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MAUD POWELL'S SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR

After a triumphal tour in South Africa, Maud Powell, the American violinist, returned to her native land last week, greatly rejoicing to be home again, her cup of happiness brimming over through her success in the Diamond country.

Other musicians have made satisfactory appearances in South Africa, but it is doubtful if anyone—particularly an American woman—has so agreeably surprised and pleased the Boer and British inhabitants as did Miss Powell with her genius as a violinist. She received ovations and praise from audiences and critics wherever she played, and was given re-engagements in all the large towns. This made her tour twice as long as originally planned.

“South Africa, taken as a whole, is a splendid country, very much in the rough, of course, as to dwellings and city improvements, but settled throughout with a most hospitable, wholesouled and music loving population of Boers and Britons...and, although I gave forty-two concerts, my whole trip was made so restful that I feel in the best of health and spirits for my coming tour of my own country and Canada.

“Traveling throughout the country is not very comfortable, partly on account of the ravages made in the traffic facilities by the war. However, the railroad officials made it as easy as possible for me by the granting of a private car, which I was informed was an unusual privilege in that country.

“The railway, by the way, is of the primitive, narrow gauge sort, built on the stage coach principle. When you come to a hill it just climbs up and down, as tunnels or cuttings are undreamed of. There are no trestles or bridgework for the small streams, so the longest way 'round them is the shortest way across.

“At my concerts the Boers showed much enthusiasm and afterwards seemed to vie with each other in offering hospitalities. In all the large towns the Mayors seem to represent the people socially as well as politically, and everywhere they seemed eager to show their country and extend courtesies to me and my party.

“In Natal, where the scenery is wonderfully beautiful, we were taken on a 30 mile drive in a government mule wagon, to see Howick Falls, which are 364

feet high, and drop with a terrific roar. My snapshot of the falls illustrates their size in July—the South African winter time—when it is the dry season. At other seasons, I was told, it is a much bigger waterfall. At Kimberley we were conducted in great state through the De Beers diamond mines and through the ‘Ferruna Deep’ gold mines, at Johannesburg. In the former the laborers, convicts for the most part, picked the diamonds out of the running sluice every other minute. It was a tempting spectacle.

“I hugely enjoyed Pietermaritzburg, which is by far the prettiest town in South Africa, and contains some magnificent public buildings. I also like Durban, which, though a more pretentious town, is not so distinctive in progressive characteristics, as it is largely a winter resort only.

“A quaint custom in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban is the use of those jolly little ‘rickshas. It was a novel sensation to me to step into a ‘ricksha in my evening dress, valuable fiddle in hand, and to be trotted off to the concert. This sort of conveyance seemed rather romantic and delightful on those wonderful starlit nights I spent under the Southern Cross.

“The townspeople of Ladysmith were more than cordial in their reception of me. All around were evidences of the terrors of war, in the demolition of portions of some of the fine buildings. Even the Town Hall did not go unscathed, its pretty little clock tower having been partly destroyed by a Boer shell. But the citizens don’t dwell much on that topic, and it was only called to my attention when in my appreciation of their putting a billboard on the Town Hall announcing my concert, I had remarked, ‘Just fancy any other country advertising my appearance on its Town Hall!’ It was a generous compliment. At Ladysmith we also visited the surrounding battlefields, which gave us more of an idea what hardships the Ladysmith settlers had to undergo during the war.”

“What did you bring back in the way of souvenirs, Miss Powell?” queried the interviewer.

“Well, in addition to more than 200 photographs, I secured a specimen of a Kaffir piano, which must be seen to be appreciated, as it beggars description.

“A memorable day of sight seeing on the way was a visit to St. Helena, where we entered Longwood House, where Napoleon lived.”

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education