

MUSICIAN MUST BE FINAL PEACE MISSIONARY, SAYS KREISLER

Soldier-Violinist Brings from the Front a Message to His Fellow Artists—Their Opportunity the Greatest to Bridge Over the Abysses of Hatred This War Will Leave Behind—Attitude Towards His Own Military Service—What the War's Effect Will Be Upon American Music

"TO bridge over the abysses of hatred and racial animosity that this war will leave behind it; to make the peace that will come and that otherwise might be but a shallow pretence, a real and a deep and lasting peace—that must be the mission of the artist, and particularly the musical artist, when this war is ended."

And that is the message that Fritz Kreisler brings to his fellow artists from the front of battle. Fine soldier that he is, intense patriot that he is, the great Austrian violinist in the larger sense is a citizen of the world, and upon his spirit of broad humanity this war in which he himself has fought has left no scars. His first thought now is for what will come after.

"It is to the artist that we must look, first of all, I think, as the true diplomat, the true missionary of peace, and in that service that will come to us it is my great hope to do my part. I cannot feel any real, any personal hatreds as a result of this war. The situation of the artist whose career has been made in many lands is peculiar in this instance. In my own case—my devotion to my own land, I think that is known. It is the one great thing with me; it is so with every Austrian. Yet I have so many friends in France, in Belgium, in England, in Russia! How could I change in my feeling toward them! How could any personal enmity enter in!

"And so it is that I think that those of us who have had the peculiar opportunity of the artist like myself will have a peculiar duty to perform. Can you not imagine, for instance, a concert by the Belgian Ysaye in Vienna after this war? Ysaye playing a Bach concerto? How they would rise to him! What a message he would have for them! What balm!

"We must all live together after this war. Whatever happens and whatever one's personal attitude on the political or other questions involved, could anyone, for instance, think for a moment that a magnificent nation like Austria could cease to have its great destiny in the world! And the links in the chain of the friendship of nations that we must all hope for—is it not the great artist like Ysaye who can weld them most firmly together?"

That Death Rumor

But a short month or two ago—in mid-September, to be exact—the report came to this country that Kreisler had been killed in action. He was reminded the other day of the distress this rumor had spread abroad in America—how it was said repeatedly that, whatever the justice of one cause or the other in this

did to our country. How could they regard us if we did not do our equal duty?

"Seeking service with the army with us all was as natural as breathing. No one thought that anything else was possible. I have known of men who have committed suicide because, for one reason or another, they were not allowed to enlist.

"Do not mistake us in Austria. It is a land of many races, I know. But we are all united, absolutely united, in our firm faith and desire to serve the



The Warrior-Violinist and His Wife in Her Uniform as Red Cross Nurse. The picture was "snapped" before Kreisler left for the front

Fatherland. Towards our enemies the attitude in the main is impersonal, with Serbia excepted. 'Carmen,' for instance, is still listened to in Vienna with as great pleasure as ever. But the Servians—they killed our Archduke; they plotted against the integrity of the Empire. Is it not natural that there should be bitterness?"

Breadth of View

Judging by the attitude of Mr. Kreisler, it is those who have been nearest the struggle who regard it in all its aspects with the greatest breadth of view. All the pettinesses of passion and prejudice it has engendered seem to have passed him by. Never has the writer talked even with an American who has exhibited a stronger compassion, a more



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Fritz Kreisler—One of the Violinist's Most Recent Portraits

thrust of the Cossack's lance. He is pale and a trifle wan from the effects of his long illness. To his brave American wife, who served with the Austrian army as a Red Cross nurse, he attributes the rapidity of his convalescence. Mrs. Kreisler was doing hospital service in Vienna and had not heard from her husband in weeks when she learned that he was in a hospital not far from the one in which she was working. "It was her untiring devotion and unceasing affection," says Mr. Kreisler, "that brought me back to a life that for a time, with



Lieutenant Kreisler in the Field. The picture was taken by a captive Russian officer the day before Kreisler was wounded

"As to the actual service in the field, it is the waiting in the trenches that is hard. One stands for hours, waiting, just waiting. Perhaps a comrade at one's side is killed by a piece of shrapnel. There is nothing to do but wait. One's own turn may come next. One has simply to wait. The hardest duty of the officer is not to urge the men into battle, but to keep them from rushing from the trenches and charging the enemy before it is yet time. The actual hand-to-hand encounter is a positive relief.

