, physical and moral, and return them to Salt Lake safe and sound to their fathers, mothers, wives, husbands, or sweethearts, seemed an almost overwhelming task, and I hesitated before undertaking the tremendous labor.³⁶

In June Pyper made a tour of the east to arrange for theatres and concert halls, and after an arduous seven weeks arrived home with contracts for the twenty five appearances. In the meantime Evan Stephens had been busy recruiting members of the choir and his choruses who could be away for the five weeks, and who had the voice and the stamina required.

On 7 October the New York Chorus staged a concert in the Tabernacle but not too successfully. After more work with their conductor, the singers gave a second home concert in the Salt Lake Theatre which enthused the community and served to quiet some scoffers who forecast failure for the venture. Only three days elapsed after this concert before the party left the evening of 23 October for Ogden, accompanied by Presidents Joseph F. Smith and Anthon H. Lund. There in the Ogden Tabernacle the New York Chorus gave their first concert away from home, with the Ogden group in the audience. At the close, the two choirs of four hundred joined to sing "America."

Details of all of the concerts and appearances would occupy a small volume. Consequently, only some of the highlights will be mentioned, especially those which illuminate the contribution of Evan Stephens to the success of the tour—artistically and as a

booster for Utah—but not from a strictly financial viewpoint.

Interestingly, the **Salt Lake Tribune** ran an editorial on 10 February, 1911 commenting on the “the keen rivalry on between the Salt Lake tabernacle choir and the Ogden tabernacle choir for preference in responding to the invitation to make a trip to New York and sing the irrigation ode at the American land and irrigation exhibition to be held in that city next November.” The article’s main point was that Utah should be represented by the best and most powerful choir, but that the Ogden group should have its fair chance. It also opposed the idea that the Legislature should be asked to make an appropriation.

The church authorities after careful review gave the nod to the Salt Lake choir. The Ogden group accepted the decision graciously.

Pyper, in his article, emphasized the courtesy of the president and director of the Ogden choir and of the three area stake presidents in allowing the New York Chorus to use the Ogden building. In an intermission address, they were welcomed and wished “God speed” by the Ogden singers, and Stephens responded.

On a later occasion the Ogden choir was selected for a coveted tour over the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir.

The Cheyenne concert provided great obstacles. A grand piano and organ had not been provided for the accompaniment. Pyper, after a desperate search found a piano in private hands, but out of tune. The organ would not harmonize, and John J. McClellan was forced to change keys twice in the concert to provide a passable accompaniment.

Pyper and Stephens had drawn up a long memorandum of instructions to the tour members on everything from laundry to Pullman car organization to offer the maximum of liberty commensurate with good discipline. Apparently the plan was highly successful with only a minor problem where some singers missed the electric cars and had to walk across the suspension bridge at Niagara Falls, delaying their train and necessitating changes in the entire New York Central train system schedules.

In many cases the concert audiences were small, owing to the anti-Mormon propaganda being circulated in magazines and newspapers at the time. Probably the most vituperative of all was

the series of three articles in March, April and May 1911 written by Alfred Henry Lewis for **Cosmopolitan Magazine**. President Joseph Fielding Smith was depicted as the head of a viper. In an editor’s note, the publication’s editor said: “It is not a pretty story that Mr. Lewis tells, but it bites deep and should sting the American people into a full realization of what Mormonism really means; how it has already cinched its deep grip upon the politics and business of a dozen states; how its influence is spreading in federal affairs; and how, presently . . . its vicious menace will become a very real and vital factor to be reckoned with not only in national business and politics but in thousands of American homes.”

Church domination of politics in Utah, the “new poligamy”, and the rapid growth of church membership to “one in every one hundred and twenty” Americans were key issues. The presence of Reed Smoot in Congress, a Church Apostle who had been able to retain his seat in spite of opposition was a continuing topic. The author of the series had been in Salt Lake City when President William Howard Taft visited and was introduced by President Smith to two of his wives.³⁷

Many Americans had been deluded by this propaganda and reacted by boycotting the choir’s performances. One concert in Buffalo, New York had to be cancelled because political authorities would not permit the Mormons to sing. Before the choir presented a Silver Service as a gift from Utah school children to the Battleship Utah, there had been a protest to the Navy to refuse it. But the elegant Service decorating a table twenty-five feet long was presented without incident to great acclaim.

Reception of the choir and thirteen soloists by their audiences was overwhelming. Many selections were encored repeatedly. At a resplendent Waldorf-Astoria banquet in New York, many of an audience of five hundred wealthy and influential men stood on their chairs and waved their napkins in a demonstration of enthusiasm after the singing of the “Sextet from Lucia” by the soloists and a chorus of fifty female voices.

The choir had time to visit many historical locations including the Temple in Kirtland, Ohio, the Hill Cumorah, the Sacred Grove

and many others, usually bursting out in song appropriate to the occasion.

Highlight of the tour for both the participants and the Church was the concert in the White House before President and Mrs. William Howard Taft and fifty invited guests. The President was to have been out of town, but was prevailed upon to change his schedule to allow an evening for the concert. One selection on the White House program was "The Irrigated Land," a part of the thirty-minute "Ode To Irrigation" with music written by John J. McClellan to the text by Mrs. Gilbert McClurg of Colorado Springs. The music had won first prize in a nationwide contest sponsored by the Irrigation Exposition. Some excerpts from newspaper reviews of the concerts illustrate the splendid reception of the choir's music:

Scranton Republican, November 2. "The conductor is Evan Stephens. . . a splendid example of Western success. Mr. Stephens has been a deep and thorough student of music, and since he assumed the conductorship of the Tabernacle choir, he has not only raised the standard of music in the 'Mormon' Church, but his influence has been felt throughout the State of Utah."

Detroit News, Oct. 28. There is a swing and vigor to the music as presented by the choir, as though the spirit of the selection was truly felt, and under the direction of Mr. Stephens the audience was carried along with it."

Cleveland Press, Oct. 30. "As indicative of western musical culture and achievement, the Mormon Choir is a living and speaking example. One point emphasized the thorough preparation and fidelity of the singers—all choral numbers were sung without music, and Director Stephens directed without score. This is an unusual occurrence and indicates that the Utahns cultivate the arts as they do the soil—intensively and with plenty of artistic irrigation."

New York Musical Courier, Nov. 8. The Choir produces splendid dynamic effects and excellent tone color, and always sings on pitch. Conductor Stephens is a born choirmaster and his choir should make a great impression wherever heard."

New York Herald, Nov. 6. "The two hundred singers, half of them men, and half women, sang with admirable precision and spirit under the leadership of Mr. Evan Stephens, who has done wonders with excellent material. No better choral singing has been heard here since the visit of Toronto's famous Mendelssohn Choir, three years ago." [The choir was frequently rated as second only to the Canadian group.]

New York Call, Nov. 6. "As a whole the company is typically American and typically Western. The girls and women are tastefully and stylishly, but by no means elegantly attired, and they have the appearance of any representative gathering of school teachers . . . The women . . . were treated yesterday by their male associates with the sincere and honest courtesy which is inherent in the nature of the Westerner. Although they are patently being exploited by the Land Show management as a 'drawing card' for their appeal, on the ground of decades of misrepresentation and falsehood, to the grosser curiosity of an ignorant and narrow-minded public, the Mormon choristers are as marked a failure as a 'circus attraction' as they are a success as a musical offering."

Evan Stephens didn't program these fifty concerts to the tastes of musical purists in his own community nor in the scores of cities where the Tabernacle Choir sang. As has often been said of him, he was a musician of the people, and he included in his

programs what he thought the people would want to hear. His strategy on the tours he directed was successful, and the choir members endeared themselves to the many thousands who heard them. But by today's standards, the programs were a heterogeneous mixture of Mormon and secular, of classic and popular, with Stephens's life spirit embodied in the emotions they communicated to his audiences. The program illustrated for the 5 November concert at the New York Hippodrome is a fine example.

- | | | |
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| 1. Hosannah | Stephens | Interval |
| (Specially composed for and sung at the dedication of the great Salt Lake City Temple.) | | 7. Lucia Sextette and Chorus... Donizetti |
| 2. O My Father | | Fifty soloists and Choir |
| (Favorite Mormon hymn arranged from James McGranahan's "My Redeemer.") | | 8. "Christmas Song" |
| 3. Fantasie Appassionata..... | Vieuxtemps | 9. Harp Autumn |
| Mr. W. E. Weihe | | Miss Lydia White |
| 4. Soldiers' Chorus from Faust ... | Gounod | 10. "Gypsy Sweetheart" |
| 5. Finale to "Death of Minnehaha" | | Mr. H. S. Ensign and Choir |
| | Taylor | 11. God is Our Refuge |
| 6. Dixie | | 12. Aria from La Boheme |
| (Arranged for male voices by conductor.) | | Mr. David Reese |
| | | 13. "The Irrigated Region" |
| | | McClellan |
| | | (From Prize Irrigation Ode.) |
| | | Mrs. Browning, Mr. Reese and Choir |

On 27 November, after the choir's arrival home, a paid reception and concert was staged in the Salt Lake Tabernacle under the auspices of the Commercial Club to honor the New York Chorus and to raise funds to defray the deficit incurred on the five week tour.

Summing up his feelings, George D. Pyper said, "But should we count success always from a financial standpoint? Are not many glorious undertakings successful that have had poor financial returns? . . . we trust the day will never come when the success or failure of our missionary work is gauged by the financial results. From such a standpoint, our going was inopportune; but for the good of the Church and the State, we could not have gone at a better time; for to the extent that we came in contact with the public, we were able to allay prejudice and counteract the damaging articles printed in the American magazines."

"As for the manager, while he appreciated to the fullest extent the noble work done by each individual artist, yet he believed that it was the work of the Choir as a whole that reached the hearts of the people."

Chapter 8

The Choir, Contests, Committees, and Controversy

Though financially unsuccessful, the 1911 New York tour of the Tabernacle Choir served to improve the image of the church in the East and Midwest and to mitigate much of the adverse comment in magazines and newspapers that year. As a cultural emissary it traveled at the right time to the right places. But the enthusiasm engendered by the excursion soon gave way to disinterest on the part of some singers. For a short time the activities were confined to the Sunday services and twice-yearly conferences.

An attempt was made to reorganize the choir in January 1913. Near the end of 1912 the Presiding Bishopric had called a meeting of the Stake Presidencies of the five stakes from which choir membership was drawn. Lists of desirable singers were made out and forwarded to the bishops and choir leaders of the various wards, who were to arrange other duties "that they would not interfere with a regular and full attendance at choir, of such as would accept the call."

The revised lists were to be returned to the Presiding Bishop's office and the singers were to take their places in the choir. As of 7 January only three of the some sixty lists had been returned, resulting in the strongly worded article in the *Deseret News* of that date. Stephens said:

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Could one imagine anything so foolish as to place a great organ in the Tabernacle and publish its merits far and wide, then have the various organizations of our Church cart off to their respective places two-thirds of the 'pipes' every time the instrument was to be played upon in public? We are all the time doing worse to our choir, and it is certainly time for us to wake up to a realization of the fact. Let us do what every stranger must imagine we surely must be doing, represent ourselves, at least, justly in the work we place before them by which we invite them to judge us. . . . Let us realize that our Tabernacle choir is one of the most heard and most effective of all our missionary institutions.¹

At the choir rehearsal on Thursday 9 January, Stephens reported the largest turnout since the return of the singers from New York. Eli Pierce was appointed as an "overseer of attendance" to check on absences of regular members. According to the **Journal History**, "6An entirely new roll with over 300 names will be made up and Prof. Stephens says with about fifty more prominent voices added, all being regular attendants, he will be satisfied."

Under the headline, Tabernacle Choir to be Reorganized an article ran in the **Deseret News** on 11 September 1915, five weeks before the inflammatory **Salt Lake Telegram** story, but under the aegis of Evan Stephens. It read, in part:

Important matters regarding reconstruction and improvement have been under consideration by Prof. Stephens with the counsel of the First Presidency, aided by a special advisory committee selected from each of the five stakes from which singers are drawn. This step is chiefly with a view of so arranging the Church duties of the singers that no conflicting duty will interfere with their

regular attendance at the tabernacle. . . .

Prof. Stephens is making elaborate preparations to have the most interesting musical work possible for his singers; nearly 2,000 copies of the most interesting musical selections which have come under his notice of late are now on the way here from the east. . . .

Compositions mentioned included "The Snow" by Elgar, "The Links of Love" by McEwan; a new chorus, "Peace on Earth", and his own "Loyalty." Other selections by Spohr, Mendelssohn, Handel, Gounod, Coleridge Taylor plus finales from several operas were scheduled for preparation.

The Professor left no doubt here as to his interest in adding to the choir's repertoire and improving performance, placing the **Telegram** story in October and comments from official sources and the press in 1916 seemingly at odds with the facts.

Again he pointed out that to have half of the singers missing, attending some other function of ward or stake, thwarted the choir's progress. "Practically all the choir needs is that hearty support and systematic arrangement such as will enable it to demand and get regularity and punctuality from every enrolled member. This would enable its chief builder and present conductor to accomplish more in the twenty-sixth year of his labors as director. . . than in the first historic years after he took charge, when the choir went before the world as a contestant for world honors and won it to the great surprise of the world at large."

Before the church's semi-annual conference in October 1915 Stephens had issued an invitation to choir leaders and singers throughout the church to join in the music. The choir on Sunday morning, 4 October, numbered about 600 voices, the largest choir ever assembled for a general conference. The **Deseret News** wrote: "This gathering of singers from the wards throughout the stakes of the Church is perhaps the most gigantic undertaking of its kind in the history of music within the Church. . . It means the assembling here in Salt Lake City of a mammoth chorus, the members of which have come from Canada on the north to Mexico

on the south and throughout the . . . intermountain region wherever there are organized stakes.”²

On 10 October the Tabernacle Organ was rendered out of commission for rebuilding by the manufacturer of Hartford, Connecticut. Bases for two 20 horsepower motors had been constructed along with a new echo organ chamber in the east end of the basement. The rebuilt instrument was expected to be available by the end of February 1916.

One of the epochal events in Stephens's tenure with the Tabernacle Choir was the first recording on a phonograph disc in 1910. Twelve numbers by the 300 voice choir were sung into horns for the Columbia Phonograph company of New York City. A vibrating needle was activated by the sound from the horns and etched a wax disc. The company had failed in other efforts to record large groups, and the German expert, Mr. Hausmann, was working on intuition.

After two hours of experimentation, he hung the two horns on a rope stretched from gallery to gallery with the flaring bells covering, on one side, the sopranos, and the other, the tenors and basses. The narrow ends were connected with the recording machine set up on the choir leader's platform. The ladies were asked to remove their hats, and all stood very closely together. The organist, J.J. McClellan had to play his accompaniments double forte, while the soloists, Lizzie Thomas Edward and Horace Ensign, sang with their faces inside one of the horns.

The choir sang a few bars of “We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet as a test and when they listened at the mouth of the reproducing horn, were delighted at what they heard. The choir proceeded through the program “with a vim, a wholesouled vigor, an earnestness, a wonderful unison and attack that carried Prof. Stephens and those who were there to listen almost off their feet . . . Prof. Stephens, particularly, was delighted, his face beamed like the rising sun.”

Four proofs of the records were received from New York on September 29 and when tested on a horn-type phonograph were deemed successful. In the Stephens anthem, “Let the Mountains Shout for Joy,” as the choir “almost shouted in joyful exultation

. . . the full effects were reproduced with thrilling faithfulness, while the heavy deep, sonorous ensemble was overpowering.”³

Fifteen proofs arrived from the East Coast on 11 October, making a total of nineteen. Six failed to turn out satisfactorily. Copies of the records became available for sale soon thereafter.

A second set of recordings was made 10 June 1927 by the Victor Talking Machine Company with a newly invented process using a microphone which conveyed much stronger impulses onto a shellac disk and offered a greatly improved result.⁴ Stephens had also journeyed to Camden to direct the Victor Opera Quartette in singing Mormon music for a recording in 1923. He praised the artistry of the singers.

Although Prof. Stephens had entered a number of musical contests and won some prestigious prizes for composition, he stated on several occasions that he did not like contests because of the grumbling and injured feelings that seemed to accompany them. He was assigned the duty of conducting several contests for the Deseret Sunday School Union and Mutual Improvement organizations and carried out the responsibility with less than unbridled enthusiasm.

An event that embittered many choir members occurred at the 1895 Eisteddfod. Thomas Griggs was singing with the Salt Lake chorus directed by Prof. Thomas. In spite of the very warm applause from the audience, Hayden Evans, one of the judges, characterized the group's performance as “noise.” They were awarded first place, but some of the singers drafted a letter to the Cambrian Society in protest and vowed to separate from the Tabernacle Choir. Griggs wrote in his diary, “The Butte band is also sore. These contests seem to be productive of sores.”⁵

In 1897 the commission, preparing for the 24 of July Semi-Centennial celebration, staged a contest for composition of a pioneer ode. Stephens entered, composing music for the poem of O.F. Whitney. It was entered anonymously under the pseudonym “Teamster” but was judged the winner for which the Professor received a prize of \$100. After his winning was announced, an article appeared in a weekly Salt Lake paper by the nephew of Bishop W.B. Preston and the Hon. Moses Thatcher, protesting

that young Thatcher had been disqualified by the committee unjustly. Apparently he had sent his entry for the competition from Europe, and claimed Stephens influenced the commission in the disqualification.

On 30 June Stephens gave a detailed statement to the **Deseret News** which was published. He said:

There is not one word of truth in the allegation so far as it concerns myself. I protested against anyone being disqualified, and when I learned that Mr. Thatcher was barred because of a rule adopted by the commission, I freely and candidly expressed my regrets. The commission, I understand, took its position on the ground that a student abroad might get assistance from his teacher, and even get the composition written wholly by him . . . I have said that if he could win with such assistance as an eminent teacher could lend him he should be given the opportunity.

Stephens offered to have his composition and that of Thatcher adjudicated by one of a group of five eminent composers from a list on which they would agree. An anonymous offer of \$200 had been made in the controversy and Stephens agreed that if the money offer were legitimate, the author of the best composition should win it.⁶

Careful research has not located any other comment in the press on this charge. It does indicate Stephens's adherence to what he considered fair play in any dispute; he never was one to avoid conciliation.

In July 1930, shortly before his death, among world composers Stephens won an Eisteddfod competition first prize for his chorus for male voices, at Scranton, Pennsylvania. He had also won a \$25 prize in the church's sacrament hymn contest in 1921, a second prize for a hymn in 1923, and first prize for "Glory to God" the best hymn with music in 1925, in addition to the prize for composition submitted without his name at the New England

Conservatory in 1886. In spite of disliking contests, he still entered them. On this he wrote to his friend, Samuel Mitton in Logan on 4 December 1925:

"I would hate to enter into an unfriendly combat with you, but it is hard for my Welsh nature to abstain from a tempting contest, as it is for a mouse to leave cheese alone. So look out! We play for money!"

Under his direction the Mormon Tabernacle Choir entered only two contests, the first at the Chicago World's Fair where second place was won; and the second in the Salt Lake Eisteddfod where the choir entered the choral competition and won first place in 1898.

Although the first musical contest promoted by the **Deseret Sunday School Union** (which Stephens dominated) was staged in 1882 with prizes totalling \$200, the first major competition took place in June 1891. Joseph J. Daynes, the accompanist agreed to meet any of the singers who so desired on Sunday Morning 24 May, to "help every singer to sing his piece as he (the singer) deems proper, and thus aid each one to excel in his own way in rendering the piece."

The three adjudicators, Ebenezer Beesley of Salt Lake, Alexander Lewis of Logan, and T.E. Daniels of Provo were seated so they could not see the performers. Each was to give his own verdict separately, and when two or all three agreed, that person was the winner. If no two of the judges decided on the same entrant, then they met to discuss the matter and perhaps to divide the prize. As with all the contests, Stephens's aim was to further the study of music among young people. He said, "The benefit of the study and earnest work given to master the pieces will be a reward worth more than the prize; while your example in attempting to excel in a noble pursuit will be equally beneficial on the rising generation as will be that of the winners."⁷

During the two day conference of the Y.M.M.I.A. the Salt Lake classes were to sing Sunday morning under Stephens's direction. Classes from south and west were to furnish music Monday morning, and classes from north and east were to sing Monday afternoon. The Tabernacle Choir sang for the two Sun-

day afternoon and evening meetings. Some of the music had been published in the **Contributor** but the balance had to be purchased from Coalter and Snelgrove.

Prizes for the various contests, solos, duets, quartets, and choruses varied from \$10 to \$75. A summation of the contest voiced Stephens's optimism. "The contest was a pronounced success, and much good has been done in bringing out the talent of some of our local singers and establishing a number of glee clubs, superior to any yet heard; and it has shown the possibility of some day having, in these Mutual Improvement Associations, the greatest organization of male voices in the world."⁸

The 1892 contest, naming Stephens as manager and director, was a much more complex undertaking, patterned after the Eisteddfod with which he was familiar. Grand prize for male chorus (united clubs, members of one stake) singing "Comrades in Arms" was the enticing sum of \$250. First prize for male chorus of not over twenty-five singers, on Stephens's "Dawn of Day" was \$100. Grand prize for brass and reed bands of thirty to fifty players, performing the Professor's band arrangement of the "Hallelujah Chorus" was also \$250. Prizes for instrumental solos—cornet, clarinet, piano and cabinet organ were \$15 and \$5.

