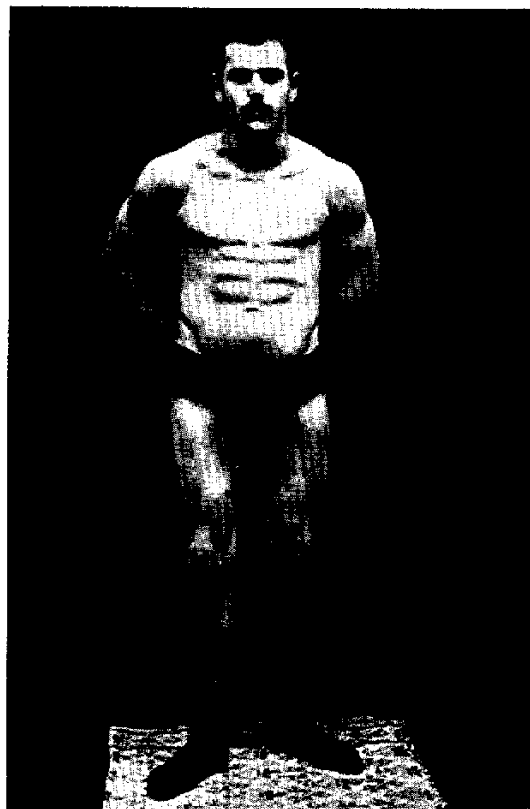


Hermann at age 17. He had already trained with weights for seven years when this was taken.



Another pose of Görner at 17 years, showing his balanced development and excellent abdominals.

high were placed under the bar to permit hands to grasp the shaft. Elbows were rested on the table throughout the feat and the bar was curled to the shoulders, whilst Görner was seated in the chair. This movement was known in Leipzig as the 'Görner' curl. Hermann has also curled in the 'Görner' style a barbell weighing 168 lb. ten times in succession. He has also performed a Right-hand 'Görner' Curl of $121\frac{1}{4}$ lb. and $110\frac{1}{2}$ lb. with the left hand.

Rectangular Fix with barbell

Performed in Leipzig with a barbell weighing $154\frac{1}{4}$ lb. lifted in correct style from the 'hang' on 11th September, 1932. He has also Rectangular Fixed 160 lb., taking the barbell from off a low table.

Upright Rowing with barbell

A barbell of $286\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (130 kilos) pulled up slowly from the 'hang' in military position (hands shoulder width apart) without body sway and elbows held at ear level for the count. Performed 19th October, 1931, at Leipzig.

Bend Over—or "Good Morning" Exercise

Holding a barbell of 335.8 lb. (152.35 kilos) across his shoulders—after jerking it from behind neck—Hermann did a Bendover or "Good Morning" exercise, in correct style with this tremendous weight. This was performed on 14th August, 1932, and is probably the record in this lift.

Double Handed Presses and Pushes

In perfect style Hermann often pressed $253\frac{1}{2}$

lb. (115 kilos) in a Two Hands Military Press, but he did not practise this lift.

With kettleweights he has pressed $242\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (110 kilos) in the Two Hands Military Press style. Using a thumbless grip, Görner did a Two Hands Push with Barbell of $286\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (130 kilos) at the first attempt. It in no way represented his maximum and was performed in Leipzig on 6th June, 1933.

SUPINE LIFTS

Hermann has accomplished the following lifts whilst lying on his back or in what is now known as the 'supine' position.

Two-hands Supine Press with barbell $330\frac{3}{4}$ lb. (150 kilos) performed in Leipzig on 26th June, 1932.

Supine Press with two barbells. A combined weight of $308\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The bells pressed simultaneously. Performed 24th October, 1933, at Leipzig. This was a Lift very seldom practised by Hermann. The poundages given are well below what he could have lifted had he been sufficiently interested to train seriously for a short while on this Lift.

LIFTS TO SHOULDERS—SINGLE AND DOUBLE-HANDED

It is the contention of many authorities that the hallmark of a Strong Man is the amount of weight he can :—