"How did the rumor that I had been fatally injured originate? I suppose it was in this way. I was lying on the ground with the other wounded after the battle of Lemberg. The surgeon had just given us a hasty examination, and after he had passed an officer, pointing to me, said, 'Do you know who that is? That is Kreisler, the artist.' 'Poor fellow,' said the surgeon, 'he has not a chance; he is mortally wounded.' But the surgeon thought that the officer had pointed out not myself, but the man lying next to me, who was in fact mortally hurt."

A Cossack's Fateful Destiny

The story of how Kreisler received his wound has been told and retold many times since his arrival in New York a week ago. Upon the fraction of a second depended the life of the man whom nearly every musician and music-lover, except Fritz Kreisler, considers the world's greatest living violinist. What a destiny was that unknown Cossack's! By losing in that desperate hand-to-hand fight for life he gave back to the world—Fritz Kreisler! Could he have freed his sword from his trappings as he fell from his horse his own life would have been saved. But he was just that fraction of a second too late and as the two men closed the already wounded soldier in the trench succeeded in getting his revolver into action and shot true to the mark.

It is not at all likely that Lieutenant Kreisler will return to the service with the Grazer Jaeger Regiment in this war. The authorities have declared him permanently incapacitated so far as military duty is concerned. He still limps painfully from the wound made by the

the pain that seemed endless, was hardly worth the living."

Effect on American Music

What effect will the war have upon American musical progress? There was the inevitable question.

"I think," said Mr. Kreisler, "it will serve to bring America to a realization of her own resources—richer probably than America herself has ever dreamed of as possible."

The violinist comes to us this year virtually a poor man. As the owner of factories and other property destroyed during the war in various parts of Austria, he has lost practically all of the fortune he had invested in his native land. However, that is the least of his worries in connection with this war.

Mr. Kreisler will begin his tour next week, and it is not difficult to imagine the reception that will be his whenever he appears upon the American concert platform. With the thrill that always goes out to the supreme artist, to a great soul finding expression in music, there will be added the admiration that belongs to the sturdy patriot, the tried and gallant soldier. And, more than all, the thought:

Thank God for Fritz Kreisler, a MAN!
RICHARD M. LARNED, JR.

Novel "Moments Musicales" with Opera Stars as Patrons

Under the patronage of Caruso, Amato, Bori and a number of other Metropolitan Opera stars a weekly series of "Moments Musicales avec Danses Modernes et Classiques" will be inaugurated on December 11, in the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria. The programs will be in three parts, the first of which will be devoted to music, and the other parts to classic and general dancing. Some of the Metropolitan favorites will figure on the programs. The project is under the management of Ottokar Bartik, Metropolitan ballet master.

By FRITZ KREISLER:

TO bridge over the abysses of hatred that this war will leave behind it—that must be the mission of the artist.

In the chain of international friendship that we must all hope for, is it not the great artist like Ysaye who can weld the links most firmly together?

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war, it was not worth the life of this one man.

"But," he protested, "I am ashamed, I am ashamed that this is so. Why should I be so singled out? How was I different from so many others? At my side in the trenches there fought men of equal rank in the arts. There were famous sculptors, famous painters, famous men of letters, all as well known—perhaps not in this country but at home—and all as high in their professions as I in mine. And how were we doing more than the average citizen was doing? Their lives were as precious to them; their lives belonged just as ours

comprehensive sympathy toward the sufferers from the wretched errors that brought it all about. The subject of alleged "atrocities" came up.

"If there have been 'atrocities,'" said Mr. Kreisler, "they cannot be traced to responsible men on either side. I saw none in the fighting between Austrians and Russians. Of course in times like this there is the rabble of hangers-on that cannot always be kept in check. But it is just as it might be in border warfare in this country. The shameful act of a few irresponsible men should not and could not rest as a stain upon an entire nation.