All competing bands were to meet at the Assembly Hall on Saturday noon to form a procession that would parade down Main Street playing "Hail Columbia."

In the summation of the contest it was noted that not all the categories for instrumental solos were entered, yet the "work done in that line was artistic."

"The vocal contest, however, was the one in which so much improvement was noticed. The solos, trio, quartettes, double quartettes, and choruses were all magnificently rendered, and the closing four choruses by the representatives from Malad, Weber, Utah and Salt Lake were each worth all the time spent in bringing such grand choruses together."

A financial report in the **Contributor** showed premiums and expenses of \$729.60 versus receipts from admissions of \$452.50 and net loss of \$277.10 for 1891. Figures for 1892 were receipts of \$654.50 compared with premiums and expenses of \$987.75

and a loss of \$333.25. The report was published to counteract the impression that the **Contributor** was making a profit from the venture.⁹

A different type of contest was projected by Stephens for February 1894. The audience was to vote on the winners among children from wards and stakes in Northern Utah on solos, duets, ballads, organ solos, and choruses. The director drew up a set of negative guidelines for the audiences as to what they should **not** judge on: Size and "cuteness" of the child, loyalty to the singers of their own Ward, and deeming boldness and power above modesty, truthfulness of expression, and beauty of tone. He also commented on each type of selection as to points for consideration.¹⁰

Stephens continued to adjudicate contests and to manage them. In December 1898 he was invited to Milwaukee to judge a music festival. In 1922 he wrote, "My experience in competitions [has] been that they are considerably a mere lottery and seldom does the best win." In 1925 he said in a letter to H.B. Mitton, "I am firmly declining to act as adjud[icator] in my declining years," and in 1928, "Of course there [are] a lot of undesirable things about contests beside the unavoidable contentions, 'uttered or unexpressed'."

Probably because he was bored and would welcome a change in his routine, on 19 May 1919 he wrote to Samuel Mitton, "I am starting tomorrow to Manti to begin adjudicating the choruses and male quartettes in the M.I.A. contest. . . . I hope to enjoy it, tho there are things in the business that [do] not appeal to me."

From the very beginning of his career in Salt Lake music, Stephens was called upon for lectures on the teaching of children and the conduct of singing classes in the church. One of his earliest speeches was at Y.M.M.I.A. Conference in 1888. He said music should be "A means of worship, to bring the minds of those assembled into a proper state for the exercises which follow; to bring a happifying [sic] feeling into the heart by its soothing and enobling influence; to draw the minds of all into one purpose by either all joining in the same song or partaking of the same feeling. . . . Its abuses generally consist of indifferent, poor (or worse) renditions of the musical exercises, and in making inappropriate selections.

Both are generally the result of an erroneous idea that it matters but little **what** is sung or **how** it is sung, so long as the usual amount of singing is indulged in. As well think that it matters not what kind of water we bathe in—filthy or clean—so long as we bathe.”

Already Stephens’s ideas of the grandiose chorus, based on his experience in Willard as well at Salt Lake had born fruit. “The material for a fresh, grand, vigorous young choir of five thousand voices is to-day ready for use among the associations within one hundred miles of Salt Lake City. We have musical works by home authors, lying in their desks ready for them to come forward and render, in unequalled grandeur.”¹¹

Under the pseudonym **Peto** the Professor wrote a column for the **Deseret News** in 1890, expounding on the idea of congregational singing being promoted to increase interest in religious gatherings. He also praised the **Psalmody** as a work that should be carried by missionaries into the field.¹²

In the continuing series of articles, “Music in the Associations,” addressed to Y.M.M.I.A. choir leaders, Stephens, in 1890, offered suggestions to the ward leaders in organizing male singing clubs. He also published his male chorus, “Invocation to Harmony,” which was to be used as a contest selection for the competition that year.¹³

As a member of the Deseret Sunday School Board, Stephens was appointed chairman of a committee consisting of himself, Thomas E. Giles, and Thomas McIntyre to prepare a music book for the Sunday School Primary Department.

A synopsis of a lecture given in 1897 reveals Stephens’s broad knowledge of classical composers, their lives and compositions, although his statement that “Dudley Buck is considered America’s most genial and musical composer” reflects a strong personal bias.¹⁴

In 1899 Stephens unveiled an ambitious plan to introduce singing into the M.I.A. meetings by scheduling a series of classes at the Choir Hall on Richards Street on Friday and Saturday nights. He said:

It will not only bring into existence a chorus of

young, vigorous men . . . but a well-drilled chorus of 500 young male voices will be inspiring. . . . It will arm the young men in advance with one of the best accomplishments needed by the traveling missionary, the power to sing acceptably songs and hymns to the purpose. . . . The Tabernacle Choir will have almost unlimited material to keep up its strength numerically and musically.

Scarcely less interesting or rare will it be to witness a young ladies’ choir that will fill the great Tabernacle choir seats to overflowing. There is something angelic about the effects of harmonies from a chorus of women . . . It is almost unaccountable that with the ability and love for singing our young ladies possess that in their meetings their singing has been so shiftless and unworthy of them. . . . Every association should see . . . that it is fully represented, that it may reap the benefit.¹⁵

From the beginning, Stephens’s plan was successful. By 16 February three hundred young ladies nearly filled the Choir Hall. “Although they have had but two meetings, the three hundred voices blend already like a full choir. Nearly all are inexperienced in part singing, but with good voices and Mr. Stephens’s plain and effective method of working, they already hold their parts well and harmonize charmingly: even singing with considerable expression and character.”

A few over two hundred young men responded, “but their earnest vigor, their full, powerful voices, fill the room with music, nevertheless divided also into three parts.”

Stephens required no tuition fee or assessment, shouldering the full responsibility himself. Dreaming on he said, “We shall yet witness the strange sight of a ladies’ chorus of three or four thousand voices singing in the Tabernacle and a similar one of young men. The time may come when the historic building will be too small to hold the choir alone, to say nothing of the audience, and we will hold musical jubilees in one of our great canyons or parks.”

The Professor's dream was partially fulfilled with the great June festivals held in the University of Utah stadium some years ago until the worldwide church membership outgrew the concept.

Added importance was given to the M.I.A. program in 1899 when President Joseph F. Smith discussed the matter of music and singing in the Semi-Annual Conference. He pointed out that many localities still had no better facilities or had improved over their situation twenty to thirty years back. He said, "A great mistake is made in waiting for and expecting the music teacher or choir leader to crowd upon us every step of improvement. They should not be required to appeal to the community to let them labor in teaching them; to do so destroys to a great extent their power for good. It is the community. . . who should seek their services."¹⁶

At the April 1904 Sunday School Conference Stephens talked on the musical training of children and pointed to his success in Granite Stake. As an example, his Granite Stake Juvenile Choir sang "The Cause of Truth" which the Professor explained was full of beautiful sentiment which he wished to inspire in the children. He said further that young people should sing both treble and alto to develop their voices, and demonstrated with his choir that they could sing both parts.

In 1906 Evan Stephens was invited to address the conference of the Primary Association, where he discussed in detail the training of children in vocal music. Two points seem of special interest. He counseled the choristers to "have the children use the little, soft voice that they have to use when they sing high, clear down the scale; you can gradually round out the tone and enlarge it.

"I know in singing work, choirs, and all singing organizations, get in a rut in meeting together. They meet for rehearsal, and they go through the same old songs over and over, and over. Singing anything, in any way, is the most sure way of destroying the beneficial use of singing in your organization."¹⁷

In the period from 1890 to 1916 while directing the Tabernacle Choir, Stephens also served officially and unofficially in many other positions. He was Music Director of the Y.M.M.I.A. and an instructor at L.D.S. University. His services also were in great demand by the Deseret Sunday School Union, the

Y.W.M.I.A., the Primary Association and the Relief Society, and he contributed much to music programs in all of these organizations, plus teaching a weekly class to outgoing missionaries on hymn singing.

Frederick Williams, one of the missionaries, described his experience:

Evan Stephens, then an elderly man, tried to impart to us some of his great musical talent. He tried to make music directors out of us. He tried to teach us to sing. He said the most important thing was to start on the right pitch, and that we should all have a pitch pipe. . . . Brother Stephens was a short man, bowed under the weight of years. He used a small portable organ to accompany us when we sang. He would say, 'Now let's sing "School Thy Feelings, Oh, My Brother."' He would then take his pitch pipe from his pocket and sound it. 'Did you hear that? That is the proper pitch for this song.' Then, seated at the organ he would begin to play a prelude. Suddenly he would think of something, some direction concerning how the song should be sung, some emphasis to be given certain parts. He would stand up, the better to be able to talk to us, but kept one foot on the pedal and both hands on the manuals. He never missed a note.¹⁸

Throughout his long career as a teacher and conductor, Evan Stephens was known as a firm disciplinarian, loath to delegate authority and responsibility, sometimes to his own disadvantage. Thomas Griggs, from his long experience in the Tabernacle Choir wrote many fine comments about Evan Stephens. For example, on 9 January 1902 he wrote, "Stephens full of valuable musical ideas on word expression, phrasing and developing important words and sentences. Choir worked well with him." Another time he wrote, "Stephens occupied the time with profitable talk," and

another evening, "Stephens strict, wants us to sing with intelligence and expression."

But Griggs, who knew the Professor intimately, entered in his diary of 29 January 1902 a divided opinion of his friend and his relationship with the choir. Griggs wrote:

Stephens says we are lukewarm in getting concert audiences, we leave it all to him—that's how he has trained us, he has never thrown responsibility or trusts upon choir committees; he has been the sole head, eyes, brain, body, arms and legs of the choir; common consent to his plans and arrangements never asked or investigation solicited as Bro. C.R. Savage said, in such things we were not supposed to have brains—just automata in a great big chorus. Yet Stephens is a wonderful leader, but I think he errs in his czarlike autocracy in the affairs of the choir which is simply 'Stephens's Tabernacle Choir' as Pres. A.M. Cannon put it.

At times Stephens waged brief skirmishes with his associates and with certain of the General Authorities. In one such instance, Stephens was given orders to have the "Seer" of B.Cecil Gates sung by the choir, although he disliked the work intensely. Thomas Griggs recorded in his diary: "Stephens attacked the music to 'The Seer,' giving it such a grotesque coloring as to have a damaging effect upon thoughtless minds." Then on 21 December he wrote: "Pres. A.M. Cannon met me and said he had requested Prof. Stephens have 'The Seer' sung, if he didn't like himself, have it given for the satisfaction of those who did, etc."

Another difference of opinion arose early in Evan's career in Salt Lake City. Some other music instructors used the Tonic Sol-fa method of musical notation while he disliked it and pushed his own method of note reading. Eventually the Tonic Sol-fa gave way to note reading in all church publications of music, so that Stephens's opinion was vindicated, and he was highly successful

with his method in teaching children. His First and Second Readers went through many printings and were in use throughout the state.

In 1898 at October Conference, Elder John W. Taylor gave a sermon in which he alluded to an unfounded rumor about some supposed immoral conduct after rehearsals by members of the Tabernacle Choir. The choir members were inflamed by the insinuations, and Taylor was chastised by his superiors. He afterwards apologized to the choir and was forgiven. Evan Stephens made no public comments about the incident, but no doubt was upset as his singers were. Taylor was severely denounced in a **Salt Lake Telegram** editorial.¹⁹

The most outspoken criticism of Stephens came in 1901, beginning with an article in the **Salt Lake Tribune** on 19 April. At choir rehearsal he had made comments about the changed tone of the Tabernacle Organ which was being rebuilt. A reporter woke him up that night at his home and requested an interview about the situation, which Stephens gave grudgingly. Pertinent parts of the interview follow:

I said to the choir last evening . . . that, while I hesitated to say anything publicly concerning the new organ, nevertheless it was my custom to talk plainly to the members of the choir on matters musical, and so far as I had yet heard the reconstructed organ, it was a fine organ, as pipe organs go generally. It was very similar in tone effect to the organs that I had heard in Chicago, at the Crystal Palace, at Albert Hall and other places, but that it entirely lacked the unique characteristics of the old instrument, which seemed almost human in its tone quality, while our present organ is decidedly instrumental . . . the organ lacks entirely the smooth, velvety pure tone quality that made our old organ different from any organ that I have ever heard. . . . So far as its use in accompanying is concerned, if—mind, I say if—the full power of

the organ is ever used, then the choir might just as well stand still, wiggle their jaws and look as pleasant as possible. The great danger is, to my mind, that there will be entirely too much accompaniment and not enough voices. Of course this will be all wrong, as accompanists are always considered of secondary importance to the singers. The old organ had power to accompany 1500 voices. The new could accompany 5000. Yes, I know, there are several pipes to be added, but as I explained to the choir this evening, they cannot have any effect on the tone—they will simply increase the volume of sound.

F.W. Hegeland of the Kimball Organ Company, who was in charge of the reconstruction said, in reply:

I think that the criticism is rather premature, inasmuch as the organ, as is generally known, is not yet completed. At the same time, the criticism is evidently prompted by jealousy or disappointment; otherwise it would not appear at this time or in its present form. I am the more surprised at such a statement coming from anyone claiming any musical standing.

As for the tone qualities in question, I must take issue with the statement made by Prof. Stephens. Ninety-six percent of the tone quality spoken of in the old organ was given it in the stock pipe shops in the East, or factories where these pipes are made, and where anyone with the necessary means can buy them. They were voiced by very ordinary methods . . . whereas the stops in the present organ are built from scales, and voiced by men of world-wide reputation. . . . But we feel that music-lovers will appreciate the fact that the new organ has tone qualities and shades not to be found in any other organ.

On the following day, under a three-column headline in **The Deseret News** a letter from Stephens was printed charging he thought the **Tribune** had written a misleading headline indicating that he was "in mourning" over the situation which was not the case. He said:

I shall have little to say or worry about the new organ, if it proves the efficient aid and accompaniment to the choir that I suppose it is intended for. On the other hand, if it impairs or ruins our musical efforts, so long as it is my duty to attend to this matter, in justice to myself and the five hundred or more who labor with me, I shall not be content with the judgement of others, interested or disinterested, who think of the organ and certain effects it produces only, rather than the effect of the whole.

A statement from organist John J. McClellan was also given where he called attention to the fact that the organ was thirty-three years old and in need of work. He pointed out that twenty couplers and combination pedals, eight stops, three tremulos and other necessary appurtenances were still to be installed, along with the 32 foot pipes. The important task of re-voicing was still to be completed. He said, "It has undergone some wonderful changes. It has many amplifications and additions. I shall study them thoroughly. I shall make of the organ a companion and friend and when we are thoroughly acquainted I pledge my professional honor that there will be no disappointment."

An editorial appeared the same day in the **News** asserting that any public criticism was premature; that the organist must be guided in some degree by the conductor, but that all can be regulated by proper understanding between the two musicians. It concluded that "The lesson to be learned from this unfortunate controversy is, be not too hasty to condemn, nor too rash in speech. Don't rush into print unadvisedly, nor assume to find fault without proper authority. . . . Let us work together in harmony, and be careful not to promote discord or wilfully injure anyone in

feelings or in reputation.”²⁰

This served as a mild rebuke for Evan Stephens. He went on to lead the choir for some fifteen more years and made no public utterances regarding the tone of the organ. The concerts with famous soloists and religious services by the choir and organ continued to be received with great acclaim.

One of the few other public criticisms on Stephens’s work is contained in the report of William M. Stewart, Principal of the State Normal School. He said, “The music taught in the Normal School has not been altogether satisfactory. This lack of proper musical training is due to employing two teachers who give specil lessons, with no unification in the work. One teacher iving his full time should be employed, and he should have harge of the music, both in the normal preparatory and in the raining School. I recommend that such a teacher be employed.” n estimate of cost for one teacher was shown as \$2,400 for the ext two years, with 138 students in music 2¹

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In 1895 Evan Stephens was interviewed by B.F. Cummings, Jr. when he noted that successful musical people will be aggressive in demanding room to work within their own parameters without being pushed by others. He said, “When I have control my authority must be absolute. I would permit no one to interfere in my work, nor would I be willing to interfere in another’s. The musical result of my labor is my first and sole consideration. Personalities come in only as this demands.”²²

Stephens indicated that the singers understood his attitude and that peace and goodwill prevailed, even under trying conditions.

George D. Pyper summed up the career of Stephens in 1933: “[He] was of the common people and he wrote his songs for them. A musical Mussolini, he wanted his own way in the choir, and succeeded best when he had it. His personality was unique. May the memory of him live on.”²³

Chapter 9

Sarah Daniels

*Seek to forget, O heart of mine,
Things that I dearly cherished,
Lest I offend God’s present love
Brooding on what has perished.*

Evan Stephens

Sarah Mary Daniels, a Welsh domestic, disembarked from the **SS Commonwealth** in New York on 5 June 1902 and bought a rail ticket to Salt Lake City. She had emigrated from Pencader, Carmarthen, Wales to find opportunity and a better life. Unlike many of her countrymen, beginning with the first Dan Jones company of 1849 who came to live the principles of Mormonism in Zion, Sarah Daniels had not joined the Latter-day Saint Church in Wales, but this was no hindrance to her being hired as housekeeper by Evan Stephens.

The daughter of Daniel Davies and Elizabeth Daniel Stephens, she was born 11 February 1864. She kept her mother’s middle name, adding the final “s,” although she signed her name as Sarah Davis on a photograph of her and Stephens in 1931. She knew her father, who supported her but married another woman and reared a family by that wife.

Sarah’s great grandfather was Daniel Daniel Stephens who

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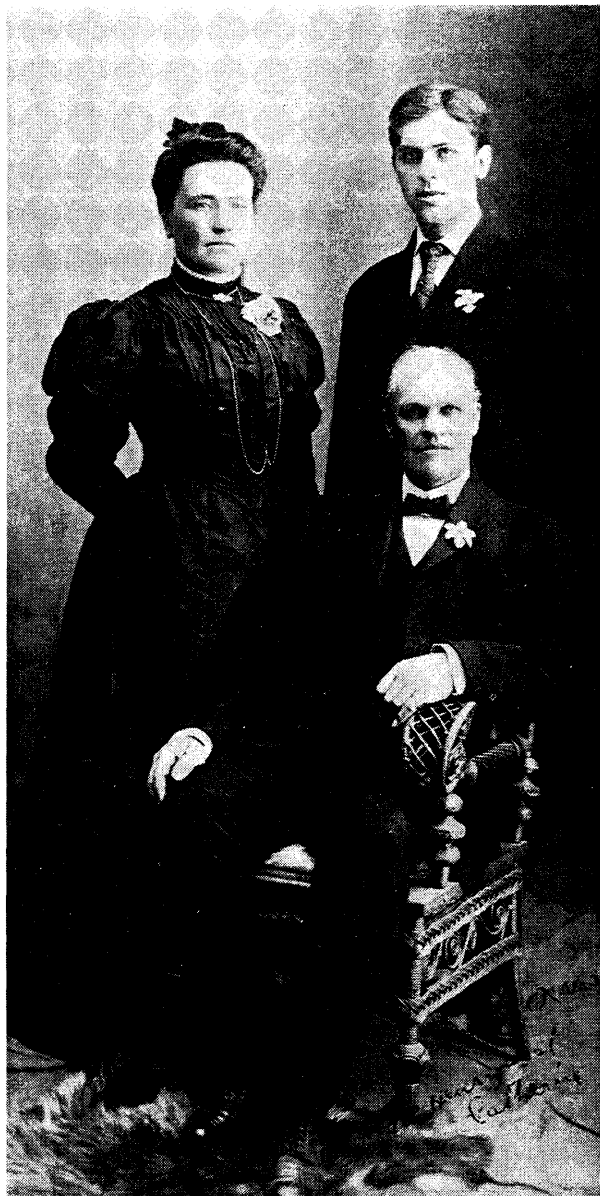
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Sarah’s great grandfather was Daniel Daniel Stephens who



Evan Stephens, seated, with Sarah Daniels and Noel S. Pratt, one of the Professor's "Boys". Photo courtesy of Don Noble, Preston, Idaho.

married Ann Phillips and reared twelve children, born between 1796 and 1820. The oldest son, Benjamin Daniels Stephens was Sarah's grandfather. His brother, David Phillips Stephens, was the father of Professor Evan Stephens. Thus Sarah was the grand niece of the composer.

In Wales Sarah had directed a Congregational Church choir and worked with children in the church. After Evan Stephens died in 1930, she received a letter from the pastor of the church in Wales conveying the sympathy of the congregation who remembered her at their communion. The choir members had become reacquainted with Stephens on his two visits to Wales after achieving prominence as a composer.

