

My Typewriter Talks

by the Rev. Charles H. Gilbert

Today I planned to go to Valley Crest, for yesterday my regular day did not seem the kind of weather I ought to go out in. But then, neither did today! Perhaps I am a little more cautious about going out in weather than I used to be. Three years in succession of having to be a hospital patient perhaps has slowed down my daring all kinds of weather.

By the way, Catherine set up our projector last night and tried out our Christmas gift or a professional type projector table. Works just fine has every convenience one ever needs. She had taken some slide pictures during those few days when the ice on the branches stayed just so without dripping or changing shape. When hot summer days come and you want something cool to look at, send for her to give you a slide show guaranteed to cool you off! For instance, imagine seeing lilac buds encased in crystal. And pussy willows made of clear glass! Or weeping willow branches frozen into garlands of diamonds! Some of her close-ups of crystallized buds are unimaginably beautiful.

All of which goes to prove that even in winter, life can be beautiful! Funny, how a closeup picture or even a well-framed photo of almost anything have their elements of beauty.

I have been trying to school myself to a more appreciative hearing of a great oratorio. For instance, I found lying on the stand the envelope which contained a recording by Robert Shaw of Mozart's Requiem Mass in D Minor. The record was on the phonograph, so I sat down to read the words which were being sung.

As a habitual listener to the Wyoming Valley Oratorio Society's productions I have certain difficulties. Most of you know, however, that with a daughter who has been singing in this Society's oratorios for about 16 years, I would try to hear every one of the concerts. In fact, I have missed very few and then only because of sickness. But as I say, I have certain difficulties. One especially has to do with the words being sung, I am not enough of a musician to enjoy to the fullest a production which is sung by human voices unless somehow I can know what they are singing. Words and their meanings are important to me. (Incidentally this is why I deeply dislike some very well-liked so-called "gospel" songs: because the words sound too cheap or unrealistic to me and my experience. The tunes may be catchy but the words to me often are "scratchy"! Pardon me for saying so!)

Girl Scouts sell variety of cookies

Now is the time for area residents to fill up their cookie jars. Girl Scouts and Brownies of Penn's Woods Council started selling cookies last Saturday and the annual sale will continue through Feb. 6.

Girl Scouts in the six-county area, armed with instructional material and supplies to aid with the sale, are "on their honor", taking orders for five varieties of cookies, including shortbread, peanut butter, chocolate and vanilla sandwich cremes, thin mints, and pecanettes.

Mrs. William Heckman, Wilkes-Barre, council-wide chairman of the Cookie Sale, stated the goal is 385,000 boxes. Participating Girl Scouts of Penn's Woods Council represent registered troops in the counties of Luzerne, Columbia, Schuylkill, and parts of Carbon, Northumberland and Wyoming.

Mrs. Heckman said the

human beings find ourselves (and we better believe it!) as sinners in manifold ways making the only effective plea we can make for mercy. We may be respectable high-brows or confessed low-brows but there is only one road into eternal peace and that is by this very cry for mercy expressed in off-repeated notes—"Kyrie eleison", Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.

To me, this great oratorio has this strong message for us couched in the language of the Church and the Bible, and, let us not forget it, poured out in repetitious phrases and in deep intensity, to the God we are taught is, may we thank His Name, not only Sanctus (Holy) but merciful.

If He is not merciful there is no hope for us! Aren't you glad you are not rich!

Jesus had an experience most alarming. A young man who was "very rich", came asking Jesus the way to eternal life. His riches were a hindrance. Jesus said to his disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

I note that God is not interested in getting a camel through the eye of a needle. Neither is the camel. But across the page in the 19th chapter of Luke there is the story of Zaccheus of whom it was said that he was "very rich". Not only was he rich but he was a "little man". Now God provided even this "very rich" but even this "little man" with a tree with branches low enough to reach. This little fellow pulled himself up into the tree where he could see Jesus and Jesus could see him. This bore out the word Jesus had said in the previous chapter: "What is impossible for men is possible for God!" And this rich man, this little man did find entrance into the kingdom!

This is about all the preaching I ought to do for this column. So, my dear clickity-clack, you can sign off!

The fact that the words are sometimes in Latin is no drawback to me, for although I am not an accomplished student of Latin I can follow the lines and know what the singers are doing. I know what Kyrie eleison mean (they happen to be Greek, not Latin) and God forbid I should not ever know what Sanctus means, and Benedictus, and Amen!

There is something obvious in this oratorio and many of the others that are sung, they are, and especially this Requiem Mass, the words first and last are addressed directly to the Almighty God Himself. That constitutes one great difference between songs and hymns. The words of a hymn, because they are addressed directly to the ear of Almighty God, can never be cheap or meaningless. So with this oratorio (which by the way is part of the spring concert the Society has just begun working on) it is a mighty serious, though beautiful prayer from the depth of the human heart which knows its sinfulness, addressed to the mercy of God in Christ. Now there is no fooling about this situation in which all of us

"cookie sales annually enable the Council to provide camping opportunities to Girl Scouts at a lower cost, assists in the maintenance of camp properties owned and operated by the Council and to strengthen the proposed camp development plan."

Adult volunteers assisting in District IV are: Mrs. Abram Daniels, Kingston, chairman; neighborhood chairmen, Mildred Weiss, Nanticoke; Mrs. John M. Zaleskas, Harveys Lake; Mrs. Earnest Norrie, Trucksville; Mrs. Robert Hossler, Kingston; Jeanne Smith, Pringle; Mrs. John Lychos, Forty Fort.

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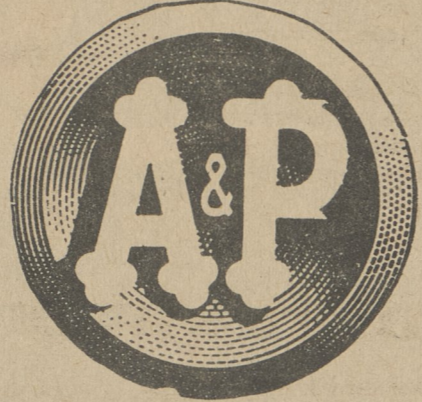
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