

easy spellin'. Now everyone calls me that. But dad—"

Again he broke off, choking with repressed emotion, and the cup fell as he cast out his hands in a childish gesture of clutching at something far beyond reach. "I have no dad," he cried, "no one to take care of me."

Like a flash Eric Sark had him in his arms, blankets and all.

"Yes, you have, Foam," he soothed. "Don't my arms tell you that? Aren't they strong enough to take care of you?"

The boy looked at him in bewilderment for an instant, then put his head down on Sark's monstrous shoulder and sobbed quietly.

Sark, holding him close, became aware that Bassett was grinning at him from the door-way of the tent, grinning and scratching his scalp. "I was just trying to remember that remark of yours about infants and the Dawson Trail," he chuckled.

"You go to thunder," retorted Sark.

NORTH up the lakes passed the rush to make Dawson before the freeze-up, and somewhere in the mob went always Sark and Bassett with the bit of flotsam they had picked up. Men called them fools to be hampered in the race for gold by a child, but they termed them that behind their backs. One at Whitehorse who had spoken in that manner to Sark's face remained in that camp with a broken jaw. Thereafter the trio were given no audible advice, although the voyagers came to look upon Sark's devotion to the lad as but one of the many manias to be encountered in the northland. And it was this intense devotion that began to heal in a measure Foam's grief. Not that it healed as quickly as most childish sorrows! For Foam Challis was in many ways an abnormal boy. His retentive brain kept continually breaking back to the past. And though Sark was shrewd enough to counteract the influence of such despairing spells with the wonder of new scenes and the joy of exciting incidents, he secretly feared that Foam was not truly healthy in mind or body. Which fear was confirmed when they went into camp one night at the Stewart's mouth. Foam would eat no supper. He complained of shiverings and a sick stomach. Sark found his skin dry, his pulse very high.

"A touch of fever," Bassett deduced.

"I don't know," Sark brooded. "For the life of me, I don't know."

By morning Foam grew worse. There was rigour, vomiting, pain in the back.

"He can't travel, Tom," was Sark's decision. "You take the boat and tent and half the outfit. I'll move into yon empty cabin up the bank."

Tom Bassett immediately protested. "Do you know what you're throwing away?" he demanded. "The freeze-up's coming any minute. You'll never get in on Eldorado if you wait for snow and dogs. You got to go now."

"Shut up and travel," answered Sark. "I'm staying here. I'll get what medicine's in this Stewart camp and doctor him before I move an inch."

IN the near-dawn Eric Sark threw his great legs over the edge of the upper bunk, felt gingerly with his toes for the rim of the lower one, slipped, and scraped his shin as he thudded on the cabin floor. At the noise there arose a stirring in the lower bunk and the murmuring of Foam's voice.

Sark rubbed his shin. "Feeling better, Foam?" he asked, gently.

The murmuring, though louder, was incoherent. Alarmed, Sark sprang quickly for the matches. The candle flared between two extremes, between a healthy giant, huge, black, hairy as a caveman, and the sick boy, frail, feverish, his blue eyes shining deliriously through his yellow, matted curls.

On the boy's flushed cheeks red specks showed. Sark held the candle closer and turned down the blanket. "Steady, Foam," he whispered, as the child tossed and cried out in his delirium. "Steady—just a minute!"

A few of the red specks appeared on the neck. Lower there were none—as yet.

The candle's beam on the ceiling quivered oddly back and forth in the arc of a circle. It was the trembling of the man's muscled arm that caused it.

For Sark knew small-pox!

He had seen it before.

SARK threw fresh fuel on the coals of the night fire in the sheet-iron stove. As he took his coffee pail to fill at the river, he saw that the freeze-up had come. During the night the shore ice had crept out and bridged the current. Henceforth no boat would move till spring. And no man would move from the camp till the ice had thickened enough to safely bear dog teams and loads.

How thick was it now?

Sark had a deep and peculiar interest in ascertaining that! He tentatively broke the sealed hole where the water-takers drew water. This was no guide because of the frozen slush that rimmed the pool. So he strode out on the mid-river surface. It bore his weight, but cracked ominously at his every movement. He stood a moment as if debating, seeing in a vacant fashion the grey morning creep over the stark divides and down the narrow canyons, noting many smokes from many fires rising straight as pillars into space. Then he shook his head dubiously, came back to the water-hole, and dipped his pail.

The boy could take no solid breakfast, but Sark managed to feed him some gruel by spoonfuls. Also, he fished out a bag containing a half-dozen lemons saved for time of sickness, and made him a soothing drink. Then Sark himself cooked and ate the heavy meal for which he would presently have need. That done, he ran up to the cabin of Randall, the Stewart trader who dealt in supplies at fabulous prices.

"How's the kid this morning?" Randall asked.

"Not too bad. Give me a light sledge and three dogs." He threw down the heavy stipend.

"Think the snow's coming soon?" the trader inquired as he led the way to the shed where he kept

the dogs.

"Might as well be ready," Sark evaded. In five minutes he had picked out three large huskies, harnessed them, and helped them drag the sledge over the frozen ground to the river ice.

At the front and rear of the sledge he tied four large, empty, syrup tins, from the cabin shelves. Next, with the provisions, he lashed on the boy, swathed in blankets against a chill.

From his door Randall saw him. From other doors other men saw him. They ran down.

"What you doing?" they demanded.

"Going to Dawson," answered Sark. "The kid's worse. I have to get him to a doctor."

"You're crazy," declared one man.

"Might as well plop through right here," suggested another.