Sarah's interest in music may have been the key to her securing employment as a domestic for Evan Stephens in 1903. The **Salt Lake City Directory** for that year listed her as a housekeeper, boarding at the SW corner of State Street and Pine Avenue, although Evan Stephens was listed as choral director, Daynes Music Co., residing at 36 North State Street. The 1908 directory lists both Stephens and Daniels at the corner of 12th South and State Street.

To coordinate street designations and make them consistent with the city plan, in 1916 the street numbers were changed so that what was formerly 12th South became 21st South. Stephens's Pine Lodge at 1996 South State Street was the same home formerly shown at Pine Avenue (12th South) before 1916.

Sarah was a full-figured woman, ten years younger than Stephens, who performed well in her capacity in the home. She enjoyed cooking and was mentioned in Evan's letter of 20 July 1927 to H.B. Mitton in Logan: "Sarah is putting in extra shifts daily at making jellies, etc. The thinner she gets the more she wants to do. She says you didn't answer her last letter, so until you praise her raisin pie again, your name is—well, not Bro. M."

On 19 December 1920 Stephens wrote: "Miss Daniels threatens our health with plum puddings but two of them have been deflected to the direction of choir youth and to the 'children' here."

He wrote a postscript on Sarah Daniels's letter to Samuel

Mitton on 23 June 1927 which read: "You see how it is, don't you. I'll forever have salt in my soup if I run away just now" [from his birthday celebration in Salt Lake].

These quips demonstrate the good-natured antagonism which characterized Stephens's relations with his housekeeper.

On 31 March 1921 Stephens wrote, "Miss Daniels is well and hearty and looks forward to meeting you again." On 24 December 1923 he wrote: "I am going out to dine with the widow and daughter of a cousin, who was during his lifetime, a scribe to Prst.Brigham Young, and shall take the two, and Miss Daniels, to see Charles Ray in the play we saw in the making at Hollywood a year ago, 'Courtship of Miles Standish' that I hope will make an interesting day of tomorrow." [Stephens was referring to a motion picture]

Sarah did not join the Mormon church until after Evan's death in 1930. Descendents of those who knew both individuals said that she tended to be polemical. She and the composer would spend hours debating about religion, sometimes by the kitchen window within earshot of the neighbors or of the frequent house guests at Pine Lodge—Evan's "Boys" or his sister or aunt who sometimes stayed there.

Stephens's relations with women were paradoxical and can be attributed to circumstances of his life in Willard before 1882 and possibly to his childhood in Wales where he was sickly, and is reported to have stuttered.¹ As an early convert to Mormonism he was subject to some ridicule by his peers, both boys and girls. He never married, yet lived in relatively close proximity to Sarah for twenty-eight years, and wrote many songs for women including solos, duets, and choruses.

In his programming for the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir and his many choral groups of varying size, he featured female vocalists frequently. Yet he avoided relationships with women and disdained to have them wield any control over his personal life. He was lonely and attached himself passionately to the male friends of his youth, and brought many young men, some distantly related, into his home for companionship, and financed their education and careers. But he never developed close relationships of a more

personal nature with women after his early years in Willard and Logan.

As a child of eleven in Wales he accompanied his brother, John, to visit the older brother's sweetheart. Evan was keenly aware that John loved Betsy dearly. The scene made a deep impression on the young boy, and he often thought afterwards that he would be sorry if John married anyone else. The brother did marry Elizabeth Williams (Betsy) in 1870.

As written in **The Children's Friend**:

[That day] . . . birds were everywhere singing love songs, not half so modestly as these two human beings; the world seemed all a heaven of peace and love to the not over-discriminating imagination of Evan. . . .He was not making love himself but he was playing his part in helping somebody else to—alas! he has been doing the same thing all these years until his hair is gray. . . .²

In his "Reminiscence," Stephens, in speaking of himself as a poorly-clad boy herding sheep on the mountain, said that "Some years later, the same boy used to bring his 'lady love' home nights to this first little corner home." He was probably referring to a later episode in his life in Willard. He did date girls at that time and enjoyed the enthusiastic companionship of both boys and girls. Evan took J. Spencer Cornwall's mother to a dance in Logan, according to the late choir director.

Incomplete details of the early-life tragedy that Stephens avoided discussing and never clarified have appeared in four sources. None completely reveals his reasons for never marrying. One version indicates that Evan remained very fond of John's friend, Betsy, after emigrating to Utah and was disappointed when his brother married her and moved to Challis, Idaho. Evan probably had said, in jest, that if John ever passed into the Great Beyond while he lived, he would marry Betsy, and this remark could have been misinterpreted by the story teller.³

A second version identified a different young lady, Eveline, of

whom Stephens was particularly fond during his school days in Willard, but who became the sweetheart of Big John Ward. Evan said later, "I [came] to be supplanted by Big John, not so much to my regret, as I really loved Big John quite as much as I did his sweetheart."

In a letter of 9 November 1924 Evan wrote, "How I remember the old swings at Willard. My little 'girl' of those days used to conveniently faint if we swung her high. No wonder when there was such an opportunity for timely aid from such a "tribulated chap. Happy—thrice happy the youthful hearts whose dreams come true."

A third account has some authentication in the writing of George D. Pyper:

Professor Stephens was always an ardent lover of nature. Flowers, mountain streams, rocky peaks, and pine clad hills have always held for him a strong appeal. The charm of his early days at Willard has never been dispelled and there are very few peaks or nooks in those hills that cannot show his footprints. Twas here he first developed his musical genius and twas here his first compositions were written. But with the charm of that life was also associated the memory of one of his deepest sorrows, experienced in the death of a dear young friend caused by an accident which occurred while the young people of the town were rehearsing a play.⁴

The incident as reported by a descendent of one of the pioneer families of Willard would have been a deeply tragic experience for Stephens. Evan, so the story goes, was infatuated with a young lady member of the dramatic company. In the course of a melodrama in rehearsal, the villain of the play was supposed to shoot the heroine, played by the close friend of Stephens. The cast member playing the villain pulled the trigger on the gun being used as a prop in the action, and a live shell still in the chamber by

mistake was discharged, killing the girl.⁵

The fourth account is found in a little privately printed volume by Ruth Johnson. It appears to be the most authentic although specific dates are not given, nor is the name of the party involved. The story entitled "A Circle On the Water" opens with the death of Evan Stephens in 1930 and relates how some sixty years before (1870) a group of young people in Farmington, Utah would meet together in homes for socials. Their families would provide hospitality to settlers who passed through the area on their journey to L.D.S. Conferences in Salt Lake City. One of the young friends was Helen Leonard.

Family history records show a Helen Mar Leonard, born 24 April 1852, to be the daughter of Truman Leonard, who lived in North Farmington and died in 1897. Helen married John Burns in 1870 and died 12 September 1931. The Johnson story refers to Helen's friend, "Jack," most likely the John Burns who became her husband.

Evan Stephens, riding a horse to Conference (probably on his first trip at age fifteen in 1869) stopped at the Leonard home and asked to stay the night. Later that evening another family arrived, former acquaintances of the Leonards, who lived somewhere "on the Weber." The unknown young woman was one of three daughters, whose brother commented about the abominable roads across the Sand Ridge (the section of Davis County between Layton and Weber County line).

Ruth Johnson in 1930 interviewed Helen Leonard shortly before her demise, and from her bed she related the incident but had forgotten the young woman's name or family name. The author called the girl "Rhoda" for identification in the story.

Stephens went to Conference with the unnamed family and returned, because of heavy rain, in their wagon. The group attended a party at Brigham Young's home and stayed at Bishop Garn's home on Brigham Street. After conference, Stephens returned to the Tabernacle in the company of Truman Leonard, who introduced him to the organist, probably Joseph J. Daynes.

Young Evan was enchanted with "Rhoda" and after seeing her a number of times wrote a song for her. But the girl wanted him

to write anthems rather than songs praising her. Finally Stephens secured permission from "Rhoda's" family for his engagement to their daughter, and they made plans for marriage, most likely in the spring of 1871 or 1872, after the Professor would become established with the ability to provide for her.

That winter "Rhoda" became ill and Stephens rode all night after getting the message, to be with her. The unnamed illness was obviously fatal, and on her death bed "Rhoda" told the young composer to devote all his time to his music and to love her through his musical accomplishments.

Stephens came to the Leonard home that night, covered with snow with his face and hands frostbitten. He groped his way to a chair in the darkened room and told Helen and her fiance, seated before a warm fire, "Rhoda is dead." Evan rarely spoke again of his fiancee and did devote his life to music.

Speculation would place Stephens's tragic engagement six or seven years before the shooting incident, which then would have provided him additional reasons for his lack of interest in marriage after that time.⁶

A paragraph from Evan Stephens's letter to H.B. Mitton of 17 March 1922 provides a clue as to his reticence in dealing with the opposite sex: "I have been several times on the verge of jumping over the snow barricades and landing upon you, chiefly at the urgent invitation of Miss McCracken of Smithfield, who has been getting the Smithfield-ites into rendering my 'Martyrs.' But like the coward that I have ever been when a lady gave the invitation, I have failed to materialize as yet, tho I am in a sense under promise."

When Madame Melba came to Salt Lake City to sing with the Tabernacle Choir, Stephens met her at her hotel. Expressing the bitterness toward the Mormon people which was rife at that time, she said, "Mr. Stephens, before I'll sing with your choir tonight, I must know how many wives you have."

He answered quietly, "I'm sorry you pressed the question. It is almost unlawful to talk about it." When she insisted upon an answer, he said, "Since you insist, I will say that I haven't so many but there is a chance for you if you are in the market." That finished the discussion.⁷

In an interview, Mary Jack described Madam Melba's attendance at a Choir rehearsal:

... She came to the choir rehearsal and he met her and took her upstairs and introduced her to the choir. He said, 'Madame Melba, I am going to have you go downstairs and sit near the front, because we're going to sing you one of my Mormon anthems.'

She said, 'Mr. Stephens, I'll listen to it because it's yours, not because it's Mormon.' So she went down and they sang, 'Let the Mountains Shout for Joy' under his inspired leadership, and he can put the life into it. ... After it was finished, she hardly waited for the last note to run up the stairs on the side over to Brother Stephens and the choir as she said, 'Mr. Stephens, you've touched me to the depths of my very soul.' It changed her attitude, and I read somewhere that she said as she was leaving Salt Lake, 'The next time I come I'm going to visit at the home of bachelor Stephens.'⁸

When the great singer, Nordica, came to the Tabernacle to sing with the choir, Evan Stephens refused to put on a swallow-tail coat to conduct, which elicited some harsh comments from the soloist. The Professor became known as the one man Nordica knew who had gumption enough to refuse to put on a formal coat for a concert. But when he took the choir to Chicago for the World's Fair competition, at last he dressed appropriately for the concerts.

Agnes Olsen Thomas said in her autobiography that as a singer she and Stephens were seen in many of the same places. "He would both play for my singing and be my escort. He, of course, was invited for himself. I would feel lost without his musical support and also would miss his company home, for he was a fount of interesting talk. But let it be understood that nothing of a matrimonial nature was ever a part of our conversation."

Sarah Daniels may have had some romantic interest in Evan Stephens after they became well acquainted. But the Professor told her frankly that he had no intentions of marrying her or anyone else. Mary Kennedy tells a story of someone asking Evan whether he was ever going to marry, and without a word, he turned to the piano and played "A Poor Married Man," as his answer.

Mary D. McClellan Christiansen said that Stephens built Pine Lodge, his home on State Street, the same on all four sides, and jokingly said he would marry the girl who would tell him the front of the house.

After Evan Stephens passed away in October 1930, Sarah Daniels was naturally grief-stricken. Their relationship had been platonic, but nevertheless there had been some degree of companionship as Sarah ministered to him in his illnesses and as they occasionally enjoyed conferences and other events together. Steamship sailing records indicate that Sarah Daniels sailed to Europe sometime in 1907 with Stephens. They are listed as British passengers returning 17 July 1907 for "emigration" on the **SS Republic**. The ship was probably a freighter carrying only a few passengers, which were listed as 46 adults, 11 half-fare, 6 children, and 1 infant.

In a letter, after Stephens's death, dated 29 January 1931 to the Mitton family in Logan Sarah said:

I have a radio now. Stephens would not let me take one in the house. I tried one before, sent it back, got another last week, will keep this. Though I shut it up most of the time, I can't stand the constant ding-dong.

The weather has been cold for a long time. I go out every day, to town often. I hope Spring will be here soon. My health is very fair, but I am lonesome. Thirty years is a long time to live in the same house with anyone. Then one goes, the other is like the last verse of 'The Last Rose of Summer.'

Apparently Stephens had purchased a cemetery lot in his late

years, but had not arranged for perpetual care. Sarah took care of this, remarking that after she were gone, no one else would do it. She also arranged to send his music—many unfinished manuscripts and printed books and copies—to the L.D.S. Church Historical Department in care of E.P. Kimball, who had been given the charge by the composer.

The author's research for this work determined that the bulk, at least, of the unfinished manuscripts made their way into the hands of Willard Davis Stephens, a grand-nephew. In 1976 they were presented to the Library-Archives in the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City by Marylois Stephens, whose relationship is not known. Details of Evan Stephens's compositions appear in the following chapter.

In November 1931, Sarah Daniels wrote a surprising letter to Samuel Mitton and his wife in Logan. She said that on 5 November she had participated in ordinances in the Salt Lake Temple and had been vicariously "Sealed to Evan Stephens for Time and all Eternity." The authorization for the ceremony had come by specific approval from President Heber J. Grant as head of the Church and a personal friend of the Professor. This is in accordance with the belief of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that families who have worthily participated in the proper ordinances will be united in the hereafter.

In her letter Miss Daniels said, "I remained single to be here with him, and had a good chance to marry a wealthy man, but the Church stood between us and Stephens, too. Now, I also refused a good home to be with Stephens. So I feel that I deserve it [the vicarious ordinance]."

Sarah Mary Daniels died 24 July 1936 of a heart attack in Salt Lake City. Services were conducted in the McKinley Ward Chapel. Some distant relatives in Idaho were listed in her obituary.

Chapter 10

Indefatigable Composer

It was like suddenly finding oneself deeply in love. The world became a new creation and rhythm began to manifest itself in everything. I walked in rhythmic motion through the fields and behind the cows and music was felt everywhere.

Evan Stephens

The ideas from which Evan Stephens derived his hymns were all around him. As with most other successful writers, artists and musicians, a single word, a strange object, a combination of sounds could stimulate his creative impulses and the words and notes would roll off the press of his mind. Never a competent pianist, Stephens would envision his music before hearing it played or sung. He wrote of his last cantata, “. . . it seems almost a stranger to me, to the extent that I feel a little curious to hear just how some portions will sound when properly done.”

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While attending the New England Conservatory Stephens found his inability to play the piano well to be a handicap. He wrote:

My most trying ordeal was to play over some primary exercises to enable me to be placed in a

piano class. Here I was a beginner indeed; and it was as much of a marvel to teachers and fellow-students, all of whom had grown up at the keyboard of a piano, how I could write freely even for the piano, and yet play but poorly a first year study. In every way I was a puzzle, even my voice was a double one, and not a teacher in the great school could tell just how I produced my falsetto voice, and still have a bass or baritone voice in practical use.¹

J. Spencer Cornwall said, "All sorts of very funny things would start Evan composing. He would go to a show, or church and someone would say something or do something, and that is all it took."²

George D. Pyper wrote of his trip to "Stephens' Roost" in Big Cottonwood Canyon, east of Salt Lake City, in the company of H.G. Whitney, John D. Spencer and the Professor. The roost was nothing more than a native pine tree, flattened by the snows and forming a sort of platform, high up on a ledge above Brighton. Here Evan would sit cross-legged and dream of leading a mammoth choir in nature, made up of the forest below him.

Here, on the right a grove of fresh young pines represented his sopranos. A little below, in the colorful rays of the setting sun, were his contraltos. To the north, there on a raised hill, stood his tenors, and to the extreme right, under the full shadow of the hills, waited his basses. Interspersed among the pines the quaking aspens sparkled and fluttered and these furnished the brilliant accompaniment for his novel imaginary choir.³

As the evening breezes rustled among his silent choir they swayed in unison, and Stephens could trace the notes of their hymns and anthems on the warp and woof of his mind. Of these compositions, many made their way into the hymn books published by the church and church members.

Lowell Durham examined the first Hymn Book published in the church. He wrote:

Most of the tunes were either traditional, or, if

composed by members of the church were picked up and committed to memory easily and quickly. Of the ninety hymns, thirty-nine were products of converts to this new religion.

In contrast to the music generally used by the churches of that day, the Mormon-produced hymns were as light to darkness and of brightness to gloom. All the old expressions of fear and sorrow, the terrible confessions and lamentations over sin . . . give place to the songs of the Mormon Church to expressions of hope, joy and the sense of sins forgiven. More emphasis is placed upon His love and glorious conquest than upon His earthly sufferings.⁴

Many of Evan Stephens's hymns illustrate this. In defining the term "Mormonistic" in music, he said:

That which breathes optimism and not pessimism; music in which the somber must not predominate, but be used only as a means of contrast to heighten the effect of the bright. I would add, in which the minor is used only to make more effective the major, if I adhered to the prevailing idea that the minor is mournful and the major joyful, which I do not, believing that the effect of each or either in the main depends upon how they happen to be used.⁵

Taking the opposite view Joseph A. Smith observed that "an outstanding feature of the 'Mormon' hymns is their sadness; another their sincerity. Lamentations abound within them and tears can be seen and felt in many a line. Frequently one finds the earliest writing pathetic and very beautiful. . . ."⁶

Stephens's intentions were to convey a spirit of joy and brightness in all that he wrote. Especially in songs for children, he felt this quality was essential.

Commenting on his vibrant "True to the Faith," he wrote, "It isn't words or music to dream over; it is that pulsating with life and action of today. If mystery is an element of sublimity, as I believe it is claimed, and rightly in literature, our songs are wanting in that element, but they make up for it in practical clearness, devotion and fervor."

The songs of the Sabbath schools, while light, bright and unpretentious, musically are earnest, clean and natural, in tone and expression, and effective for young voices. Perhaps we have been a little too much impressed by the rhythmic swing of so-called 'gospel hymns' . . . Youth . . . still can be touched and reached by a more ennobling quality of devotional expression and earnestness, and of deeper things musically.⁷

Stephens talked much of the grandeur of spirited congregational singing and pushed the idea of congregational rehearsals in the Sunday Schools. He complained that composers in the church were not writing on "home topics." He warned of the growing taste for wishy-washy 'cheese-cloth' style of music and said there was an evil creeping among the church members in the indiscriminate use of the Moody and Sanky words and music [Gospel-hymn styles].

Dale Johnson summarizes: Though his hymns are for the most part difficult for congregations to sing and in spite of the fact that they are patterned after the popular Grand Opera choruses of the last half of the nineteenth century, they possess a certain melodic and rhythmic lilt they have found favor with both the church authorities and lay members alike."⁸

"God of Israel" was one of the Professor's favorites, and represents the type of choir hymn which he wrote. Prof. A.C.Lund offered an analysis. "In it he displays more variety of style than in any other of his works. It contains a solo for soprano and tenor, a trio, a quartet and brilliant and massive choral effects. The pastoral feeling of the middle movement is of unusual excellence,

and in essence and substance in this piece, Professor Stephens builded a lasting monument to his genius."⁹

On his way to New York in 1923, Stephens tried to answer the frequently asked question as to which of his tunes, songs and anthems he considered his best in a letter to George D. Pyper. He emphasized that each had its own personality and appealed to him in a different way, dependent on the conditions in which it was rendered. He said that numbers like "God of Israel," "Hear My Prayer," his oratorio, "The Nephites," and two cantatas, "The Vision" and "The Martyrs" aroused within him "a feeling of satisfaction and pride for the workmanship as well as emotional content—something like a fond parent may feel over having a child who proves a real 'leader' in his line in a community."

Stephens confessed that hearing some of his work much sung and loved made him resentful because others more neglected may have superior qualities, such as his male choruses published in the **Era** and ladies' choruses in **Young Woman's Journal**, and some fifty other things not published.¹⁰

Perhaps an analysis of Evan Stephens's music and the genius which produced it is most valid in the words of his contemporaries—those who knew him and worked with his music. The Professor's friend and co-worker, George D. Pyper wrote:

Possibly the artistic vein dwelling his blood, his natural love of flowers, music, and the beautiful—all these may instinctively suggest such thoughts, and certainly his surroundings may have furnished an inspiration for his creations. Yet there must be a deeper feeling back of it all—an interest in the happiness of others.¹¹

J. Spencer Cornwall, later director of the choir, said in an interview, in part:

His style of writing was Italian. He wrote more dotted eighths and sixteenths than any other church composer. His music was all optimistic, always

full of hope. To Evan soloists were the big thing and his choir was a background for these soloists. . . . 'The Voice of God Again is Heard' is the only true choral written by Brother Stephens. . . . George Careless wrote a new type of hymn more distinctively a choir hymn; they are more elaborate than the congregational hymn. Stephens followed this new type of writing.

