

the music no matter HOW hard he gripped, to make it more interesting I made the two muscles dance in time to the band either individually or together. Naturally this little scene was taking place after Lurich's remarkable show was over and not during it. I think it was that night 32 years ago that the art of muscle control born for what "came natural" to me seemed to create quite a sensation amongst the people around me. It was an amazing coincidence that the man who gripped my arm happened to be a professor of anatomy at Berlin and that he also happened to know the great George Lurich. He insisted that I should accompany him to Lurich's dressing-room and so, by mere chance, I met one of the most dynamic strongmen of all time. I knew very little German at that time and Lurich knew almost no English at all but with the doctor's help we managed nicely and I was entranced by the fine proportions of Lurich when I saw him just after he had come out of a shower; he was not as terrifically developed as Sandow but the enormous strength and virality of the man were evident to even my inexperienced eyes. I was beginning to feel rather "important" when Lurich made a fuss of me and my muscle-control for after all I HAD shown the same sort of thing to the world famous Sandow only about a month before; the fact that I had done this seemed to impress Lurich greatly and inspired me to continue along my own lines until I became a recognized strongman. Lurich was the first man I had ever seen handle a barbell and I assure you his stage show was amazing. He walked on with his fine chest covered with medals (as you see him in the accompanying cartoon) and behind him walked a page-boy carrying a large velvet cushion; after Lurich had finished bowing in acknowledgement of the applause the boy came forward holding the cushion on his two hands and while the band played a rousing march Lurich unpinned each medal and laid it on the cushion and he did not begin his act until the boy and the medals had left the stage; that was a really good bit of showmanship which really roused the audience. He first gave a first class exhibition of posing and then did some remarkable juggling feats with a barbell which I suppose weighed about 150 lbs. He whirled that barbell around his body in various ways as if it were a broom-stick. I have seen Dervishes juggling with rifles in North Africa and the great Russian athlete seemed to manage that barbell as easily and as speedily as they twirled their rifles around. He then did various feats of strength which I cannot remember too well as I was a raw novice at the time and not even 15 years old. Undoubtedly George Lurich was one of the greatest Ironmen of all time. He was born in Estland, Russia, in 1876. He was fairly weak by nature but when he reached the age of 15 he started barbell training and soon acquired quite remarkable technique and agility. I reported big wrestling tournaments for years all over the Continent and I'm quite sure that I have never seen another wrestler with such panther-like agility as Lurich possessed. When he was only 17 he stayed with Dr. Krajewski (the man who discovered the unequalled George Hackenschmidt) in St. Petersburg and was trained by him. His terrific energy and his love for the Iron Game carried him forward until he succeeded in creating world's records in weight-lifting. At his weight, about 190 lbs. I still think that he must have been the world's greatest combination of wrestler and weight-lifter and even after all these years I doubt that any man of his weight could equal him as an all-round strength athlete. Fifty years ago, altho' he was very much lighter than the great weight-lifters, he was certainly one of the

very few who could do a two-handed jerk of 330 lbs. and his one hand jerk of 266¼ lbs. still stands as a world's heavyweight record today! He several times gave away over 30 lbs to such strong wrestlers as Aberg and Zbysco and defeated them. At the time Stanislaus Zbysco wrestled Gama in London we were much together and Zbysco always insisted that I should try to get Lurich to make a match with Gotch. I wrote to Lurich but he replied:— "After I read what you had to say about the Hackenschmidt match in the "Illustrirte Zeitung" I have no wish to meet the American. I'm a Graeco-Roman wrestler and could not allow myself to use the strange methods that man employs. If I had to suffer toe-holds, ear-pulling and hitting with the fist I'm afraid I would go berserk and you know best what would have happened to Gotch then; I would have smashed him with my strength and speed. Hackenschmidt never lost his temper under ANY conditions, he always had the heart of a real sportsman despite his enormous strength but I'm different Troup and I've never allowed anyone to hurt me except in what I call "proper" wrestling holds and from such well tried holds I really will NOT depart." So that was that and I never made another attempt to persuade Lurich, but HAD I succeeded I'd have bet my last penny on Lurich doing what that fine gentleman George Hackenschmidt did not do and as a technical expert I would not have given Gotch a chance against the toughest man of his weight I've ever seen. Yes if there ever was a man who could be called "a cat on hot bricks" that man was Lurich. He has done the following lifts:— Two legged press with barbell resting on soles of feet, 220 lbs. 75 times and 250 lbs. 60 times. Holding a barbell of 180 lbs. above his head with one arm he laid down flat on his back and stood up again without any help from the other arm. He did the same feat while holding a kettleweight of 116 lbs. up in each hand. Lying on his back he pressed 443 lbs. once and 340 lbs. 15 times!!! (We knew nothing about bench pressing those days). He also did a two-handed clean and press of 245 lbs. 10 times and I think all his one hand jerks must still be very nearly world's records, here they are 266¼ lbs. once, 220½ lbs. 6 times, 199 lbs. 10 times and 178½ lbs. 15 times. He was the only man who ever defeated Hackenschmidt at Graeco Roman wrestling but as Hackenschmidt was still in his teens then the matter is not of real importance. This brilliant strength athlete had the following measurements when I measured him personally in 1904 in Dresden:—Height 5'9½", neck 18", chest (exp.) 50", biceps 17", forearm 14", waist 33", thigh 25". Many years later I had practically the same measurements at a height of 5'8" and I certainly did not dream that I would ever reach those figures when I put the tape over the wonderful, "quality" muscles of that tiger in human form George Lurich. The accompanying picture shows this world's champion holding five men aloft with one hand!!! In those days people knew nothing about the possibilities of Iron Men and thus such pictures were much admired but I'm sure that any of my readers can see that the photo is merely an interesting fake; today no weight-lifter would dare to allow such a photo to be published. In this particular case tho' the apparent bluffer was the finest one hand lifter of his day and I wonder if there is any 19 lb. athlete alive who could do a one hand jerk of 220½ lbs. SIX times? Perhaps there is, Dave Willoughby would know, I certainly have no knowledge of such a man. When Lurich and I were together in Dresden in 1904 we had many discussions about strength and altho' our talks were 48 years ago I still remember them