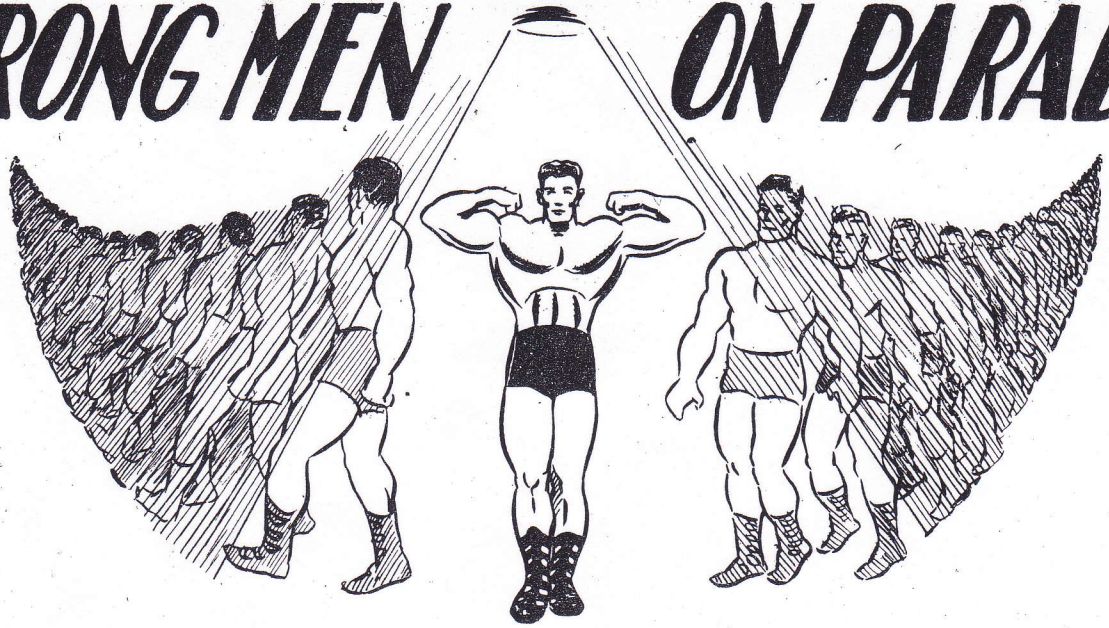


STRONG MEN ON PARADE



by LEO GAUDREAU

• The story of a boy who made a dream come true. A great old-timer, Clevio Massimo.

IT is indeed wonderful, and inspiring, to review this parade of mighty men. Before introducing our subject for this month we must go back many years, to a modest home in Opi Labruza, near Rome, in Italy.

May 4th, on this day, in 1880, a typical Italian family is rejoicing over the birth of a child in the home of the Sabatinos. The child was named Clevio Massimo Sabatino; it was their first child. The father and his two brothers were known as "the three giants".

The child grew up robust and strong in the clear fresh air, sunshine and simple food. His parents and grand-parents were descendants of the ancient Romans; they regaled him with tales of the strong-men of mythology and stories of Roman gladiators. He would beg to hear these stories over and over again and then on the grassy slopes he would dream of himself as a gladiator—and this is the story of that boy, who made his dreams come true.

When his family migrated to America, and settled in Buffalo, it was necessary for him, oldest of twelve children, to help support the family. At the age of ten he was toiling in a factory.

His athletic career started in the Y.M.C.A. He exercised and engaged in various athletic accomplishments. His physique and strength (still in his 'teens) began to attract attention. He developed rapidly, both in skill and appearance and at the age of seventeen he was travelling around



Clevio Massimo, a muscular hercules, in a unique pose. This photo shows Massimo at the age of 26 when he was appearing on the stage as "Young Samson."

the United State posing as a model, in colleges and art schools, in some of the largest cities.

He had devoted much attention to wrestling and at 18 years of age he was matched with the outstanding wrestlers at that time. Once he wrestled a 450 pound polar bear, in Washington, D. C. He was to collect fifty-dollars if he lasted 15 minutes. He went the time limit but the promoter refused to pay him, claiming that Massimo had proved to be unfair by using catch-as-catch-can tactics on the bear. Wrestling, posing and hand-balancing took up much of his time and his improvement proceeded apace with his fame. His ability and development were kept in top form through the use of weights.

In addition to his athletic achievements he was devoted to music. The violin took his fancy and the hours he spent in practice on this instrument were put to practical use when he used his musical ability in his act. Today he owns a rare Bellafagiore violin, over 250 years old and valued at \$5,000.

Early in his career he appeared as "Young Samson" in a single strongman act. He also appeared in various acts with a partner doing lifting, posing and balancing. Siegmund Klein caught his act in the Miles Theatre, in Cleveland, in 1920, and he says: Of all the 'hand-to-hand' balancing acts that I have seen none impressed me as much as this act. And from the applause the audience gave this fine team they, too, sensed it.

(Continued on page 44)