Margaret Summerhays was a well-known soloist, who told of walking away from J.J. McClellan's funeral with Stephens, who remarked that he had differences with the organist but had respect and admiration for him. He said, "I have written more than will ever be published. John was a young man and I am an old man; he had life before him so why couldn't I have gone instead of John? Miss Summerhays said in the interview:

Professor Stephens was very theatrical and highly emotional. He possessed a fine sense of melody. He liked big effects and big volume of sound. He lacked finesse and his harmonies were very rudimentary. He didn't refine his work. Brother Stephens liked the mountains and loved to sing about them. He wrote songs to fit the sacred services. His field was church music.

Gerrit deJong, Jr. was an educator who knew Stephens and was interviewed by Dale Johnson:

Evan had told me that he had written seven hundred compositions, mostly hymns, and thought about half of them were good. He was the glorious flourish at the end of the pioneer music period of our church. . . . His music technically would not be rated very high, but always breathed the typical spirit of Mormonism. . . . His music has helped a lot of people to see the value of the Gospel of Christ. ¹¹

Perhaps the most insightful of the early biographical sketches of Evan Stephens is that by B.F. Cummings, Jr. in 1895. His observations are relevant to our understanding of the Professor's great achievements:

It has been stated, in speaking of the childhood of Evan Stephens, that one-part singing did not impress him deeply, nor arouse within him that musical enthusiasm for which he is so noted. But when he first heard part singing, the melodious blending of musical sounds and chords, the effect thrilled him like a revelation. His gift does not deal simply with tune, the rising and falling cadence of an air. Rather it revels in harmony, and in the emotions and depths and shades of feeling expressed by combinations of musical sounds. . . .

A mind like his lives much of its time in a world to which the masses of mankind are strangers, and which can be penetrated only by such as are gifted like himself. He feels, reasons and even **thinks** in music, and the gamut is the tablet on which he records the products of his mentality.

In him is again exemplified the truism that hard work is the essence of genius . . . ¹²

In his compositions for the M.I.A. and Sunday Schools, Stephens was aiming for a style of music not yet supplied by our composers; a happy mixture of the religious and secular, without being trifling. We want that music that has in it the vigor and sprightliness of youth. To be as serviceable as possible it should generally be so arranged that it could be advantageously sung by either male or female voices alone or together, and sung with a melody sufficiently attractive to be useful if sung alone. ¹³

Stephens enjoyed writing for women's voices, and numbered among his compositions are many choruses, solos, duets and trios. In addressing officers of the Y.L.M.I.A. on How to Train Young Ladies' Choirs he emphasized the need for proper and suitable selections upon which to work. He wrote:

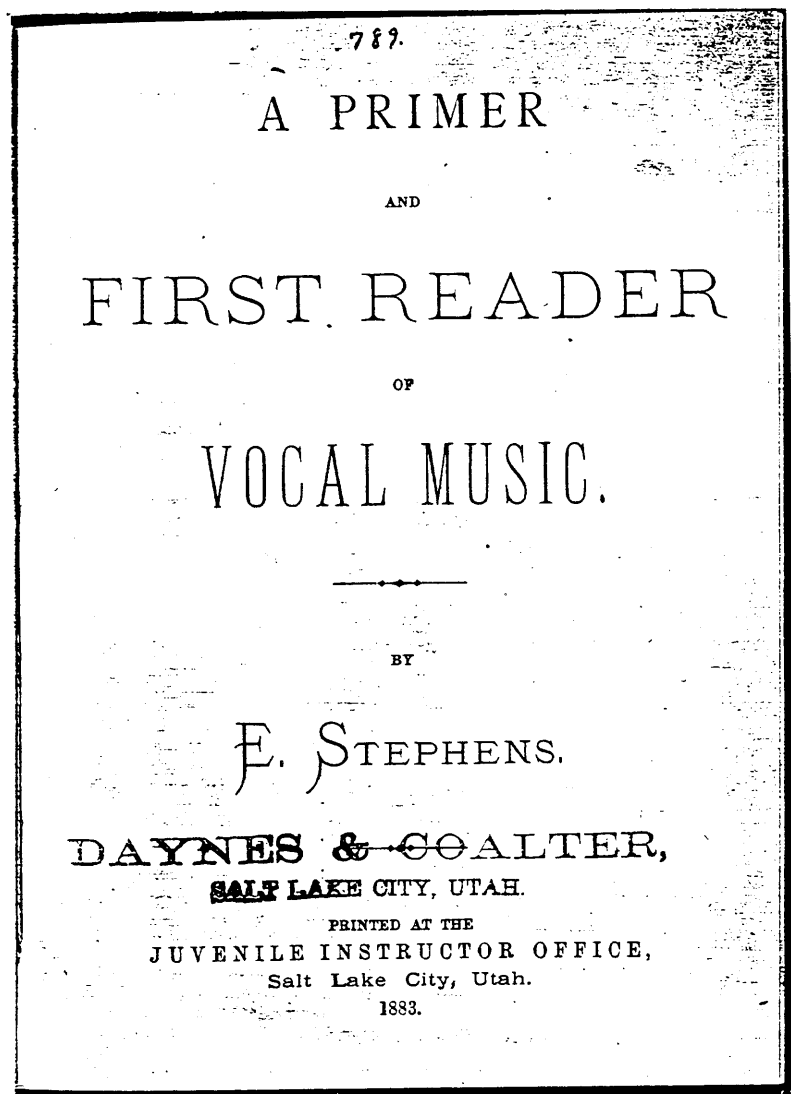
Our composers, as well as our poets, are to contribute for you their best endeavors. Music produced by ladies' voices alone has about it a superior charm in the way of refinement, and delicacy. Male voice work is more stirring and powerful, but less refined and delicate. The mixed voice choir is the ideal for our people. This form should always form the central figure. But the female choir should supplement it upon the one side, and the male choir on the other, while the children, like beautiful buds, should be strewn all over the base of it, if not really form the base of our vocal musical structure.

The Professor made a strong point regarding the unwillingness of young women to sing the "middle part" rather than the "lead" soprano. "They rather prefer to ruin their voices—and the musical effects—by straining to sing high soprano intended only for voices of high compass."¹⁴

As pointed out in previous chapters, Evan Stephens saw his first composition in print in 1875. Until 1888 when he produced his first book of music, he continued to have many hymns and anthems, along with some duets, trios and choruses published in the auxiliary magazines of the L.D.S. Church. But because he felt that more needed to be done to improve congregational singing and also to assist lay members and children in elementary study of music, he decided to produce his own study guide, **A Primer and First Reader of Vocal Music**. He followed its success with his second reader, **The Song Garland** in some fourteen months. In succeeding years he edited some publications and played a major part in issue of others. The last work he published himself was his cantata, "The Martyrs" in 1921.

In the last forty-five years of his life, Evan Stephens had, at times, drawn an above-average income from his choir position and teaching, which enabled him to do a great amount of traveling in this country and in Europe. But as an extremely generous and considerate teacher and friend, he made many gifts to his students

and those in need, depleting his resources. He was always optimistic about earning a reasonable profit from his publications and music; but that time never came. So the financial considerations of his composing many times nagged at his usual cordiality and depressed him. In the next chapter his other activities will be treated in detail.



A Primer and First Reader of Vocal Music. Evan Stephens's first publication of a book of music in 1883. Photocopy courtesy Utah Historical Society.

Chapter 11

Traveler and Enterpriser

For the dedication of the L.D.S. Temple in St. George, Utah on 1 January 1877, Evan Stephens composed an anthem, "This House We Dedicate to Thee" to be sung as a part of the ceremony. No information is available as to whether Stephens attended the dedication. Then in 1884 he composed a special anthem, "Song of the Redeemed" for dedication of the temple in Logan, Utah on 17 May, and undoubtedly traveled back to Logan for that special occasion. A service had been held previously in 1877 when the temple basement was dedicated, and Stephens's "Hosannah" anthem was sung.

On the morning of the dedication, a procession formed at the corner of Main and Center streets in Logan, below the temple site. The Logan band led the parade, playing all the way up the hill, dressed in Civil War uniforms—sky blue trousers trimmed with yellow stripes on the legs, dark blue coats and jaunty black hats with ostrich plume. The band was followed by the architects and temple workmen, then the Logan choir, the Twelve Apostles, the Presiding Patriarch, Presiding Bishopric, presidents of the lesser priesthood and their counselors, presidencies of other priesthood quorums and stakes, and finally, the general membership. For Logan this was the beginning of a new era.

The Tabernacle Choir, in which Stephens was singing, traveled in eight automobiles to Ogden on 23 February 1883 to give a concert. The choir history noted, "The effort of Mr. Evan Stephens in the song, 'When the Leaves Begin to Turn' was somewhat of an extraordinary character, as his voice reached to as high a pitch as we have ever heard, and it was not only so, but it was sweetly rendered." ¹ This was Evan's initial trip with the Tabernacle Choir to sing in another city.

His major years of travel began in September 1885 when he left for Boston to study at the New England Conservatory, and returned in some ten months. Although he had traveled by foot, rail, and car to Idaho to visit his family many times, his first trip north to be noted in the press was in 1892 for a week "to get braced up for a big season's work." ²

Just a year later he traveled to Chicago with the choir to the World's Fair and national recognition. After that, his movements usually were noted publicly.

On 20 April 1895 the *News* reported that Stephens had gone to California for rest and recreation. Joseph J. Daynes directed the Tabernacle Choir in his absence.

January of 1896 found Stephens in San Francisco arranging for the choir's forthcoming excursion in April to several West Coast cities. He found the travel exhausting and wrote in a report to the *News* that his walking to various halls and offices had tired him so much that he had to decline an invitation to a New Year's Eve party!

He wrote, "Oh, this perpetual summer land does seem very lovely to a lover of nature. If my singers and others who come out here in the spring enjoy it as much as I do now—with all the work, I will not regret having put the notion in their heads nor will they regret a whole winter's earnest, enthusiastic 'rustling' and practice, which must be well done, as much will be expected of us. . . ." ³

The choir's April tour was Stephens's sixth trip to California. The first ones must have been taken in the early 80's. The travelers arrived home at the end of April, and soon Stephens was planning another concert tour to the national Eisteddfod in Denver. He and John James traveled by train on 11 July to perfect arrangements.

The tour commenced for some 400 persons 31 August 1896. Stephens considered it a great success despite some criticism in the press of the soloists and programming.

Professor Stephens demonstrated his love for travel with a continuing series of trips until the last few years of his life when his health did not permit the rigorous schedule of work and pleasure in which he had indulged. A review of his life provides ample evidence that travel experiences compensated for his lack of formal education. That he was able to negotiate time away from the Tabernacle Choir and other musical pursuits so frequently is amazing.

In August 1897 Stephens made his second trip to Yellowstone National Park which had been created in 1872. Hotels and roads had been constructed, but the Professor and his companion, Dr. Willard Christopherson, traveled with horses and a buckboard, and camped at ranches or wherever they could find grass and water. Their adventures were preserved in a letter written to Horace Ensign, Jr. then on a mission in Colorado.

Stephens mentioned that they stayed at the Idanha Hotel in Soda Springs, Idaho, where a ball was to be held in the dining room. But he and his friend "were rather tired and sleepy, so slept while others danced." Perhaps this offered an excuse to avoid social contact with women which Stephens, at the age of forty-three, seemed purposely to avoid. Otherwise there would be no reason for him to mention the incidents in his letters.

At their camp at Chub Springs, Evan caught four nice fish and Willard shot a dozen ducks, which they ate for breakfast. Though the day was Sunday, Stephens said, "We felt there was more worship in moving through the lovely hills and mountains than stopping in this lonely place; so we traveled about 30 miles to another ranch. Here after catching a few more trout, we remain[ed] over night."

The next day they met a party of Ogdenites who looked like "stranded gypsies. . . faces all colors from dark yellow to salmon red, dresses dust-covered from a high skirt with sweater bodice, bicycle suit, to shakers, glasses, etc. while the gents' faces were a grimy mixture of hair and dust. Horses, mostly ribs and hip-joints,

yet they were merry and having a great outing. Such is human fancy.”

Two days later they camped at Henry’s Lake, where they met a group of musicians from Butte, Montana and enjoyed a musical evening with violin, guitar, organ and vocal music. When they entered the park they had to check their guns and were left “to the mercy of bears and other wild animals, pets of the government, who must not be touched. If they attack us we must simply beg them to deal gently with us and give a bear hug for hug.”

Stephens’s description of their wild night camping at West Thumb is lengthy, but the particulars are interesting. After registering with “Uncle Sam’s defenders” the campers learned there had been a robbery and the park soldiers were armed to catch the thieves. Two visitors who came informed them that they were camped on the bear trail, on which bears came down during the night to the garbage dump behind a nearby cafe. They were warned to make plenty of noise with pans and tin cans to scare the bears away who wouldn’t hurt them. Later that night, three soldiers appeared, heavily armed. Stephens wrote that “the tragic impression for a moment made me feel as if I might be under arrest and court-martialed and shot in a few moments.”

The soldiers talked “big” about shooting the desperados on sight, but finally requested that if the bandits came in the night to steal their horses, “or purloin some of [their] newly made soda-fried doughnuts” that one camper should steal away to inform the soldiers and the other should argue with the purported thieves.

Stephens said, “We were then left, two lonely waifs, far from home, with our campfire embers dying away with our courage; silently we stole into our cheerless tent with our fancy tossing us from the embrace of a great black bear to the arms of a blacker desperado. And our horses, our chief pride and our only hope of escape from this fearful place.”

They hid their money and “Willie” took up his arms of a tin plate, a tin pan, and a hatchet. Evan undressed, but kept his socks on!

During the night they were awakened by the rattling of the buckboard and their horses tramping wildly. Willie tried calmly to sooth the mare, and they searched for bear or robber but found

nothing. They scarcely had settled down when the noises broke again but more wildly. Boxes, frying pans, and plates were hurled in all directions, along with firebrands from their fire.

As Evan wrote in his inimitable style:

Will was thoroughly aroused to the sense of his duty and began vigorously striking the plate and pan together. I wonder we did not think of singing but we did not. I led cautiously out, this time Will following in Chinese tragedy fashion, earnestly beating the tins and grasping the deadly hatchet, exclaiming, ‘They are bears, sure.’

The two men found, however, that the buckboard had been swung around the tongue and swept their equipment with it. The mare stood trembling by their tent; she had been reaching for oats and bent the brake handle, getting caught there, and had jumped violently, causing the damage. They saw no bears that night nor on the rest of the trip, except some that were caged at the hotels.⁴

On 23 August 1897, Stephens was given a royal reception at Rexburg, Idaho where friends came to pay their respects.

Then in December 1898 Stephens again took leave from the Tabernacle Choir and traveled to New York on a culture and sightseeing trip. He sent long reports to the **Deseret News** exuberantly outlining his thrills at seeing Central Park, and then attending at least four Metropolitan Opera performances along with a Sunday concert at the same house and a great program by the Boston Symphony. He was met at the ferry entrance by R.C. Easton, a Utahn who had sung with the choir and was studying there—who accompanied Stephens and his companion to some of the attractions.

Upon returning to Salt Lake, Stephens expressed his gratitude for Madame Nordica’s allowing him to attend rehearsals at the Metropolitan Opera. She also had arranged with Prof. Walter Damrosch for Stephens to attend rehearsals of the New York Oratorio Society’s production of Handel’s “Messiah.”

Evan offered some advice to young musicians on pursuing

their studies in New York or Chicago, being dismayed by the high cost of instruction at \$5.00 for a half-hour lesson. He suggested that they learn all possible in their home communities at a tenth of the expense. Then only if they had extraordinary ability and sufficient money to pay for the best instructors should they consider the large centers. He concluded that "worry financially, homesickness and loneliness take up nine-tenths of the time and energy they need to devote to mastering their studies. . . ." ⁵

Before the choir's eastern tour in 1899 fizzled, Stephens again traveled to California during the summer, leaving Prof. McClellan to conduct in his absence. Besides enjoying San Francisco's musical events, he found time to study the list of choir members and had it reduced to 175 for the scheduled tour, regretting having to leave so many at home. Obviously the cancellation of the excursion was a disappointment to the conductor, who then made plans to tour Europe.

His announcement was made 2 January and he proposed to leave 5 February 1900 to be gone about a year, although he actually returned 20 September 1900. Evan's original plan was to take in the New York opera season and then spend some time in Florida, sailing for Europe in April. But reflecting a drastic change in plans, he and his companion, Willard Christopherson, spent a month in Chicago and New York and sailed on the *SS Belgenland* on 14 March, arriving in London March 22. Although he said the voyage was pleasant, the ship encountered a violent storm the second day, making most of the passengers violently ill. Stephens offered a vivid description of the storm:

The steamer had been well rigged and was ready to contest for the mastery with the defiant neptune. Below stairs in the cyclone-gripped steamer the scene was an awesome one. The *Belgenland* did everything she ought not. With terrific jerks she wallowed from side to side, then like an angry beast, she put her nose down and stood on her head, raising the screw into the howling air to churn and rattle till we felt the stern

post had to submit to the green waters that rolled over our heads viciously.

Stephens sent long letters from his various stops in Europe to the Tabernacle Choir. The bulletins are interesting because they reveal the Professor as an observer, sometimes extremely opinionated, yet eager to embrace the enchanting poetics of the countryside, the sensuous arias of opera, the overwhelming magnificence of the six-hundred member Royal Choral Society. His poetic descriptions and oftimes gentle, frequently sardonic digressions are a delight.

A few of them are quoted here:

English first-class carriage: A caboose filled with a set of rather worn carpet chairs, or lounges, ranged on each side, two facing each other, by each window, and a small aisle up the center of the car; that was the American part of it; and wonderful for England it was, as it made it possible for every passenger in that car to actually rub against every other. English excusiveness was entirely set aside.

Hotel room in London: It was large enough, cold enough, sombre enough, and afterwards dirty enough to suit the most aristocratic.

Westminster Abbey: A wonderful pile of rocks, pointed gables, stained glass and soot.

The Metropolitan Opera at intermission: The house is a blaze of electric lights and we leave our perch to go to the sides, where we can look down on those below us. Circle after circle of women dressed in beautiful silk and satin gowns of all delicate shades of colors, diamonds sparkling in their hair, around their throats and upon their dresses. Millions of dollars are shining beneath us.

France: A day's journey to France and what a difference! How much more like home! I am simply charmed with the French at home. Happy,

contented, clean, forever chatting. What I saw on my short visit seemed ideal, with two exceptions, namely: inhumanity to horses, and the abominable 'tips.'

Wales: (Pencader, his birthplace) At last I emerge out of a tunnel into the little winding vale where I first saw the light, where a mother's tender care and love taught me the best things I have learned in life. How like and yet unlike what I remembered! It seemed crushed together into a little play garden, places that I thought a long distance to be sent on an errand, were all within a few steps.

Performance in London of J. Colridge Taylor's 'Hiawatha': (In Albert Hall with chorus of 600 and orchestra of 100 pieces) The young composer—a mulatto . . . born in America, and schooled in England, conducted in a very spirited and decided, but quite awkward manner, nearly shaking his right arm off. But he kept them well in time and they were trained by their regular conductor, Dr. Bridge, in shading and expression, so that without signals from the composer they interpreted the music gloriously, apparently feasting on it themselves. Smooth, rich and finely balanced with a certain earnestness and refinement, they far exceeded any chorus singing I ever heard in America, and even the orchestra and soloists were far below them in finish.

Stephens was very complimentary in his comments on the Paris Exposition and especially on Welsh male chorus singing. His visit to Wales was a highly emotional experience for him, visiting his birthplace and seeing a few living relatives there. He was also pleased to drill the Pencader male chorus one evening and trained the Christiania chorus for six weeks. He returned home earlier than expected because the only ship he could sail on to attend October Conference left 30 August. Stephens's companion,

Willard Christopherson, stayed with him two months in England and then went to Norway for his mission.⁶

Professor Stephens resumed his direction of the Tabernacle Choir at the Conference in 1900 and continued his regular activities until he directed the concert excursion to California in March 1902. Then on 27 March at choir rehearsal he announced that he had secured a leave of absence from the First Presidency to travel again to Europe from the middle of April until August. J.J. McClellan was voted to replace Stephens during his absence, and Prof. Giles was appointed organist.

On this second European excursion, Stephens's emphasis was on the teaching of children to sing. His letter sent home and published in the **Deseret News** was addressed to his Juvenile Singers. He was on board the **S.S. Commonwealth**, traveling with the group of Mormon missionaries on their way to assignments in Europe. In his announcement to the choir on his trip, he said that the California tour had impaired his health to the point that he was "almost a physical wreck." But on this sailing, as before, he seemed immune to sea sickness, and in good spirits. When he returned home he said he had never felt so strong and well in his life as then.

In his letter to the young singers, Stephens displayed great concern over their less-than-thorough preparation for later life. He felt they should be taught to be more earnest and thoughtful and less frivolous. He said, "At present as much as I love them, I cannot help but realize that they compare unfavorably with many young men and women of the world in this respect."