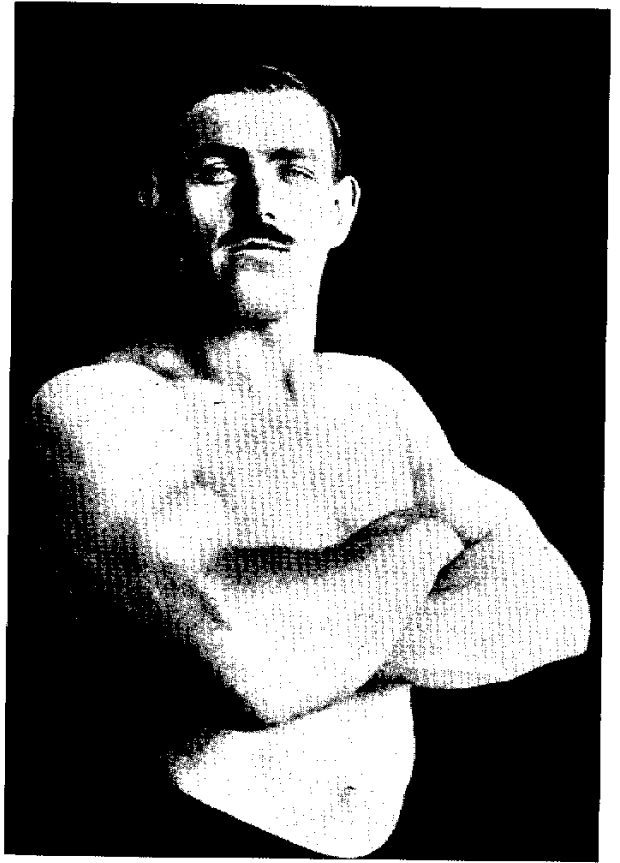
- (a) lift off the ground, and
- (b) lift to his shoulders.

The reason being that in the performance of both these feats application of science or skill is

largely eliminated—the amount that can be lifted being governed almost solely by the strength possessed by the individual. A close examination of the following feats performed during his career by Hermann Görner will reveal very vividly the enormous bodily strength and all-round power he possessed, as in all the feats listed sheer brute strength is the predominating factor in their execution.

Two-hands Barbell Lift to Shoulder

A barbell of $442\frac{1}{4}$ lb. (over 200 kilos) lifted to the shoulders in two movements—in other words, 'continentalled' to the shoulders. This was performed without squatting or splitting on 10th January, 1933, in Leipzig, and surpassed Hermann's previous record of 441 lb., which he performed at Breslau on 27th July, 1913. As far as it is known, this is the heaviest weight ever to be lifted to the shoulders unassisted, although it is now some 17 years since Hermann performed this amazing feat. History has it that the giant Viennese, Karl Swoboda, lifted overhead with two hands a barbell weighing 440 lb., which, it is said, took four men to lift to his shoulders. The highest recorded feat of lifting to the shoulders unassisted appears to be Rigoulot's feat of $402\frac{1}{4}$ lb., performed on his specially-constructed barbell, although it has been reported that Charles Rigoulot performed unofficially a Two-hands Clean to the shoulders with 422 lb. (191.4 kilos), but more exact information regarding this Lift would appear to be unobtainable. John Davis of U.S.A. is said to have lifted clean to the shoulders 405 lb. (183.7 kilos). Harold Cleghorn



Hermann Görner—aged 18 years.

of Auckland, New Zealand, Continental Jerked 408 lb. (185 kilos), when lifting in the Australian/New Zealand Championship in 1942. 409 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. was lifted in the two-hands Continental Jerk by Swoboda in Vienna on 4th November, 1911. It is worthy of note that, in executing his lift, Swoboda took no less than five movements to get his barbell to the shoulders before jerking it overhead.

One Arm Turn In to Shoulder with barbell

In Leipzig on 25th September, 1920, Hermann upended and turned in to the shoulder with the right hand a barbell weighing no less than 385 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. (175 kilos). As far as the writer is able to trace, no other man living has lifted with one arm in this style a greater weight. Arthur Saxon, who bent-pressed a barbell weighing 371 lb. to arm's length without erecting the body, used two hands in taking this bar to the shoulders, Saxon's best one-handed lift to the shoulders being 315 lb.

Right-hand Clean to Shoulder with barbell

Lifting in Leipzig on 9th November, 1919, Hermann cleaned with the right hand a barbell weighing 297 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (135 kilos).

Two-hands Clean with barbell whilst sitting on chair

In Leipzig on 7th October, 1931, Hermann lifted clean from the floor to the shoulders a barbell weighing 220 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., whilst he himself was seated on an ordinary kitchen chair—a pretty strong one at that! In this feat, the barbell was lifted into the shoulders using pure arm and shoulder strength only. No help being obtained from the legs or back. Hermann remained seated throughout the performance.

Dead Lifting Single and Double-handed

These lifts are truly what W. A. Pullum, the well-known English Strong Man and trainer of Strong Men, once described as 'the fundamental test of a man's bodily strength'. The reading of the following feats performed by Hermann Görner will leave one in no doubt whatever that Hermann possessed 'bodily strength' to a degree it is the fortune of few mortals to own. In connection with these stupendous feats of strength, may it be recorded that Hermann could never be persuaded to train upon dead lifts, his contention being that such feats were inclined to increase the blood pressure. He lifted always within his powers—what he might have done had he been persuaded to train on these lifts can only be left to the imagination. Would 900 lb. (or more) have been beyond the bounds of possibility!

