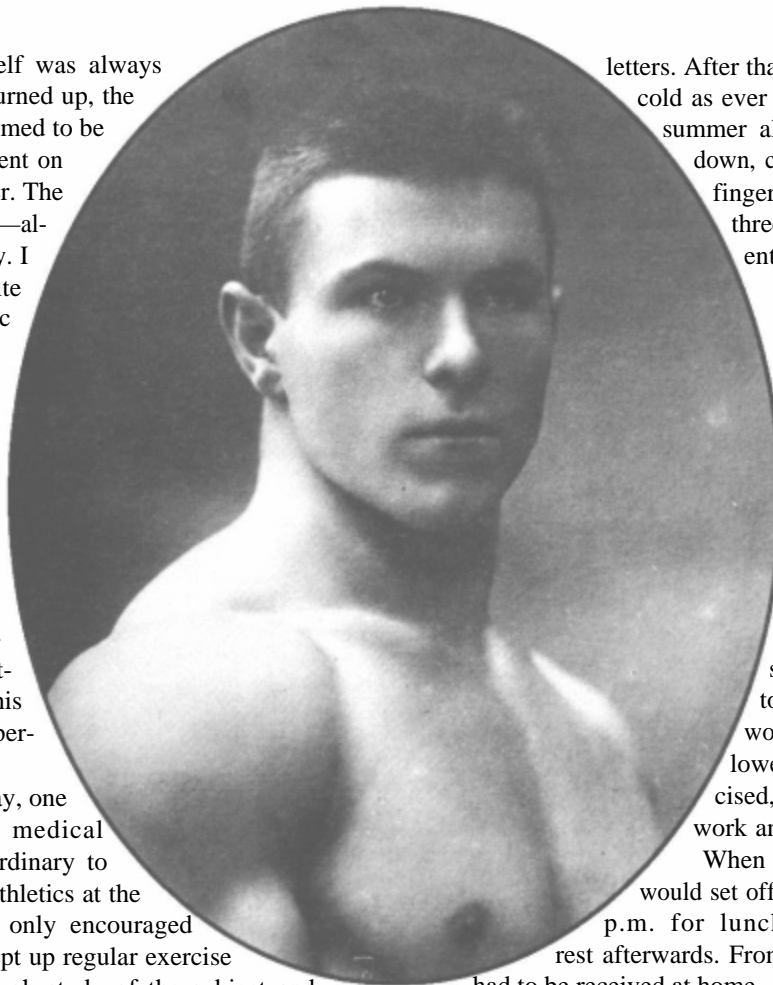


The Doctor himself was always busy, yet, the moment he turned up, the room and everyone in it seemed to be transformed, and training went on more energetically than ever. The man was unique in his way—always so unselfish and kindly. I never met anyone else quite like him. His was the magic wand which inspired us all. At times he would talk to us and, though his eyes might look tired, his body was always well poised and erect, while he dropped a word of praise here and encouragement there. Then the strong and the weak, the phlegmatic and the energetic, would all stand to attention and pay tribute to his singular and enlightened personality.

He was, by the way, one of Leningrad's leading medical men, being Physician-in-Ordinary to the Tsar. He had taken to athletics at the age of forty-one and not only encouraged others to follow suit but kept up regular exercise himself. He made a thorough study of the subject and systematized weightlifting. But though practicing what he preached, he seldom paid attention to see that his advice was followed. His mental outlook was mostly concerned with record lifts. Everything about the man was striking—movements, stride and manner of speech. Friend Guido Meyer, one of the strongest amateurs in Russia, used to imitate him to perfection saying: "All I want is record lifts, more record lifts, and still more record lifts, so hump yourselves and get busy."

No, he didn't coach me either in weightlifting or wrestling. In fact, the latter didn't interest him much, and I was just left to carry on in my own way. But he had decided views about nourishment and told us to leave condiments, sauces, beer, wine and liqueur out of it altogether. Smoking he considered to be definitely harmful. As for sleep, he thought eight hours out of the twenty-four ought to be enough for anyone. Every night when he went to bed, he wrote on a card what time he was to be called next morning, and the servant, an old Caucasian, would knock at the door at the hour indicated.

Once dressed, he had breakfast—bread, butter and tea—and then went through his correspondence and replied to



letters. After that, he'd have a cold bath, as cold as ever he could get it, winter and summer alike. He'd step into it, sit down, cover nose and ears with his fingers, and then lean backwards three times, immersing himself entirely. Getting out of the bath, he wouldn't use either soap or towel, but started lifting weights. After twenty or thirty minutes of this, varying the movements as much as possible so as to bring every single muscle into play, he was soon well warmed up and dry. He never stood still or sat down between exercises, but walked up and down. For some eighteen months we took our baths together—he would have his first, and I followed—then, while we exercised, he'd tell me stories of his work and experiences.

When that was over, the doctor would set off to visit out-patients, return p.m. for luncheon and for an hour's rest afterwards. From 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. patients had to be received at home. At 7 p.m. he dined, and at 8 p.m. resumed medical practice which might last until one o'clock in the morning. During this evening session, he often had as many as a hundred to attend to, mostly of the poorer classes.

As far as he could, he systematised his professional work; many of his prescriptions were already written out so as to avoid the loss of time entailed in copying them. Practically all his patients knew him as he knew them. Men and women entered his study prepared for an examination and no time was lost. In one corner was a weighing machine with a chair hanging on the scale, and he could overlook this from his seat behind the writing table.

He was indeed a great hearted man, not only attending to poorer patients without making any charge, but frequently paying out of his own pockets for their medicines. His mental activity was on a par with his physical energy. At the age of sixty-three, in spite of the immense amount of work he got through, he claimed to be more vigorous than he had been at forty. This he attributed to constant exercise with heavy weights.