In speaking of the missionary group he said:

Good, dear, hearty boys, but as full of Utah frivolity as an egg is of meat. And the earnest look and behavior of thoughtful men is so foreign to some of them that to even assume it is to be unnatural, untrue, and even painful. In two years from now they will have acquired it, and may look and act even unnaturally old. How different it would be if we had not been brought up to be so full

of nonsense. Boys and girls, do be in earnest. There may not be so much 'fun' in it, but there is a great deal more pleasure in it.

Stephens decried the fact that the missionaries, while singing admirably on board the ship, could sing only Moody and Sankey gospel songs" instead of Latter-day Saint hymns and music.

In summing up the experience, Stephens said, "In a practical way, too, I have found much of what I am ever in search of—information and suggestions that may be of some benefit to me and those for whom I labor. I have taken particular note of methods used in the 'old world' in training the youth to sing and read music . . ." ⁷

Again in 1903 the Professor made two trips to California, the first to arrange accommodations and itinerary for the Tabernacle Choir, and the second to direct the excursion. Apparently he visited California at least once between 1903 and 1907.

His third and final vacation to Europe was in the summer of 1907. Though nothing appeared in the press, he must have taken Sarah Daniels with him to revisit Wales. Sailing records indicate that Evan and Sarah both left Liverpool 17 July 1907 on the **S.S. Republic**. This ship carried only 64 passengers with both Utahns listed as British passengers and both traveling on reduced-fare tickets.

On this trip the choir conductor found that England was taking the lead among all nations in choral music. He heard a concert sung by five thousand children at the Crystal Palace in London which impressed him greatly. His investigation into teaching methods with children confirmed that much was being done in the public schools of both England and Wales. He wrote in an article:

Special stress is at present laid on the proper use of the child voice which should still further perfect the voices in the near future. The greatest source of good is that the boys are especially trained here for good musical work. Would that we could

take the hint, and make more effort to train our boys, even more than our girls. It is the thing we need above all else musically, and even religiously it is one of our blessings most neglected. ⁸

Enthused by his European experience, Stephens prepared for the 1907 season by submitting to the *Deseret News* an unequivocal appeal to present and future Tabernacle Choir members. He repeated the same complaints he had voiced previously on many occasions about conflict of duties between the wards and stakes and choir members. This time he referred to the situation in Ogden where a very competent choir had been organized rivaling the Salt Lake group.

Note what our sister organization can do in Ogden with just a determined stake presidency at its back. When a member of that choir fails to report for duty a letter of inquiry signed by the president of the stake is forthcoming and no other church duty can be given as an excuse. If the member is more needed elsewhere . . . he is honorably released from the choir while another good singer is searched for to fill his place.

The Professor went on to say that Salt Lake could have a choir twice the size of Ogden's with the same procedures, but with twice the artistic possibilities because the Salt Lake choir "Is heard by 99 out of every 100 strangers passing through our land." He outlined the exciting features on the fall schedule—a concert with Madam Gadski, the greatest of Wagnerian sopranos; a new complete work, "The Golden Legend"; another concert with Sousa; and an appearance of the great artist, Calve; plus new music by home composers and from standard master works.

The article was concluded with an unprecedented statement: "If this cannot be done right and in a way to do justice to the work and the community, it will be far better to disband this historic organization before it brings disgrace instead of credit to us all." ⁹

Stephens's travels continued, with the heralded Eastern tour to New York and Washington in 1911 by the choir, and an excursion to New York after his release in 1916. He also traveled again to Los Angeles in 1923 and toured Utah and Idaho at various times.

From the beginning of his career in Logan and later in Salt Lake City with the Tabernacle Choir, Evan Stephens understood that his activities had to be self-sustaining. His living habits were conservative, for example, eschewing a Pullman berth for sitting in a chair car enroute to Boston in 1885. He managed the affairs of the choir and his classes the same way. He was always willing to devote time and means to further musical progress, never placing his personal gain as a major consideration.

For example, on the May Festival of 1890 he was supposed to receive one-fifth of the receipts for management expense. But after the soloists, orchestra, and choral society were paid, there was only \$269.40 left for him, which was \$417.10 less than the agreed sum. After the settlement he said, "But in consideration of the excellent results in every other way of our first 'May Festival' I am content, only regretting that the public did not make it possible to have a couple of thousand dollars for charitable purposes."¹⁰

From 1885 to 1895 Stephens averaged nearly two thousand pupils per year who acquired an insight into reading vocal music and chorus singing. According to the **Contributor**:

About three-fourths of all this labor has been performed gratuitously, and the rest at a nominal tuition fee, seldom more than a dollar per term [or thirteen lessons for 75¢]. At ordinary prices of even class teaching, the public of the northern half of the Territory, mainly of this city, have received no less than \$50,000 worth of vocal music lessons gratis from Professor Stephens. The latter frankly states that, for the work for which he has been paid, he has received during the last ten years an average of about two hundred dollars per month.¹¹

His teaching at the University of Utah in 1896, for instance, brought him only \$300 for the first six months, and would pay only \$200 for the last four months. To bring in a little income, the University Catalog of 1893-94 showed Stephens renting rooms at his home at 43 Alameda Avenue for \$5.00 to \$10.00 per month, and board and lodging at \$3.50 to \$5.00 per week.

For the Stephens Opera Company, their performances in 1889 were artistically successful but financially disappointing. Seven performances brought in slightly over \$4,000 with a net of only \$747.21. The figures recorded by George D. Pyper do not show any salaries; presumably the casts performed for the love of their art, or for very low wages.

Professor Stephens received a salary for his work with the Tabernacle Choir, which was increased to \$2,000 per year in 1895 when he was expected to devote full time to the big organization. Of course his work with the Sunday Schools, M.I.A. organizations, and other church groups was donated. He did receive some small and varying amounts of pay for his management of concerts and choir excursions, but also was instrumental in raising considerable sums for religious and charitable activities. In 1892 a grand concert given by the Sunday Schools netted \$750 for publication of teaching aids. Another similar concert in 1882 netted \$400 for the Sunday School Union.

In 1885, the date of Stephens's benefit concert before he left to study, the Tabernacle was closed to all events where an admission charge was made. This rule was in effect until 1889 and posed a hardship for the juvenile choir concerts, where other smaller facilities had to be used.

In the years 1900 to 1905 Evan Stephens supplemented his music income from participation in some commercial businesses. He never discussed them, but he was listed in the **Salt Lake City Directory** in the following positions:

- 1900 Vice President, Salt Lake Nursery.
- 1902 Choral Director, Daynes Music at 36 N. State St.
- 1904 President, Daynes and Romney Piano Co.
- 1905 President, Romney Piano Co.

Apparently Stephens was thought to be wealthy by some of his choir members and associates, but Mary Woozley Jensen made the interesting observation: "Stephens was wealthy but he spent it as he made it. Used to take in a boy every year or so and educate him. Five or six of them he sent to the University and let them take anything they wanted and he would pay for it."¹² Judge Noel Pratt and Dr. Thomas Thomas were two men who received their education through Evan's generosity. He educated Wallace Packham and referred him to an excellent position in California.

When his friend, Les Dunn, was about to be married, Stephens offered him a piece of property on which to build a home, although Dunn settled in another area. The Professor gave his young student, Horace Ensign Jr., a home as a wedding present, and gave several organs as gifts, one to the parents of long-time choir member Evangeline Beesley.

In his twenty six years with the Tabernacle Choir, only once did Stephens petition the First Presidency for funds—the small amount of \$250. Beyond this the choir was self sustaining with expenses for music, excursions and incidentals of nearly a hundred thousand dollars.¹³

The choir's funds came mainly from their many concerts given locally and on their tours. Some of the Salt Lake programs yielded a fair profit, but the only profitable out-of-state tour was to the West Coast in 1902. Yet, "In ten years, the choir netted over \$50,000 from its concerts. This sum was spent on a library of choral music. Much of this music has been composed by L.D.S. composers [but] most of it is the work of the masters."¹⁴

The Griggs diary of 29 January 1902 indicates that the Tabernacle Choir outings to Saltair and other locations had cost some \$30,000.

Shortly after Evan Stephens became choir director, the membership was doubled, requiring additional choir seats. Though the church architect designed the improvements according to the director's plans, the choir shared the cost with the church on this project.

The Tabernacle was furnished without charge to the choir, but in the earlier days, the cost of heating and lighting the huge

building was prohibitive and so the choir had to work in a separate rehearsal hall or in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square.

In September 1920 the General Music Committee was appointed to oversee musical considerations in the church. On 8 December of that year the committee discussed the question of an equity contract with composers whose music they might wish to publish. Some works were published to support the committee financially, but later this operation was given to Deseret Book Company. The members also recommended that composers be paid for their music, but the amount and conditions were left open.¹⁵

Stephens won two prizes in competitions sponsored by the committee, who agreed to credit him \$5 each for 56 new hymn settings he would compose, and \$1 each for 164 transcriptions.¹⁶

For his two cantatas, "The Vision" and "The Martyrs" composed in 1920 and 1921, Stephens was not happy with the financial arrangements. For the first work he received ten percent of the net. On the June performance his share was \$110 while the Music Committee's share was \$1,100 clear plus 2500 passes for Conference attendees. On all performances, the Committee netted \$3,811.

The attendance was poor on the presentation of "The Martyrs" on which Stephens had printed the music himself, but had difficulty in disposing of the copies to recover his costs.¹⁷

After coming to Salt Lake City in 1882 Stephens lived at several addresses but secured a home in the vicinity of what was then 12th South and State Street. This house was large enough that he could entertain hundreds of people and was host to the Tabernacle Choir there. He christened the home "Pine Lodge" because of its location on Pine Avenue. A flowing well was on the property and Stephens dug out an area for two artificial lakes which were of sufficient size and depth for boating. He landscaped the lot with trees and flowers and installed a fountain in one lake. Pine Lodge was a favorite haunt of the Professor's young friends who frequented secluded "lovers' nooks". The property totaled some four acres with the lakes, lawns and orchards.

George R. Gygi, as a teenager, was hired to do odd jobs around the property—cleaning out the fish pond, cutting lawns and

picking fruit. He wrote that the property extended through the block, almost to Main Street, from Hollywood Avenue (then Pine Avenue) almost to 21st South. On warm summer evenings, the Farmer's Ward congregation would hold Sacrament meeting on the lawn, at Evan's invitation.¹⁸

In a letter to S.B. Mitton 10 August 1927, Evan said,

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I am glad not to be too prominent in it as that will make the others more active and more responsible. There are times when one prefers a 'back seat' and this is one of them for me.⁵

The year 1921 saw the completion of "The Martyrs" as Evan Stephens's second definitive work. He was assigned the Monday of April Conference weekend when many visitors had returned home and on a night when bad weather kept the audience to a maximum of 3,000. Some quotes from the reviewer indicate the enthusiastic reception of the work:

The subject treated has much more of the dramatic element in it than the 'Vision,' and it is in the expression, the dramatic that Stephens is exceedingly gifted, and he rose to heights in the new composition to which he has seldom attained in his long and prolific career as a composer. It is certain that there is much in the text and music of 'The Martyrs' that will serve the Church well as appropriate music on its beliefs and traditions. Evan Stephens is first and always a writer of poetry and music expressive of the faith of his people.

He is unquestionably at his best in his massive expression of the full chorus. There are moments of tremendous exaltation in some of the passages for full chorus, notably in his treatment of the hymn tune with choral accompaniment, 'Praise to the Man' in the 'Choral,' and in the final chorus, 'Honor and Fame.' The instrumental accompaniment on the fugue in the last chorus is a most unusual treatment and is as pleasing as it is original.⁶

Stephens was proud of his two cantatas, and in a comparison of his various works he said:

So the musician, in conceiving selections, finds some of extraordinary fine workmanship, and having put out his best efforts in developing his themes and subjects and making a superior artistic work of it, finds his interest enhanced in it to the point of seeming favoritism, yet perhaps love it no more than the less pretentious members of his family. Such a feeling I have for numbers like 'God of Israel,' 'Awake My Soul,' 'Hear My Prayer' (unpublished), 'The Pioneer,' my oratorio 'The Nephites' and two cantatas, the 'Vision' and the 'Martyrs,' and some others . . .⁷

Fred Graham, who had managed some of the choir's trips and was an accomplished vocal soloist, organized a traveling company in October under the auspices of the music committee to tour the hinterlands under the direction of Stephens. The double quartet was scheduled for fourteen performances in thirteen days, with twelve rehearsals enroute, each time with a different choir. The "Vision" was one of the Professor's compositions programmed.

Unusual circumstances made the trip both awkward and difficult for Stephens. He was to ride with the committee chairman who had recommended his release from the Tabernacle Choir. He was the one who had said, "Try some younger man." Stephens said he bore no malice against this individual, one of his long-time "Boys", whom he realized was perfectly sincere in his actions in 1916.⁸

Stephens continued in his composing after the completion of the cantatas. He mentioned twenty-four choruses for men and boys as published in the **Improvement Era** and twenty numbers from the **Young Woman's Journal**, combined into a booklet suitable for M.I.A. use. With the work assigned by the Church Music Committee he was kept reasonably busy as his health and outlook would permit.⁹

Two more events gave him increased recognition. The Los Angeles choir brought him to their city in December 1922 for a festival week which included performances of both of Stephens's cantatas. The correspondent to the **News** wrote: When Professor Stephens arrived on the 'Limited' he was welcomed and escorted by auto to mission headquarters, and the entertainment of the venerable old composer commenced, but not until the professor himself had done some entertaining in his youthful, interesting, humorous way."

Stephens took part in the final rehearsal of the choir of 150 voices. The Sunday evening performance was said to be the most important musical event in the history of Los Angeles Stake. For seven days the visitor was entertained with sightseeing, dinners, and parties. On the last day a visit to the Charles Ray movie studio was arranged where Stephens met the star. A young man from Salt Lake, Wallace Packham, had come to Los Angeles and traveled

with him to San Francisco where he was treated with utmost kindness.

Probably the highlight of the visit was Stephens's determining that his cantatas had been performed a dozen times in several cities, including San Diego at Balboa Park before an audience of 15,000. Alexander Schreiner, then a missionary in California, played an organ concert at that event on the great Spreckles pipe organ. He was recognized by Stephens as a "coming genius."¹⁰

The other event occurred in 1923 when Stephens went to Camden, New Jersey to record Mormon music, including some of his compositions. The Professor said the trip was interesting and pleasant, but that he wished that a half day could have been spent in recording music other than hymn tunes. He was amazed at how the musicians and other production people became interested in "Mormonism", and wished he had been able to have them hear the finales of his cantatas and "Awake My Soul."

He considered the recording by the quartet of "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy" to be an ideal reproduction," and longed for the day when recordings could be made of every important musical event in Utah with local facilities.

Much of Evan Stephens's work in his late period after the Fall of 1920 concerned the Church Music Committee. He served faithfully in the assignments he was given, including composition of the 56 new hymn tunes and 164 transcriptions mentioned previously. He had worked intimately with the committees of the Deseret Sunday School Union and other auxiliaries, and with the group under George Careless preparing the first edition of the **Psalmody** in 1889. He had a total of 109 pieces included in the official hymn books from 1889 to 1950, with his highest total of 84 in the 1927 **Hymns**. But he found increasing dissatisfaction with his music among some of the younger musicians, trained in universities both in this country and Europe, including some on the General Committee. The group included Melvin J. Ballard as chairman, with George D. Pyper, Edward P. Kimball, Anthony C. Lund, John J. McClellan, Tracy Y. Cannon, H.G. Whitney, B.Cecil Gates, Lizzie Thomas Edwards, Joseph Ballentine, Margaret Summerhays, Mathilda W. Cahoon, and himself.

Stephens's last composition assignment came in January 1930. Writing of this he said:

The last thing I have written is an anthem. President Ivins sent for me about three weeks ago. I thought they were going to send me to the Hawaiian Islands on a mission. Brother Nibley said, 'We sent for you to tell you that we want you to write a special anthem for the centennial celebration in the Tabernacle. We want you to do what you have done with the 'Hosannah.' We want you to write something that the congregation can join in with the chorus, for a mass of ten thousand people.'

I said: 'I will try, you are giving me a hard task to write music that a congregation can sing, but I'll do the best I can.'¹¹

Stephens's later years can be examined more fully and candidly by study of his letters to his friend and fellow composer, Samuel Bailey Mitton of Logan, Utah. They provide an intimate view of the professor's life from 1916 to 1929. Three letters from his housekeeper, Sarah Daniels, give details of his last illness and her feelings. The sixty-six letters are preserved in the private collection of Mary Mitton Kennedy.

Chapter 13

Letters to Samuel Bailey Mitton

Of the sixty-three letters written by Evan Stephens to Samuel Bailey Mitton, twelve have been selected for inclusion in this chapter. The selection was difficult, as each letter contains revealing facts about the Professor's activities and his interpretations of them. Though considerably abated, his work continued until his last conducting of the Tabernacle Choir, three weeks before his demise.

The final selection was made with three criteria: interest to the present-day reader, content of personal detail, length, and degree of redundancy. Some of the holographic letters were six manuscript pages, usually with no separation into paragraphs. The omission of some of Stephens's humorous sidelights and analogies in those for which space was not available is regrettable.

The letters contain some very frank but not malicious comments about music and musical personalities in the church from Stephens's viewpoint—colored by his frustrations with declining health, financial losses on his activities, differences of philosophy with the Church Music Committee, and the onset of old age. The original music committee accomplished much in publishing hymn books, training choir leaders and organists, and codifying music for religious services, but in Evan Stephens's opinion, at bureaucratic pace.

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I am glad not to be too prominent in it as that will make the others more active and more responsible. There are times when one prefers a 'back seat' and this is one of them for me.⁵

The year 1921 saw the completion of "The Martyrs" as Evan Stephens's second definitive work. He was assigned the Monday of April Conference weekend when many visitors had returned home and on a night when bad weather kept the audience to a maximum of 3,000. Some quotes from the reviewer indicate the enthusiastic reception of the work:

The subject treated has much more of the dramatic element in it than the 'Vision,' and it is in the expression, the dramatic that Stephens is exceedingly gifted, and he rose to heights in the new composition to which he has seldom attained in his long and prolific career as a composer. It is certain that there is much in the text and music of 'The Martyrs' that will serve the Church well as appropriate music on its beliefs and traditions. Evan Stephens is first and always a writer of poetry and music expressive of the faith of his people.

He is unquestionably at his best in his massive expression of the full chorus. There are moments of tremendous exaltation in some of the passages for full chorus, notably in his treatment of the hymn tune with choral accompaniment, 'Praise to the Man' in the 'Choral,' and in the final chorus, 'Honor and Fame.' The instrumental accompaniment on the fugue in the last chorus is a most unusual treatment and is as pleasing as it is original.⁶

Stephens was proud of his two cantatas, and in a comparison of his various works he said:

So the musician, in conceiving selections, finds some of extraordinary fine workmanship, and having put out his best efforts in developing his themes and subjects and making a superior artistic work of it, finds his interest enhanced in it to the point of seeming favoritism, yet perhaps love it no more than the less pretentious members of his family. Such a feeling I have for numbers like 'God of Israel,' 'Awake My Soul,' 'Hear My Prayer' (unpublished), 'The Pioneer,' my oratorio 'The Nephites' and two cantatas, the 'Vision' and the 'Martyrs,' and some others . . .⁷

Fred Graham, who had managed some of the choir's trips and was an accomplished vocal soloist, organized a traveling company in October under the auspices of the music committee to tour the hinterlands under the direction of Stephens. The double quartet was scheduled for fourteen performances in thirteen days, with twelve rehearsals enroute, each time with a different choir. The "Vision" was one of the Professor's compositions programmed.

Unusual circumstances made the trip both awkward and difficult for Stephens. He was to ride with the committee chairman who had recommended his release from the Tabernacle Choir. He was the one who had said, "Try some younger man." Stephens said he bore no malice against this individual, one of his long-time "Boys", whom he realized was perfectly sincere in his actions in 1916.⁸

Stephens continued in his composing after the completion of the cantatas. He mentioned twenty-four choruses for men and boys as published in the **Improvement Era** and twenty numbers from the **Young Woman's Journal**, combined into a booklet suitable for M.I.A. use. With the work assigned by the Church Music Committee he was kept reasonably busy as his health and outlook would permit.⁹

Two more events gave him increased recognition. The Los Angeles choir brought him to their city in December 1922 for a festival week which included performances of both of Stephens's cantatas. The correspondent to the **News** wrote: When Professor Stephens arrived on the 'Limited' he was welcomed and escorted by auto to mission headquarters, and the entertainment of the venerable old composer commenced, but not until the professor himself had done some entertaining in his youthful, interesting, humorous way."

Stephens took part in the final rehearsal of the choir of 150 voices. The Sunday evening performance was said to be the most important musical event in the history of Los Angeles Stake. For seven days the visitor was entertained with sightseeing, dinners, and parties. On the last day a visit to the Charles Ray movie studio was arranged where Stephens met the star. A young man from Salt Lake, Wallace Packham, had come to Los Angeles and traveled

with him to San Francisco where he was treated with utmost kindness.