Sark tried to ignore them, but every face was grim, and the grimmest one was Randall's. "Look now, Sark," he began, "you can't go on. It's murder and suicide. If I'd known, you wouldn't have got the dogs. I thought you were only outfitting early. You can't go on, I say."

"Can't?"

"No."

"Who'll stop me?"

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The Art of Eugene Ysaye

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

THE picture below is one way of looking at Ysaye. He looked that way about ten years ago. When he played last week with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra he was a portly, prodigious personality who looked as much like the late Oronhyatekha as any man ever could and play the violin. Huge, thick shoulders, a tremendous chest, a mop of crow-black hair and a slight stoop, he resembled no other violinist that ever played in America. Little Mischa Elman he could almost have poked into one of his cavernous trousers pockets. Kubelik would have made a nice-sized walking-stick. Only Kreisler, six feet and more and every inch a soldier, could compare in mere bodily strength to this giant of the four strings and the bow. A dress suit on him looks like a disguise of mere makeup. It by no means becomes him. He is cheerfully more at home in a floppy big smock, a spraddly felt hat, a tously scarf and a pair of big shoes; such as he is sometimes dressed when he goes fishing.

And Ysaye is as unusual in his use of the violin as he is in looks. When a lad at the Liege Conservatoire the tutors said he never would learn the violin. They sent him home. Some years ago, however, he began to be the greatest living violinist. At the age of fifty-five he is still the big chief. Other violinists may have genius, Ysaye has lived to conquer the violin; to make it speak the language of absolute, interpretative art.

Colossal, cyclic and immense he walked heavily out with his little fiddle to the front of the stage, bowed with tremendous gravity, took a twiddle at his violin and intimated to the conductor that he was ready to begin the Viotti concerto. At once he began to play with the first violins; just sawing away in a leisurely fashion to warm up the strings. In a little while he was playing solo.

From that till the end of the Beethoven Concerto, which took the best part of an hour, Ysaye recreated art in most of its eloquent forms, with the consummate, impeccable certitude of a great master. He performed. He spoke. He sang. He whispered. He shot off fireworks. He did aerial convolutions. He rolled the bow and it was like a small boat on a big sounding sea. He built up ponderous climaxes of tone. He hair-brushed a phrase till it was as smooth as oiled silk. He double-stopped on a long galaxy of chromatics till they became as garrulous and querulous and as jubilant and as heydayish as a pack of birds in a summer grove. He let the bow decline on to the G string and it gave out deep, tenderish voices vibrant with restrained pathos. He slid up to the last cobweb of his E string and made it speak a little mes-

sage in a clean, articulate, well-rounded phrase that never once became maudlin or doubtful.

But why recount the things he did—with that queer little eloquent fiddle? He did—everything that the fiddle can do. But it was always art. Always he was master of himself and of his instrument. Mainly he seemed bent upon giving you Beethoven and Viotti, and in the one encore St. Saens, with or without as much Ysaye as it needed. Much of what he did was overpoweringly technical; perhaps too much. It has been said of Ysaye that he profoundly expresses himself in the violin. But a man does not naturally think in technical terms. Had Ysaye wanted to make his fiddle laugh and weep and preach and philosophize as some claim he does, he would have chosen a more obvious programme. Instead, he chose to demonstrate that Ysaye is the perfect master of the violin, which has no potentialities that he has not explored. To him the fiddle was not a naive thing like the blowing of a shepherd's pipe, on which he artlessly uttered "things that lie too deep for tears." No, it was the thing he had made his servant, to say what he wanted it to say at any particular time—in the name of violin art.

IT was all art. Ysaye left nothing to chance. He was not there to show how daring he could be. He had rehearsed all. At the rehearsal he was most devilishly exacting. Many great virtuosos at a rehearsal just go through the motions to give the orchestra an outline of the tempo and the nuances. Not so Ysaye. He did everything even to the long cadenzas just as he had it to do at the concert. When he had finished the band was a bit fagged; so was he. But what matter? It was necessary.

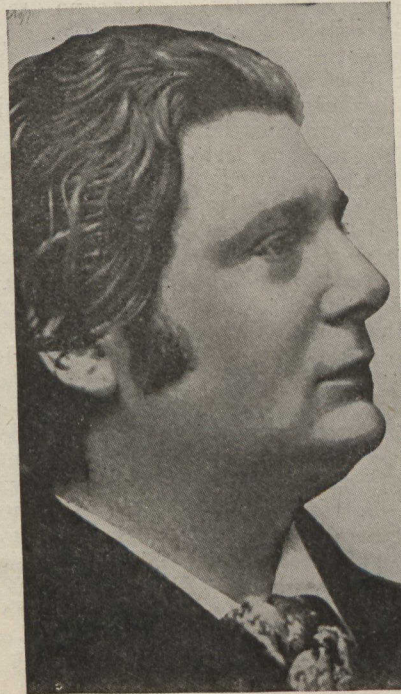
Art must never be left to casual inspiration.

It was suggested to Ysaye that the public might like to hear an encore with the piano accompaniment.

"Tut!" he stormed, "I do not care what the public want. I will not play an encore with the piano—this time."

So he played it with the orchestra.

And it must be said that the orchestra supported Ysaye better than they have played for any of the long line of big artists in their clientele. It was a hard test. The Viotti concerto they had never seen until Ysaye fetched it the day of the rehearsal. The maestro was obviously pleased; though always critical. He has a fine ear for balance of tone and dynamics. But after the opening of the first movement in the first concerto he seemed to settle with himself that the band was in good hands; he had nothing to fear. That's as severe a test as is possible.



EUGENE YSAYE, VIOLINIST.