Probably the highlight of the visit was Stephens's determining that his cantatas had been performed a dozen times in several cities, including San Diego at Balboa Park before an audience of 15,000. Alexander Schreiner, then a missionary in California, played an organ concert at that event on the great Spreckles pipe organ. He was recognized by Stephens as a "coming genius."¹⁰

The other event occurred in 1923 when Stephens went to Camden, New Jersey to record Mormon music, including some of his compositions. The Professor said the trip was interesting and pleasant, but that he wished that a half day could have been spent in recording music other than hymn tunes. He was amazed at how the musicians and other production people became interested in "Mormonism", and wished he had been able to have them hear the finales of his cantatas and "Awake My Soul."

He considered the recording by the quartet of "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy" to be an ideal reproduction," and longed for the day when recordings could be made of every important musical event in Utah with local facilities.

Much of Evan Stephens's work in his late period after the Fall of 1920 concerned the Church Music Committee. He served faithfully in the assignments he was given, including composition of the 56 new hymn tunes and 164 transcriptions mentioned previously. He had worked intimately with the committees of the Deseret Sunday School Union and other auxiliaries, and with the group under George Careless preparing the first edition of the **Psalmody** in 1889. He had a total of 109 pieces included in the official hymn books from 1889 to 1950, with his highest total of 84 in the 1927 **Hymns**. But he found increasing dissatisfaction with his music among some of the younger musicians, trained in universities both in this country and Europe, including some on the General Committee. The group included Melvin J. Ballard as chairman, with George D. Pyper, Edward P. Kimball, Anthony C. Lund, John J. McClellan, Tracy Y. Cannon, H.G. Whitney, B.Cecil Gates, Lizzie Thomas Edwards, Joseph Ballentine, Margaret Summerhays, Mathilda W. Cahoon, and himself.

Stephens's last composition assignment came in January 1930. Writing of this he said:

The last thing I have written is an anthem. President Ivins sent for me about three weeks ago. I thought they were going to send me to the Hawaiian Islands on a mission. Brother Nibley said, 'We sent for you to tell you that we want you to write a special anthem for the centennial celebration in the Tabernacle. We want you to do what you have done with the 'Hosannah.' We want you to write something that the congregation can join in with the chorus, for a mass of ten thousand people.'

I said: 'I will try, you are giving me a hard task to write music that a congregation can sing, but I'll do the best I can.'¹¹

Stephens's later years can be examined more fully and candidly by study of his letters to his friend and fellow composer, Samuel Bailey Mitton of Logan, Utah. They provide an intimate view of the professor's life from 1916 to 1929. Three letters from his housekeeper, Sarah Daniels, give details of his last illness and her feelings. The sixty-six letters are preserved in the private collection of Mary Mitton Kennedy.

Chapter 13

Letters to Samuel Bailey Mitton

Of the sixty-three letters written by Evan Stephens to Samuel Bailey Mitton, twelve have been selected for inclusion in this chapter. The selection was difficult, as each letter contains revealing facts about the Professor's activities and his interpretations of them. Though considerably abated, his work continued until his last conducting of the Tabernacle Choir, three weeks before his demise.

The final selection was made with three criteria: interest to the present-day reader, content of personal detail, length, and degree of redundancy. Some of the holographic letters were six manuscript pages, usually with no separation into paragraphs. The omission of some of Stephens's humorous sidelights and analogies in those for which space was not available is regrettable.

The letters contain some very frank but not malicious comments about music and musical personalities in the church from Stephens's viewpoint—colored by his frustrations with declining health, financial losses on his activities, differences of philosophy with the Church Music Committee, and the onset of old age. The original music committee accomplished much in publishing hymn books, training choir leaders and organists, and codifying music for religious services, but in Evan Stephens's opinion, at bureaucratic pace.

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The Professor continued to be resentful of his release from the conductorship of the Tabernacle Choir. He observed that his own experience paralleled that of Mitton in being released without warning from his position as conductor of the Logan Stake Choir. The disappointments were discussed many times.

The language and sometimes faulty spelling of the originals is maintained, with frequent editorial clarification by use of bracketed material. Many words were underlined without presenting a point, and some of this emphasizing has been eliminated. The letter writer's penmanship was illegible in many instances, and some words were deciphered in his unusual use of them only after several reconsiderations.

Horace Ensign wrote from his mission in Japan that he consumed the time between letters from Professor Stephens in interpreting the handwriting. In the light of the author's experience, this was no exaggeration.

One cannot read the full collection of letters without great appreciation of Evan Stephens's poetic mode of expression, his broad knowledge of the English language obtained from his avid reading of great literature, and his use of Scripture to make his points.

At times the letters provide a discordant view of the composer, but add an additional dimension to the personality portrayed in his own writings and public utterances. In no way should they detract from his remarkable achievements.

EVAN STEPHENS'S LETTERS

40 North Main Street
Salt Lake City,
Jul. 28th 1916

S.B. Mitton,
Dear Bro.

I received your kind letter, and your quite stirring music to the "Seer." And would have written you earlier had it not been that my attentions have been rather much turned to a matter you doubtless know of by now, and perhaps rather surprised, tho, it is by no means a new affair, but a long anticipated one. I mean my resignation and release from choir duties.

Well, back to your music, it strikes me as striking, spirited and quite natural expression of the text—something in the order of my "Morning Breaks" music. I like it because of its fitness, whether it will be taken up as much as it should it is hard to tell, chiefly because people are so used to the old music of "the sea, the sea, the open sea," to which doubtless the words were originally made for, and is often difficult to turn people from the **rut** even for something better when the former has become a habit. Still I am glad you have felt the need of a new personal expression of it. I see no way to get it before the public unless the SS' Union will use it in the Juvenile Instructor. I shall deliver it over to Bro Pyper with the request that they use it if they **will**, and if not to return it to you. I rather think they will be glad to get it, but as Bro Ballentyne and others form a committee to pass on all music and songs for the Juvenile [Instructor] I of course can't speak for them. However keep it up. Each and every act may not seem to bear fruit, but one should keep "sowing" knowing that some must take root.

I, at the end now of my Choir journey wish you much success and joy in yours on which you are just starting. The entire trouble here is the growth of conflicting duties to which my singers are subject, and which impeded our progress to such a degree that I can rely practically on no results from our best efforts. I have tried hard to have something done whereby the Choir should not be the

one to suffer, but the local authorities of wards and stakes from which our singers are drawn oppose any action which may draw them from any activities at home, that the presidency feel they cannot afford to fight them over the matter. So we have all agreed to try the "new broom" idea to see if it will help to at least aid for the time being.

While it is a disappointment to me not to be able to get the material I needed for the sort of work I wanted to do, and there is a natural sadness in giving up one's life work as it were. Still it is a great relief to have many burdens removed, and to at least be released from trying the impossible. I expect to spend most of the fall and winter—perhaps in New York, just taking in the musical things of the metropolis. I am very grateful to you for your enthusiastic support by using and liking my songs. Let me hear from you once in a while. I am ever your Bro.

E. Stephens

Home. Aug 7th 1920

Dear Bro Mitton,

It is a long time since your latest letter came to me. And I have often thot of writing you, and then put it aside for the moment, and so the time has sped. So much there is to be written, and yet perhaps just at present, and for some time past much that we would like to write may be as well unwritten. I am sure I can guess much of your feelings, especially when worked up from any special provocation—and sometimes even the most friendly touch may arouse a train of thot best left alone to sleep.

Some of the little incidents in connection with what has happened are so like what I have passed thru that I cannot help comparing. And they usually appear to me that I had even larger doses to swallow than my kind Brother—but we are all liable to think our own are the greatest. Yet, in a way, I couldn't but feel thankful that yours seemed lighter in their effects than similar ones of mine seemed, for example the fact that you were never remunerated for your faithful hard work in **Cash** after all seemed

a blessing in disguise. It left you fully dependent upon your outside work for a living, and in this respect your release didn't throw you out of your ordinary living job, while in my case my wage took me from **all** outside work practically, and my release took with it my earning of a living at a time when it was too late in life to start over. Then added to that it didn't change your home and family life any, while it so happened that it came just at the time my Boy and only special companion was leaving for New York to persue his medical studies and meant a total change in life at home. And I was not in financial shape to live in New York with my Boy.

I think this worried me more than retiring. Still to a great extent I brot the whole change about of my own accord, tho it was chiefly to try and force the Church to place the choir upon a higher firmer footing that I did it. I merely mention this to show you what I mean in that perhaps my little trials were even more trying than yours have been. Then too the way in which matters were done were aggravating and trying in both our cases. That feeling comes from seeing apparent old devoted friends in the boat from which one is thrown into the waves is another, similar experience for us both. In my case "My dear Boy" Horace S. Ensign was made a "tool" to do a lot of the chief work for my successor being made for a while the assistant conductor. He was required to get out the lists of singers etc. for Bro L[und] and thus to bridge matters over. A few of my good singers have kept the choir from dying out a number of times. I really urged them to remain, tho the major part have absolutely declined to return.

I found that my greatest comfort in my own heart after all was that I had just put my natural feelings under my heel, and took the position of even urging my friends to help along, as I had no desire to return to the work. Perhaps the thing that annoyed me most—and I fancy you will taste of it—was the indiscriminate praise and camouflage appreciation shown to or over very bad work done. This seemed to poison and make of no worth any and everything said and done by similar parties in favor of work done by me or under one that I had thot **sincere** at least. There is nothing to do in such cases but to quietly pocket the hurt, and let it go at that. I

advise you to pay as little heed to it as possible when just a possibly rotten or bad thing is praised perhaps quite as enthusiastically as some splendid things were under your sympathetic and spiritual leadership. It will "turn in your stomach"—don't dwell upon it and feel shocked that this one or the other, in whom you had confidence happen to be the perpetrator. Lots of people feel that this is the only way to do, enthuse over "the powers that be," whether deserved or not; indeed many think it is a sacred duty, and fear that anything short of that stands for the wrong spirit of "fault finding" or "knocking." There are times when I force myself to take the attitude of one not in the least interested in my old-time vocation, and in this way I work it off my mind, and enjoy "peace" at any price perhaps, but **peace**. . . .

My old Ranch is as attractive as ever. Try it some of these fine days. I shall be glad to see you whenever you can make it.

I expect just about as many—or less—of E.S.'s compositions rendered in the Logan Tabernacle as is being done in the Salt Lake area from now on. And I am quite resigned to it. And you must not be surprised to find your Logan friends share my resignation quite readily. They enjoyed it I am sure just as they claimed they did when your splendid singers under your direction served it out to them, but they will manage as the Church has done at their big conferences here, to get along nicely upon whatever is served to them by the singers or powers "that be." I have been rather lazy this entire summer, and have written very little lately of any consequence. I need a Boss, I guess, and am taking life too easy. But my health is very good, so it seems to agree with me. . . .

The splendid times I have enjoyed with you, and your family, and singers have been hours to remember for me while life lasts, and doubtless after!

Let me hear from you soon, don't follow my bad example in waiting so long. Will you be down to Conference? I hope so if not before.

Best regards
from your Friend and
Bro
Evan Stephens

Oct. 3rd, 1920

Pine Lodge

Dear Bro. Mitton,

I have gladly received both your letters and the music, all just your own kind self as usual and appreciated. The little violin piece is your own usual self too, you couldn't deny it to me if you wished and it is none the worse for your not having conceived it while holding the "high seat" above the stand. The same sweet, unaffected spirit breathes thru it. I see but very little to suggest in the way of change in its arrangement. We will consider it together when you come down, which I hope will be soon.

I suppose you have seen an account by the "Church Music Committee. I don't expect to have any very intense activities in it, but I recognize its needs, and possibilities of much good in sort of keeping our wandering leaders(?) from leading us all astray. I am perfectly willing to do what I can to help Bro. Ballard in his "arduous task." (Not much less than Wilson's at Pons & Lane's when it comes to real work and results.) For we are a motely crowd when it comes to aims and purposes as noted in our work. However it is needful that the church exercise some reasonable control especially over the general units or aims of our musical forces and I anticipate much good results from future efforts in that line. If things are done in a way to win the hearty cooperation of the **real leaders** in the church (tho the present personnel of the committee, logical as the selections have been being that of the heads of departments[])—it appears a little hard to harmonize in their activities, but being placed in the position of having to follow some policies by the church they may pull together better for that. I am glad not to be too prominent in it as that will make the others more active and more responsible. There are times when one prefers a "back seat" and this is one of them for me.

Well, as I shall expect to be able to chat with you very soon I'll spare writing, as we can get over more ground by tongue in a few minutes than we can by pen in hours.

Let me know when to look for you so I'll be at home for sure.

Your Bro as always, E. Stephens

Pine Lodge Jan 14, 1921

Dear Friend Mitton

I am sure you have been looking and looking in vain for a word from your old friend and perhaps at times you think unreliable, like too many more. Then again I hope you reach less gloomy conclusions and reflect that "**large bodies** move slowly." Anyway I have been eager to sort of make up my mind what to do. And finally some chilly breath came along and helped the decision I wanted to make in a contrary way. I feared running after a possible cold, as I have been remarkably free for many months. So as I was hesitating a little crowd of my folks arrived even during the Holidays, all more or less playing the roles of invalids, one to get tonsils out, another for appendix out, another for eye trouble, and another to just find out if there was anything the matter with her anyway. So it went for the best of two weeks. Then when they had all returned home, I suddenly found myself dipping for a handkerchief. A week ago tonight upon my return from a run through [of] my new Cantatta with the highest powers that be, Profs Lund and McClellan at the former's studio at his urgent and very kind invite. They seemed to have enjoyed it much and declare it "far ahead" of the "Vision." I hope they are right but as you know their very praise would be liable to create doubt in me, as we seldom see thru the same glasses. But they seemed sincerely enthusiastic, and if a tone of deeper tragedy, and sorrowful emanation could put it on a higher plane they are evidently right, the subject demanding that. But I doubt if it will at least create a keener friendship for itself than did the "Vision" or be loved as much. In sizing it up this morning with Bro. Ballard I said, "The "Vision" is the "Baby Girl." "The Martyrs" the "Baby Boy." Each I hope will win sympathy for itself. So there is my excuse all mixed up with what else is on my mind.

Now I have **very** good news for you even it it means no visit from one for me this winter. I was given the permission to prepar .it at my **own risk**, and in my own way, with the best wishes apparently and moral support of all concerned from the President to Prof. Lund, with the same forces in general as the other. The performance—the first anyway to take place about March 25th at

the Tabernacle with a likelihood of repeating for Conference. This is all I wished. It includes a heavy **risk** financially, in addition to paying artists. The printing will mean close upon a thousand dollars, for our edition of 2000. But with two performances I am safe—even though the Church for the choir holds me up for 30 percent in gross receipts.[sic]. But I feel confident it is far better for me than the old way of merely accepting a Tithe of Net. The second performance—the one in June netted me only \$110.00 (one hundred and ten) while the Church had eleven hundred dollars clear, and about twenty-five hundred passes for the Mutual workers at Conference. As it is now, tho, I wish I run a chance of clearing a thousand or so, especially if the Books sell and clear themselves. So I set the printer at work today, and will call my singers for work beginning with the ladies a week from next Monday night, and gents the following Friday night. I wish you were within reach of the fun. Enough on that point. I think that our "Music" committee is very **interesting**, a regular "Box of Monkeys" in a sense. Tho we are not all back to our **ancient ancestors**, one never knows what may pass our "I move you" hands up! Sometimes we discover impossible barriers to some grand scheme almost before our hands are down, and lucky we are to make the discovery before too much mischief has been done. I am sort of a **Caboose** of the train where the "Airbrake" is located and I hear this airbrake is very unwelcome sometimes to the enthusiastic rushing ahead "youngsters." Anyway we have mostly stood right on the same uncertain switch so far, and have never gone ahead or backward. We hardly know where we are bound for, north, south, east or west. I can often sense Bro. Ballard has been burdened with this so-called Music Committee party, he isn't left to himself. Then if he sometime feels he needs aid he could call for just what he wanted. But right here I want something of you. I want you to spare me a copy—the best you have of everything you have on hand. So that if there should come a chance to choose one for this, and one for that of the various collections, or whatever they may decide on I can have them on hand to speak for themselves and be spoken for. In this way I hope to see your name on many a paper yet before I go to sleep. Don't hesitate then, yours are better all

around by far than most of what my young Brothers will have to offer. So don't delay and do as I ask please. Then let come whatever will. And don't expect too much for they are a slow bunch in general that is each looking out for No. 1. I was to have gone to Jordan Stake where it was to be a Stephens day "musically" by a choir who have given the "Vision" three times in three different wards, but I was so ill with quinine salt and cold that I could hardly keep from going off in a faint. But as you see I am quite revived and need to be to do my forthcoming job. Never mind I shall surely see you when the gentle spring comes again. In the meantime write me freely, never mind that it is on paper if it is not to go farther. I can even burn if necessary. So let us "talk out" to one another even if not "in meetings." Best regards to all your folks in the "twin house" and to any of the old friends. If I could run up for a couple of days sometime, could you stand me to have a young nephew I have studying in Pocatello meet me there? He is very crude and loud.

From old friend
Stephens

Pine Lodge March 14, 1921
Dear Old Friend,

I have just been itching to write you this long time, but I have desired to have the music of the "Martyrs" to send you about the same time, so I could comment or chat a little about it in a way that you could look up the same in the copy. Several times I have been on the point of just sending you the unbound sections. Then again I would think that you would get more satisfaction if you got it all together, so perhaps after all I'll now wait and hold my breath till they bind the six parts into books, and then send you a copy at once. Tho that won't be before the middle of next week. My chorus, a few over 400, have worked well upon it, and it is going fine in general now up to the last long pages of the chorus work.

In order to get copies for the chorus as fast as they could learn it, I had the printer set all the chorus work first, and put the six page solo that should have been between part I and II at the end of the

book. So today he finished the 40 pages of all chorus work and started on the solo, which he won't finish before about next Tuesday when they will begin binding into books at once. The singers enthuse more and more as they get better up in it. At first I think they feared it would not equal the "Vision" but now many think it superior to it. The last two rehearsals in the Assembly Hall have been as fine and spirited as any I can remember. We are given Monday night of Conference in which to render it. I hope for a big crowd—as I have all the risks to run of getting out even—and with the dead weight of an entirely **inactive** Tabernacle Choir hanging on, and taking 30 percent of the gross receipts out in a bulk, while my books cost about a full one thousand, of course much of this will come back from the sale of books, if it goes alright, but at best it is quite a risk or gamble financially, but it leaves me otherwise free, and under few obligations, except to my good singers with a running chance to make a few dollars on it, if I get a full house. I wish to state with pleasure that both Professors McClellan and Lund have been very nice about it; the former with his accomp. have been just **splendid** at most all rehearsals, and the latter has met with us once or twice, and will sing with us, also in a duett "Comrades in Song" with Rees, who will again take the Tenor solo. Of course you will be down to hear it. I fear I can't come up until the load is off. More anon when the book comes, which will be as soon as bound.

One of your good bishops told me yesterday that Prof. S..... was going to leave Logan; I am sorry to say, I don't feel a bit sorry for him or those who may be unaccommodated thru his leaving. If they are real sensible now they will put you back with a nice little salary of at least a \$1,000 a year so long as you care to hold it; but of course that may be too much of a **self correction** for even moderately sensible **weak humans**, even in goodly positions. So I shall just await developments with interest. I admit I should like very much to yet witness you giving both the "Vision" and the "Martyrs" together with your fine old crowd. It would be a fitting retribution [retribution] for you and they.

The Church Committee upon "Church Music Literature" has not made much progress as yet. So I have no news to send you

regarding the good things you sent me. But if they ever get to the point of publishing collections or otherwise, if I still have any voice in things as they will appear—and then I am sure they will be put into service alright by many, many choir leaders. Your best, like all the rest—tho not elaborate, is sweet, and full of feeling, loved feeling at that, which is better than so called correct grammar musically, or “harmonically” tho you are not often out on that...., and need not worry over your “lack of training,” etc. It is better than being **overtrained** into senseless feelingless learned stuff. Oh, I too look forward to that walk in the hills, or another bus ride up the river. April or May will be fine for that if all is well, and we **behave** and not run races with the Interurban, as of old when we were kids.

Give my best to every one of your kindhearted family including the Twin section to the north. (If they ever go into the Hotel Business I shall recommend [sic] myself and all my friends to room and board with them.) My health is pretty good tho I have had a couple of colds, and am just getting the best of a slight one right now. Miss Daniels is in good health tho I once in a while hear her groaning and moaning at the “chromatics of the Martyrs.” Write soon. Love as ever.

Your Bro. E. Stephens

Pine Lodge June 19th, 1921
S.B. Mitton,

My dear old Friend, I have neglected to write you for so long that I really feel guilty of neglect, when I could much of the time I would not be in the right mood. Since about the first of May I have been more or less in the grip of a siege of “Lumbago” and I am only just mostly over it. The back feels a little weak yet, and I don’t bend much to anybody, only very carefully. Much of the time it was more painful to sit than to stand, and that made corresponding a misery, but I feel that the most, yes the most of it is passed by. Thank goodness, and I can at least dream of roaming the hills and canyons again at least in the “Sweet by and bye”.

Well, the “Martyrs” performances are off my hands, and so far as artistic renditions and the success of the work goes all has been successful **very**, financially **not so**, as I was not able to cover the cost of the books. The weather, other attractions, conference and other good things including the Tabernacle Choir, which swallowed up as its share what might have covered a good part of my deficits. The mag. confusing me on Conference date was forcing me to give it after all nearly had hastened home to be out of the heat, discomforts and expenses here, etc. etc.

Well, I have borrowed—at 8 percent interest—\$600 of my “Vision” money in the hands of the Church Music Committee and will in a few days have everything settled for, and when I have sold the 1200 copies I have yet on hand I shall even be under no **loss** financially, for having brought out my work. So I am not downhearted about it, but am casting my mind about looking for pleasant things ahead among them that long talked of visit with my truest of friends.

But what may develop first I have yet not made up my mind. I may run over to Frisco (San Francisco) to get a total change of air and surroundings and then make for your lovely region after returning—but still I may decide not to waste money on the Pacific Coast at all this season. I think I’ll decide in a week or two. For the present I must get things straightened out a bit around home here, as I couldn’t help do much with my bad back, and Sarah was the one helper about. So I have some tall grasses and weeds to consider more than even the “Lillies of the Field.” Thanks for the lot of enthusiastic things you wrote of the **Cantata**. It helps make one not sorry that he did it, even tho we both have many little regrets which touches upon it, but never mind. I feel sure we both of us have thot within us that will administer comfort enough to still make life quite worth living, and to enjoy too. Old Nature may play some rough pranks with us, as sending a Blizzrd in one’s way one time and a sizzle of heat the next etc. but she also sends a wealth of lovely things for us who can appreciate that we cannot but feel that she gives much more than she denies to us. Jeremiah must have been a very sad prophet but the sadness led him to write his wonderful “Lamentations” and even in our day,

here we are having some sweet emotional moments out of the Martyrdom of the great Latter-day Prophet. Queer isn't it? but such is **existence**, thank the Lord it is so. From "darkness riseth light," we are told, and find it so. I wonder if Johnson wouldn't like to take up "The Martyrs", what do you think about it? Of course for financial reasons I would like a good many choirs would take it up, and if we can't have your own good self at it, perhaps it would be well to encourage someone else to try it. I want to add tho right here, it won't be to me anything like having **you** do it, and had it been the previous man in charge I wouldn't have it even mentioned.

Five parties now have copies. Bro. Stone in Canada, the largest number as yet, 100 copies. Others have been writing, but one never can depend until they have their copies bought, and not always then, as it is no small task.

I was glad to have a peep at your five little big daughters here at the house and after the Concert. In a way I was glad you were not present, as you would worry about the slim attendance tho everything went well otherwise. "Uncle Sam" peeped into the scroll and came nearly stealing my love letter. The postman said next time you must set the letter to music. Never mind, I was very glad to get both, just as it was. I am sorry you have had so much sickness this spring, but so long as all pull thru alright, it isn't so hard. I am sure everything is lovely up there now. Give my best to Sister Mitton and the rest in the twin home. Write soon, music or no music. Love as usual.

Your Bro. Stephens.

Pine Lodge Oct 22nd, 1922

Dear Old Friend,

This is my second attempt at writing you since I recieved your last kind letter and music. I became too "communicative" in my others, and wrote at the spur of the moment some things that might be misunderstood upon the subject of our "**successors**" and their efforts. So while I felt I was writing only facts to another, it might appear that I had at least some bitterness at the bottom of my heart towards some while really I believe I am free of it entirely. You

will understand, I am sure, what I mean. For instance the chairman of the committee that recommended my release, and "try some younger man" about 7 years ago, I have never felt badly towards— tho at moments I felt that it was strange and a wee bit awkward that it should be one of my long time "Boys" who was never intentionally my enemy. I realize he was **perfectly sincere**.

Oh well we are starting on a little tour north tomorrow and he and I travel together by ourselves in his little coupe. I am sure he has no spite or bitterness. I am sorry we don't appear in Logan, but that too is all for the best, tho I know it would have been very different had certain things not happened up there. Things look quite favorable for a strenuous and successful try—14 performances in 13 days, with 12 rehearsals enroute each time with a different choir. Some task for an old gye [guy] that deserted his job over six years ago. But I am feeling quite well at present and my little bunch of singers do fine at rehearsals. All we do in Cache Valley is a concert program at Smithfield and a regular "Vision" with preliminary programe at Preston— Thursday night and Friday night, week after the one beginning tomorrow. Then doubtless pass thru Logan to appear at Brigham, then home. After the performance we go north as far as St. Anthony and Driggs in the Tetons, the latter only for a general performance Sunday night, no charge of course. I hope and trust we shall escape storms and cold catching.

Both your sweet numbers pleased me, especially the duett. That must see print some day ere long. I was glad, too, to find the one in the "Juvenile" [Instructor]. I can only tell you I feel sure many if not all your songs, duetts and hymns will yet be sung and loved throughout our community.

Hope to see you on our way back.
E. Stephens

Pine Lodge, May 14th, 1924

Dear Bro. Mitton,

I had intended to follow up the order of books closer than this, but the moments fled, and here I am rather late. The "Vision" is so

much church property that I have never had any copies of it save a couple presented specially to me. And a bag full of singers' used copies stored in the basement of "The Administration Bldg." The rest here all turned over to the Deseret Book Store by the church, there to be had on sale. They were thot to be all sold once, but a small bunch was found, and so after recieving your kind order I went up to the store to make sure, and finding some, left them the order to fill. I think they charged them up to the Ward.

At least I hope they were all delivered safely and correctly, let me know when you next write. Had it been the Martyrs I could have supplied them myself, as I have about 50 copies left. The rest of the Edition of this was turned over to the church too—for payment of printing etc. and are sold at the book store. They have not sold as quickly as the "Vision" which has had over 100 performances, up to date, and is very nearly all sold—and I regret to add that means it will be soon "out of print" like nearly everything else of mine, so far as being on sale goes, and there is no deliverance in sight yet. The **Committee** seems hopelessly slow, and so I may be said to be resting on my oars—if indeed my oars are not "washed over board." However I feel that the universe will go on as usual in its routine. If anything will suffer it will be me, and I don't intend to any more than I can help.

The summer seems to have set in down here, but everything around the Ranch here is at its best, including the Rancher. I am like some old cow quite contentedly "chewing my cud" among the sweet green of foliage and colors of bloom.

My little place was never more charming. And to see the passing show—the constant rushing stream of machines filled with pleasure seeking humans. As it was Sunday until well toward midnight, one would imagine Salt Lake to have become a real metropolis. It is fast doubling itself in population, and I am greedily looking or hoping for a demand and a good price for my frontage on both Main and State St. in which case you will see me if health and strength remain good "taking the air" as it were and once in a while again paying a visit to the most charming spots I know, Logan included, and basking in the smiles of dear old friends. In the meantime I must carry the Hose, and push the lawn

mower, and enjoy it as well as I may, which is not inconsiderable.

I am sorry to know that there are several Tabernacles in our midst under "partial eclipse." Well let us merely hope that the time of awakening again will come before we go hence. I read with interest the prospectus for your summer school, with the lot of noteables taking part. I couldn't but wish that I was rich and young so I and "Wally" might come and take a few of the courses, and make Logan our home for a couple of months or so. Indeed I know of no pleasanter way to spend a summer season—if it were not so conveniently near home. Hope to see you and yours down to the M.I.A. Conference which will soon be here. Love to you and all—as ever your old Friend and Bro.

Stephens

Pine Lodge Jul 20th 1924

My dear Bro Mitton,

I have been on the ragged edge of writing for weeks, it seems to me. But I have become grounded, or as the old sailors used to call it becalmed" in the "dead calm" of a church music committee.

I haven't even been able to see your M.S. since I turned it in to Bro. Ballard. He is either not in or hasn't the copy along, when he comes to committee, but there will be time enough yet before the "Psalmody" will really be getting into form. But I wanted to report progress when I wrote, and hence yielded readily to the putting off process so tempting to a lazy person. I left with him the letter also and have had no chance to chat the matter over with him. Everything moves so slowly that like the Earth and the planets perhaps may be going at a tremendous speed yet to old time mortals it was not evident whether the earth was moving at all or not, and it remained for later minds to reach a conclusion. I think we are waiting for the younger members of the committee to prove they can write hymn tunes so that we can report progress on their behalf. If so we may be some time yet. Bro. T.Y. Cannon was quite out of patience with the worthless setting of "O My Father" so it was comforting in one sense and discouraging in another to have recieved your enthusiastic admiration of it. The points you men-

tion doesn't seem to count with the new "Lights." Nothing short of a "hunting song" playing along in the accomp. would serve I fancy with Bro. L.[Lund]. That part is the discouraging one. A Bro. Robertson in charge of school music at Preston awakens my interest. At periods he is splendidly interesting, then again he suddenly collapses into momentous forced effects that seem quite impracticable, like a person furnishing [a] house, placing a plush article in the kitchen or an old kitchen table near a \$1000 piano in the parlour. But he really is fine in major moments and the bigger the work I believe the better the workmanship. His hymn tunes are either lacking in interest or over ordained with key changes in the harmonizing. Yet I feel to say watch out for something really good from him.

Well, dear friend, I have been looking up the progress my whiskers have been making before announcing my presence or absence at your interesting big centennial festival to which you have so kindly invited me. I regret to say they, the whiskers, have shamefully foiled me. And I have become discouraged to the point of giving up the attempt. Can't afford to enter and take only second prize. You know it would publish my weak points. So I fear I will just have to thank you sincerely and keep still at home. Somehow I haven't had the roaming spirit at all this summer, and it has been one continual time of home guarding with nothing to guard against. I know very well you will have a huge time, and that I would be right in with the best friends I have on earth. But I can't pick up the ambition to feel a hunger to come just now. Some other time I hope to make up for it. You know I don't need a centennial to have a good time with you and yours.

You ask about my Boy "Wallie," well he is at home in Blackfoot working nights in a morgue. His folks were close run to meet interests on their mortgaged farm and Wallie had a chance to earn a \$1000 per month at this gruesome job, and took it while on his visit home at the end of school in order to help meet a July payment. I miss him much, but he writes often and I admire his goodwill. I think he will be back this fall, if Love doesn't carry him off, in iether case I brand him as "De besht boy I ish gott." Still, even if I don't have him, my health is unusually good, but my

ambition to do much is bad this summer. And I am reminded of the man with the hoe (or better without a hoe) sort of good—good for nothing."

Write soon. I like to recieve your letters even tho I seem negligent in answering. Love to all and wishing you all a cheery fine time during the "Centennial."

Your Bro. E. Stephens

Pine Lodge Dec 4th 1925

Dear Bro. Mitton

The Era brot you to the front of my thots again a couple of days since, with your lovely little poem spreading a picture of nature before my mind's eye. It sure is a little inspiration, as clear cut as a Master's painting could be—a true and tender lover of Nature you are. I liked it in manuscript, but better than ever in print. And now by the way, I like your remodeled version of the precious one with its ancient "ye"'s and "Thou"'s cast out quite as well as the original and better with the suspicion of irregularities omitted. I could feel how reluctant you were to do it—like me about having my teeth pull'd, but it is better as it is, and I hope on the other hand I shall [n]ever have to change my mind anent the teeth! For nothing short of great physical suffering would compel me to do it. As to the music, I wouldn't have changed a note of it, I fear, if it had been me. You knew what you wanted—slight, gramatical errors excepted—a heap better than Br. C. could tell you, or even suggest. But I hope it is all done to suit, and that you won't worry further about it. Only such things are annoying and unnecessary. Nonsense about quitting—you old sinner, you are too old to reform; it would be worse than "Birth Control" for you to give birth to no more music. Write whenever you are craving to. It will be soon enough to stop when like me you feel that the desire is killd [sic].

I make no harsh promises either way—I will or I won't. But if I catch the mood and feel the inspiration you—bet—your life—I'll write to my dying day. The Good Lord permitting, and lending me the proper faculties to write, and really express myself.

Have you seen the call for Hymns from the S.S.U. [Sunday School Union]? And are you going in for any or all of the twelve subjects? I would hate to enter into an unfriendly combat with you, but it is as hard for my Welsh nature to abstain from a tempting contest, as it is for a mouse to leave cheese alone. So look out! "We play for money!" They are a pretty good lot of subjects—but why need them? It seems to me we have far too many hymns and songs already. But if something really worth while happens to be dug up out of the heap, all well and good. Has your Tabernacle choir revived under its new director? I wish it would revive "The Vision" or do "The Martyrs" as an aid to bringing the singers together again. Our music committee is asleep, but having spasms of "nightmares." The books [with] hymns and anthems are turned over chiefly to the Deseret Book Store and all we have left of great import is reporting if we have or have not heard anything worth reporting during the week, etc. I heartily wish I was honorably released, but there may be some use for me with the rest, who knows? I hope you have pleasant and interesting Holidays just ahead of you. I am feeling fair, but fear the cold weather may set me down where I was last winter but I hope not.

Best regards to you and all the friends up there, especially Sister Mitton and the rest of the double-family, and all your all. Write soon, or sooner.

Your old Friend,
Stephens

Pine Lodge, Aug 18th 1926

Dear Friend Mitton,

Was glad to get yours from the Scout camp, and share in a small way with you your great joy to be with the "Boys." I can't think of anything more thrilling and pleasant, especially when you have specially dear ones among them. They and nature at its grandest must crown the gifts our Heavenly Father sends to mortals. In imagination I can be with you, and share it all. Thank God for the wonderful gift of imagination and you, dear friend. For both your desire to share it with me and doing so in reality, by

writing all about it, not all, one couldn't do that, but a goodly part of the cream of it.

I?—I am almost as good as before the last "morning call" came. I now feel but little hurt, but realize that such exercise as mountain climbing couldn't be risked, and that, if I can do it at all. But it is not so bad to be able again to tend to my own little paradise in the vale, and look up to the heights where I know well what they look like, and the beauty they unfold to the appreciative eye. Dear grand old mountains, and your sweet, lovely partners, the vales they are ever present, living things to me, second only to the priceless humans, for which they were made most of all, and without which even they would become but dead rocks and worthless verdure. The human being is after all the central great attraction in life—even for a live "old bachelor." Art, music, the delights that all the precious senses yield us are all but attendants upon Human Love. And thank God! This wonderful planet of ours and its flourishes in the humblest hamlet. And at some time or other lightens and upraises every thing living, I do believe, but most of all the intelligent heart-throbbing human.

I think the choir had a general good time, and I am glad of it. They have had a ten years waiting, and any joy they have had lessens not a whit what my own singers had in our own good times. I am not yet trying to do any writing. Maybe next week, but it doesn't matter. Write soon again.

Best regards, Your Friend, E.S.

Pine Lodge May 2nd 1927

Dear Bro Mitton

First of all I wish to acknowledge the welcome receipt of your kind letters and interesting, good hymns and then as briefly as I can give you the explanation of the why of my delay in writing, etc. etc. Now as to the hymns doubled in the Psalmody, I told you of them, and as I think you too sort of hoped, looked for a possible call upon you to furnish the numbers to take the place of the duplicates. Now at the first (and only meeting I have been able to attend) after conference, I found Bro Ballard had a list of three,

which the presiding Brethren (I think) had regretted being omitted in the book, namely "God Be With You" and "Sometime, Somewhere" and another I do not recall from the modern "Evangelists". They were at once noted upon and admitted. I thought there might be some reconsiderations, so did not report to you, since then I was not at the next meeting, because one of my "Boys", Judge Noel S. Pratt, was reported to me as just having been taken to the hospital, and I went there instead of to the committee meeting, and Bro. Ballard has been out upon his tours to the far off places. So we have had no meeting since.

I hope you will not mind the turn in Psalmody events. "Some time, somewhere" maybe all we have written and expressed may come in and take their places yet. In the meantime let us be quite satisfied with what seems at present to be the "demand." I am interested in all you say as to preferences of my hymn tunes in the new Tune Book. Hymn tunes seem so "cut and dried", and brief in form that it is hard to reach a special preference at best, but of those expressed by you I am more or less in accord. I am glad we were both represented at your Logan Conference. Please thank Bro. Southwick for me. I like him, he seems to have the right heart and spirit desires. We old foggies must not look for too much "recognition." We are of the past more or less. Others must fill up the future. But we owe gratitude to those of the coming activities who treat us kindly.

I look forward to the possible coming events as a child may do Christmas. I see it all in my mind, Logan canyon and pines, Nature's gifts and nearer and dearer "The Human Friends" who will intensify every charm—anthems and gold. If I can judge myself aright, I am losing my great love and desire for things musical, and even poetical. But the delights of the heart, are still strong within me. And even the sweet things of nature appeal as strongly as ever. The others seem a little mechanical, and as to that I fear a flying machine will never equal a "sea gull" to my fancy. I doubt not but this is all wrong.

Best love to you all, and a wish to see you some day. Write soon and oft.

Your Bro. E. Stephens

Chapter 14

A Shepherd Boy from the Hills

*In the city I came to understand
many strange new things,
both without and within, new things
about life and people, and the way to live.*

David Grayson,
Adventures in Contentment, 1909

In a letter to S.B. Mitton in Logan, written on Christmas Eve 1923, Evan Stephens told of reading a new book by David Grayson. He said there was "something so 'Homey' in it that it strikes me as very unusual." Undoubtedly the book struck a familiar chord with Evan because it plunges to the heart of his philosophy as father of musical progress in the church and state.

He came down from the hills as a farm boy, unschooled but full of the uninhibited dreams of youth wherein he could hear magnificent choruses singing hymns of praise before a multitude of believers. He wrote:

My dreams of action all grew out of what
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which the presiding Brethren (I think) had regretted being omitted in the book, namely "God Be With You" and "Sometime, Somewhere" and another I do not recall from the modern "Evangelists". They were at once noted upon and admitted. I thought there might be some reconsiderations, so did not report to you, since then I was not at the next meeting, because one of my "Boys", Judge Noel S. Pratt, was reported to me as just having been taken to the hospital, and I went there instead of to the committee meeting, and Bro. Ballard has been out upon his tours to the far off places. So we have had no meeting since.

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appealed to me as the real needs of our people in

musical growth and attainments. Included in these dreams were a host of delightful accomplishments, which were apparently for me to encompass such as great choirs, massive choral societies, male choruses, ladies' choirs, children's choruses numbering thousands, musical festivals, musical contests, schools of music, music taught systematically in the State, and public schools, great congregational singing of Latter-day Saint music and songs, not only by the people at home, but eventually by the world at large. Our own hymns sung to our own music . . . ¹

In a talk in 1954 at the Evan Stephens Centennial service, John James, a Welsh associate of Professor Stephens on many projects, said, "More than once I jokingly said to Stephens, 'I believe you are a descendent of one of those Pencader Bards.' And his reply was, 'I haven't as yet met anyone who saw me descend, but I imagine if I should find such a person he will inform me it must have been quite a descent'."

As James said, the bards in question were philosophers, "advocating the belief that the world we live in came into existence through the sphere or realm of music. They were ridiculed for advancing the theory . . . that during the creation, 'the stars of heaven sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy.'"

Stephens's compositions had been brought to Wales by James in 1904, and their choirs took up the music as their own. Evan was displeased that his associate had sung his praises there. He wanted his name spread only through his music. On a return trip in 1949 James heard a choir rehearsing "The Vision" but they couldn't get the tempo right on "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." So James showed them how Stephens's choruses had sung it. The music had been secured from a missionary, Evan Arthur, a former Tabernacle Choir member.

Stephens had been back to Pencader twice, and wanted to travel there again, but couldn't secure a passport. He had applied for U.S. citizenship through application for a homestead in Idaho.

But his records had been lost and the town clerk had died, so he was unable to travel to Europe again. ²

On his 1900 trip to England, Stephens's rare tongue-in-cheek humor came to the fore in his report to the choir:

I forgot to tell you of the day we lived at Windsor Castle. The queen had to go to Ireland on her errand relative to the troublesome Boers, and to the great relief of the rest in the castle, I hastened to supply her place, was received by several dear old servants of 'her majesty,' who spent hours in entertaining me, even showing me—don't tell anyone—her majesty's jewels, presents, feathers, paintings, and lots of her forefathers' old swords and tin helmets. Guards with muffs on their heads stood upright at every entrance. ³

Another anecdote was related by President George Albert Smith. The gist of the story was that a bishop, expecting some important visitors to the Sunday Tabernacle service, approached Stephens and said, "I hope you are going to have some good music."

Brother Stephens said, "All right, Bishop, we will have good music." The bishop didn't think that Stephens understood.

He then said, "These are not ordinary people. They are men of influence and wealth, and I would like them to see what a fine choir we have. Won't you give us something just a little special?"

Stephens replied, "Bishop, we have already had our practice. The music has all been prepared. I don't see how we can make a change. I think it will be good enough for your friends." The bishop pressed his point.

Stephens, obviously piqued replied, "Now see here, Bishop, we have prepared the music for next Sunday to sing to the Lord, and I suppose if it is good enough for the Lord, it is good enough for your company." ⁴

Several of Evan Stephens's students, choir members, assistants and associates have written their personal observations of the man

which confirm the general impressions which he gave through his writing and speaking.

Edna Coray Dyer, a student of Joseph J. Daynes, was asked by the conductor to substitute when Daynes was absent. She wrote after her first night as accompanist:

O dear! to see those scores and scores of strange singers pouring in until the choir seats were all occupied—and I was supposed to play for them! But Stephens gave me a smile in greeting that was encouraging, and I did not feel quite as scared. He fortunately selected an easy anthem for practice—'O Come Let Us Sing Unto the Lord'—and I didn't do so badly after all.

[On Sunday 19 October) Prof. Stephens seemed kinder than before, and made me feel much more at ease than before.

[I November] The Prof. called me Edna all the time and seems to be almost like himself—i.e. in respect to his kindly treatment of me. I'm so glad, for it would be unendurable trying to work under his direction otherwise.

After the gala concert 15 October 1903 with Nordica, the Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra and Franko, the violinist, she wrote that the climax of the evening was the presentation of "The Marvelous Work" with the orchestra, organ, and choir of at least 400. "It was very grand, and I fancy Prof. Stephens's heart must have beat ready to burst itself as he wielded the baton over it all."⁵

S. LeRoy Mitton, son of Samuel B. Mitton, wrote: "One thing I recall about him [Stephens] was his love for flowers. One day in front of our home in Logan, while father and I were talking to him, he picked a bloom from a dandelion and held it up for us to see. He said, "I can't see why people dislike the dandelion. I think it is a beautiful flower."

Ann Mitton Dunn recalled "that Brother Stephens had a huge yard that was full of dandelions, and that he loved each and every one of them. In his homeland, Wales, they were considered to be flowers."⁶

Agnes Olsen Thomas wrote:

The musicians in general were very kind to me, and several offered to help me with my accompaniment and coaching. However I found greater help and good judgement through Evan Stephens. He very often played my accompaniments when I sang for different functions.

During Professor Stephens's visit to Norway he wrote me that he was searching for more voices like mine. He said he was visiting choirs and listening to choruses but could not find a voice to equal mine. This was a high compliment to pay me.⁷

Evangeline Thomas Beesley was a long-time choir member. In her history she wrote, "One thing that Lew [her brother] and I did together was to go to the singing classes that were directed by Evan Stephens. Mother insisted on our going when we were very young. Lew hated it. He said it was sissy. But I loved it."

She told of taking piano lessons with Ebenezer Beesley. Her family "didn't have a piano, but we did have a beautiful Esty organ that Evan Stephens had given my parents when they were married. He had used it while teaching music classes and had had the top cut down a little so that he could see the class while playing."⁸

At a Tabernacle Choir rehearsal in July 1898, the choir members suddenly decided to go serenading the city's three newspapers, of course with Stephens's approval. The event was written up in the **Salt Lake Herald** and by T.C. Griggs in his journal. The newspaper staff must have been amazed to see 500 singers, carrying flags, come into their offices to sing "America." Stephens stood on the balcony, waving his baton which consisted of the American and Cuban flags joined. Griggs wrote, "It was a most pleasant incident, and one which reflects great credit upon the choir and its leader."⁹

Edith Edwards McClurg wrote in a little article that Evan Stephens always considered Willard his home, and the pioneer settlers there considered him their son who had made good in the big city. At Willard's seventy-fifth birthday celebration Stephens came and sat in the choir seats. "During the program he arose from his seat, and going over to the old treadle organ, played and sang for us "Hard Times Come Again No More."¹⁰

Former Tabernacle Organist, **Alexander Schreiner**, wrote about his meeting Stephens:

I first met him in the Assembly Hall where he had been listening to me play an organ postlude following a meeting. I remember the organ was new. This was in 1914 when I was thirteen years old. My father had carpentered the front golden display pipes and some other wooden artistry of the case. Two years later Brother Stephens and I met at Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park, and we enjoyed an afternoon watching the play of the geysers. . . . For most of his hymns, as well as his cantatas, he was his own librettist, like Richard Wagner before him. His texts spoke of the glories of the Restored Gospel, and were wonderfully faith-promoting. . . . Once I played for him when he led the Tabernacle Choir. He led with up-beats, vigorously and inspiringly. It seemed impossible to sing flat; the singers were hypnotized.¹¹

Becky Almond was a well known pianist and teacher. She served as accompanist on the two tours of "The Vision" with Stephens, where they worked with choirs in thirty-two towns. She said in an interview with Dale A. Johnson in 1952:

Marvelous person. He did more to influence more people than any one other pioneer musician in the community. In his music he loved tremolos. He was very particular about the efficacy of the

accompanists he used. Evan always talked at concerts and about someone he knew. In his later life his teeth were terrible. They had worn down to the gums and he was very opposed to dentures.¹²

The subject of tooth extraction was an anathema to Evan Stephens. He mentioned it several times in his letters to Mitton, but never as strongly as on 23 July, 1926. He said

I appreciate your kind eagerness, but apparently not to the degree of casting out my old teeth. Dr. said 'Maybe it would help, and maybe it would not.' Anyway so long as they behave alright I guess they'll stay. You know we should be just even to teeth—under suspicion even. How many times have my feet (damp, cold, wet etc.) brot trouble to various parts of our old bodies, but whoever heard of our even threatening to have them pulled out, cut off, or thrown away for the mischief they had done. So live even the teeth—stumps fair play.

Another subject on which Stephens was adamant was the radio. He said, "Folks, I cannot enjoy the radio. I have banished it from the house. I told my housekeeper I wouldn't pay the rent if she brought one into the house."

Stephens's mode of working, his demand of freedom from what he felt were artificial restrictions on his creativity were indigenous to his character and of great importance.

In his conversations with B.F. Cummings, Jr. he made this very plain:

It is true that every stirring musical person is aggressive enough to demand room to work, and can ill endure the elbowings of another. When I have control my authority must be absolute. I would permit no one to interfere in my work, nor

would I be willing to interfere in another's. The musical result of my labor is my first and sole consideration. Personalities come in only as this demands. My singers understand this, hence our comparative peace and good will under the most trying conditions.¹³

In one other small matter, as has been mentioned before, Stephens literally disdained the custom of appearing in a dress suit or tuxedo for his concerts. Apparently he thought overalls were just as good. John James said that he and John D. Owen "got Evan in a room prior to the tour to the Irrigation Congress in 1911, and insisted that he wear proper dress as a conductor. Evan called this dress 'fandangoes.'" He did submit, however, and was photographed in his formal dress and eventually accepted the custom more enthusiastically.

Noteworthy in Stephens's major address at his 1916 testimonial in the Tabernacle was his statement that "I think a great deal of the organ and so does everybody who hears it, the re-constructed one as well as the old one that Brother Ridges put in." For Evan this was a quiet submission to his critics in the organ controversy of 1901.

In perhaps the most remarkable portrayal of his life in music, Evan Stephens, writing in third person, submitted an article entitled "M.I.A. In Music" to the **Improvement Era**. The first paragraph is quoted here. It leaves the reader with a lucid understanding of how the Professor viewed his own life and destiny:

When the Lord wishes to direct his people into certain paths of progress, his favorite mode of procedure seems to be not so much to thunder his commands from the mountains of clouds, as he once did to his people of Israel, for his own good purposes, or perhaps because of the hardness of their hearts at the time, but he more often gives his children the benefit and joy of accomplishing the work, by his aid, in a way less spectacular, but no

less effective. Some quiet, unknown man or woman is unconsciously attuned into a fit instrument for the work. An intense desire is in some simple, natural way created in the person to accomplish something in this line or that. As the person or persons pursue the desired paths, more and more grows the desire and the joy in the labors of pursuit; more and more dawns upon their vision the possibilities and the desirableness of accomplishment, until it becomes a burning fire of passion, warming the heart and soul of the devotees, and constantly, awake or asleep, urging to their minds plans and means leading to the ultimate accomplishment of first one thing and then more, all tending to the ultimate aim of the great guiding hand. And lo! some fine day, apparently directly or indirectly, through the fruits of the labors of these inspired persons a people are found to have attained, to a more or less perfect degree, that particular goal and purpose desired by the Lord.¹⁴

Evan Stephens's last public appearance was at the October Semi-annual Conference of 1930. The choir conductor, A.C. Lund had asked him to lead in the singing of one of his anthems, "Come, Dearest Lord." As John James described the scene, Stephens "put his heart and soul into it, and was siezed with a heart attack and never came out of his home again. In talking with him at his residence at 21st South and State, he informed me he didn't know how he got on the bus or how he reached his beautiful home."¹⁵

On 28 October 1930 under the heading, "Former Leader of Tabernacle Choir Closes Active Career" the following paragraph appeared in the **Deseret News**:

Professor Evan Stephens, whose name and life work were for nearly half a century inseparably associated with all that is cultural in the develop-

ment of music in Utah, and synonymous with the achievements and world-wide fame of the Tabernacle Choir, died early Monday night at his home . . . from cerebral hemorrhage after an illness of nearly three weeks.

The article proceeded to outline his vast achievements in the Church and community. Survivors were listed accurately in a subsequent **Salt Lake Telegram** article as a brother, David E. Stephens of Big Hole, Montana; several nieces and nephews in Malad, Idaho; two grandnieces, Mrs Alice Daniels Heywood and Miss Sarah Daniels of Salt Lake City; and several cousins and relatives on the maternal side in Wales.

Funeral services were held Friday, 31 October in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Speakers were President Heber J. Grant, Elder Orson F. Whitney of the Council of the Twelve, George D. Pyper, and Professor A.C. Lund. The entire choir membership sang several of Professor Stephens's hymns in a fitting farewell to the shepherd boy from the hills of Willard who left an unchallenged legacy in Utah music.

Notes to Preface

1. **The Deseret News**, 4 June 1927, 1.
2. Alexander Schreiner, **Alexander Schreiner Reminisces** (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1984), 104.
3. Wendell J. Ashton, **Theirs Is the Kingdom** (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945), 260-61.
4. Dale A. Johnson, "The Life and Contributions of Evan Stephens" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952), 40.
5. Johnson 6.
6. David Oshinsky, Editor's Page, **Memories Magazine**, February/March 1990.
7. A Pioneer, Evan Bach, "A True Story for Little Folk," **The Children's Friend** (General Board of the L.D.S. Primary Association, January 1920)19:473.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Letter to S.B. Mitton, 9 March 1926. Copy in author's poss.
2. **Salt Lake Tribune**, 7 April 1917.
3. **DN**, 10 March 1917.
4. **DN**, 2 July 1914.
5. **DN**, 25 August 1916.
6. Thomas Griggs Journal, 24 November 1901.
7. Stephens had financed Dr. Thomas Thomas through medical school at Columbia and gave another boy a home as a wedding present. He was widely known for his generosity. Some of the boys who stayed at his home (which at times resembled a boarding house) included John J. Ward, Horace S. Ensign, J. Wallace Packham, Willard Christopherson, and Judge Noel Pratt. Some female relatives also made Pine Lodge their home periodically.
8. **DN**, 23 September 1916.
9. **DN**, 24 January 1895.
10. Griggs Journal, 24 January 1901.
11. **DN**, 14 October 1909.
12. Unsubstantiated reports indicate that Stephens was provided a monthly stipend of \$100 for the remainder of his life.
13. Michael Hicks, **Mormonism and Music** (Urbana and

3. Kennedy interview, 1989 and Samuel Bailey Mitton biography, typescript. See Ruby Mitton Baker, "Childhood Recollections" in Kennedy, "Precious Moments," 31.

4. DN, 29 July 1919.

5. Stephens letter to Mitton, 3 October 1920.

6. DN, 5 April 1921.

7. Pyper in **J**I 68(October 1923):496.

8. Stephens letter to Mitton, 22 October 1922.

9. Evan Stephens, M.I.A. in Music, **IE** 28(June 1925):732.

10. DN, 26 January and 3 February 1923.

11. Carter, **Our Pioneer Heritage** 10:91.

Notes to Chapter Fourteen

1. Stephens, **TCF** 19(May 1920):187.

2. John James, "On the Hundreth Anniversary of the Birth of Evan Stephens" lecture, Archives HDC, 1954.

3. DN, 12 May 1900.

4. **IE**, 55(March 1951):141.

5. Edna Coray Dyer Journal, Archives HDC, 1903.

6. LeRoy Mitton and Ann Mitton Dunn quotes from Kennedy, "Precious Moments," 42-3.

7. Agnes Olsen Thomas, 4, 7.

8. Evangeline Thomas Beesley, **So That My Children and Grandchildren Might Know** (Salt Lake City:Beesley Family) nd.

9. Griggs Journal, July 1898.

10. Edith Edwards McClurg, holograph, 1989, 6.

11. Alexander Schreiner, 103-04.

12. Johnson, 89.

13. **CON** 16(September 1895):661.

14. Evan Stephens, "M.I.A. In Music," **IE** 28(June 1925):730-32.

15. James, lecture, HDC.

APPENDIX

Evan Stephens's Letter to Salt Lake Telegram

22 October 1915

The following communication was received this morning from Prof. Evan Stephens, director of the tabernacle choir: Salt Lake Telegram Editor:

Dear Sir—inasmuch as a number of statements in an article termed, "Church Will Reorganize Tabernacle Big Choir," which appeared in your Tuesday paper have caused wide comment, I wish to make a statement in my own behalf. The unsatisfactory condition of the choir was pointed out to the first presidency by myself—and not "by a member of the twelve apostles"—about four months ago, with an urgent request that the causes leading up to the conditions be removed. It is not the first appeal, but one out of many made during the past ten or fifteen years. My complaint has been that the choir members are so engaged in church duties (all good and praiseworthy) in their various stakes and wards that conflict with their regular attendance at the tabernacle; that irregularity has become so prevalent as to destroy the effectiveness of our work. And my request was that proper ecclesiastical authorities remove this obstacle that we might enjoy what every musical organization must have to do artistic work, a full attendance regularly from all the enrolled members.

Meeting is called.

The presiding authorities (I suppose in order to have an amicable adjustment of the difficulty agreeable to all stake and ward authorities) called a meeting about ten weeks ago of all bishops, counselors and stake presidencies concerned in the tabernacle. And I was invited to lay before them the difficulties and make a statement as to my view of solving the same. The points, as stated by me, were something about as follows:

(1) Tabernacle choir members being active in Sabbath school work and Mutual Improvement associations, ward and stake choirs and other local church duties, it is impossible for them to be

regular at the tabernacle. Many of these hold meetings or sessions at the rehearsal or meeting time of the choir, results, one-half or two-thirds missing at some rehearsals and the same at some meetings or services. Half or more present at the one, absent at the other, making everything uncertain or to "part balance" or volume; in fact, making it impossible to render satisfactory anything but our simplest, best known selections.

Other lesser reasons for irregularity and even withdrawals from the choir and mentioned were:

(2) Our people generally having two to three hours of religious activity in the ward or stake every Sunday morning, and a couple of hours again in the evening, have felt it to be too much to journey uptown to the tabernacle in the afternoon. Hence they have naturally formed the habit of remaining at home, or to visit, ride, or stroll in the park, etc. This to such an extent that few go to the tabernacle. The singers finding their companions and friends mostly elsewhere feel it a burden to separate and go where but few others go.

Our need of the singers in the tabernacle clashing with the equal need of their presence elsewhere by the church has a tendency to make the tabernacle choir seem in opposition to the other organizations, and destroys the good feeling and backing it should have from the ward members and authorities at large; making a sort of an "outcast" of it. I might add that a lack of support in sentiment and act is so often evident from many sources as to discourage many from making the sacrifice that membership in the choir demands.

"Endless Difficulties"

I could go on enumerating endless other difficulties naturally in the way of keeping intact year in and year out a large unpaid musical organization of this sort, but I will desist and go to one which you state the committee finds and the responsibility of which falls upon me. (By the way, another slight correction. The committee appointed to investigate matters was not appointed by the presidency, but simply by act of the aforementioned meeting of ward and stake authorities, who in considering the best means

to accomplish something hit upon the plan that each stake appoint two members to take up the entire matter. Hence that committee.)

You say the "result of the investigation was, it is said, that the committee learned that many of the members and former members of the internationally famous choir had become wearied of the music they were presenting at the regular services and at special performances and had not been assigned enough new music to sustain their interest."

Now, a part of this I account for as true in my statement, that the very irregularity I complain of made it impossible for us to render satisfactorily anything but our simplest, best known selections. And, of course, through no fault of mine, made it discouraging and uninteresting to those who attended. But as to the "new music" as well as the weariness caused, I wish to make it plain that it was neither from the amount nor the quality of the material placed before them by their conductor that the trouble arose. During the past three months of rehearsal—June, July and September—the choir has taken up as entirely new the following:

(1) Chorus, "Hear Us O Lord," from "Judas Macabeus," (Handel). No finer classic chorus could be found. It was one of the contest pieces for the \$10,000 prize at San Francisco in July.

(2) Part song, "The Indian Serenade," Major Williams, considered by musicians as one of the most beautiful of modern times. Another of the contest pieces.

(3) "Loyalty." One of mine, but one which has received much praise and a sale of nearly 2000 copies since it was first sung in July. A line of the words may be pertinent—

"Who would a traitor be, when foes assail,
Stand idly by or flee, when wrongs prevail.
Who would deny the truth and let the lie
Unheeded pass him by?"

(4) "The Snow," by Edward Elgar, the greatest English composer of today, so generally acknowledged.

(5) "The Links o' Love." A fine part song by modern Scotch composer.

Numbers Practiced.

Besides working on these fine numbers, entirely new to the choir, and of which it can be said without fear of repudiation, equal in quality and charm to anything studied by any of the best choral societies in America or England. The choir has drilled upon the following old "stock pieces" to prepare for public renditions at Sunday services, etc. (Musicians are asked to note the quality and quantity of these also.)

- (1) Double chorus, "Judge Me, O God" (Mendelssohn).
- (2) Duet and chorus, "I waited for the Lord" (Mendelssohn).
- (3) Motette, "By Babylon's Wave" (Gounod).
- (4) Scene, "The Judgement," from "Mors et Vita," (Gounod).
- (5) "Hallelujah," from "Messiah" (Handel).
- (6) "Hosannah," temple dedication anthem. (Stephens).

Most of these have been sung at services and concerts during the past three months when the attendance of singers was sufficiently large to render them properly. The others and lighter numbers, which justly called complaints from conductor and attending singers had to be substituted for better things when the attendance made the parts unbalanced and weak.

I freely invite the judgment of musicians at home and abroad as to whether or not the material given this choir ought to serve to have singers of merit get "wearied of the music they were presenting" or to complain that they had not been assigned enough "new music" to sustain their interest." Is it not far more likely that owing to the causes I have enumerated above, [t]hey have lost interest through absenting themselves, while the regulars are wearied of having to put up with their general absence and their irregular presence. I felt it was my duty to explain these matters placed in your hands. As to the rest of your article, I have nothing to state more than that some of it was interesting "news" to me, and that I have up to date received no official word from anywhere.

(signed.) EVAN STEPHENS.

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THE CHILDREN SANG

The Life and Music of Evan Stephens

is an intimate portrait of the young pioneer of 1866 who at the age of sixteen foresaw his destiny in Mormon music. Almost single-handedly he engineered a farms-footed renaissance in Church music, between 1880 and 1916, spurred on by his dreams of Mormons "singing their own hymns to their own music."

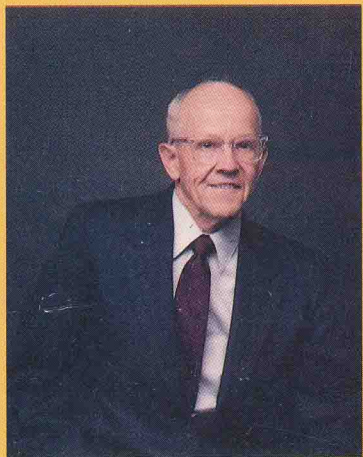
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The author quotes liberally from Stephens's published articles and letters. He includes twelve of a series of letters written by Stephens to his friend, Samuel Bailey Mitton, from 1916 to 1929, which reveal for the first time the Professor's inner feelings about Mormon music, the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, and the agenda of the Church Music Committee of which Stephens was a member from its formation in 1920.

The author, Ray L. Bergman recalls his childhood experience of singing in Evan Stephens's chorus of six thousand children in 1927. With this event as an impetus, he undertook to explore the life and works of Evan Stephens. Ray has published articles on a variety of subjects in local and national newspapers and magazines including *Decor*, *This People*, *The Deseret News*, *Harvest*, etc. He lives in Utah and has been a teacher of creative writing and has a varied background in theater, communications, publishing and retailing. He is a former instructor at the L.D.S. Business College and the University of Utah. He holds a B.A. from the University of Utah and an M.B.A. from Northwestern University.



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