830 lb. Two-hands Dead Lift

This amazing feat was performed in Leipzig on 18th August, 1933, the weight consisting of a 441 lb. barbell and two men. Both men stood on the bar, one either end, and balanced themselves by placing their hands on Görner's shoulders. The combined weight was then lifted by Hermann who stood erect with it and held it in the correct finishing position for several seconds.

793 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Two-hands Dead Lift

This is believed to be still the highest poundage lifted in the orthodox style. It was performed by Hermann in Leipzig on 29th October, 1920, using an ordinary 'Berg' barbell. It is interesting

to note that the bar was lifted with an overhand 'hook' grip and not the more usual reverse grip used by most lifters when executing the double-handed dead lift. The highest officially recorded two-hands dead lift approaching this stupendous feat of Hermann's is that performed by the American Light Heavy Weight Bob Peoples (body weight 189 lb.—13 stone, 7 lb.), who lifted 725½ lb. on 4th March, 1949, at Johnson City, Tennessee, U.S.A.

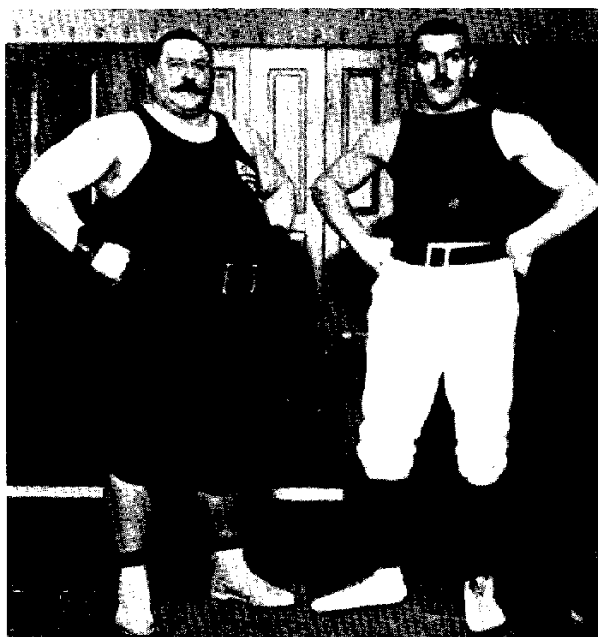
The best dead lifts performed by the famous French heavyweights, Rigoulot and Cadine, were 621¾ lb. and 617¼ lb. respectively. Other outstanding dead lifts include those made by Carl Pepke, an American amateur, who lifted 657 lb. in 1947. Walter Podolak, also of America, lifted 660 lb. unofficially and 641¾ lb. officially. John Davis of U.S.A. is reported to have lifted 705 lb. (319·8 kilos) at a body weight of 190½ lb. (86·5 kilos).

734½ lb. *Right-hand Dead Lift—Blockweight*

This lift was made by lifting a square block of sandstone with a handle attached. The weight was lifted between the legs using the 'hook' grip, the whole block being lifted until body was erect and both legs straightened. Performed in Dresden on 20th July, 1920.

Right-hand Dead Lift with barbell

On this lift Hermann has lifted more weight than any other man in the world. His best performances being 727½ lb. (330 kilos), which was lifted unofficially on 8th October, 1920, in Leipzig. The bar was correctly lifted from the



Hermann Görner with Karl Swoboda, World's Heavyweight Champion. Photograph taken in Leipzig on 21st September 1912 when Hermann was just over 21 years old. Swoboda was 30 years old and weighed 342 lb.

floor to the fully erect position of the body. Officially Hermann has performed a right-hand dead lift with a barbell of $663\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (301 kilos), which was lifted on 29th October, 1920, in Leipzig. No other man has come within aiming distance of Hermann's amazing record. Some of the outstanding right-hand dead lifts performed include 502 lb. lifted by Laurence Chappell in 1932. Chappell being the English Amateur 12 stone lifter. The great Charles Rigoulot lifted 450 lb. in the right-hand dead lift, performed in Paris in 1926. Ernest Cadine, the French heavyweight lifted $449\frac{3}{4}$ lb. (204 kilos) in the right-hand dead lift.

Malcolm Brenner, an American heavyweight, performed a one hand dead lift of 550 lb. in October, 1949.

617 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. Two-hands Dead Lift with two barbells

In performing this feat Hermann stood between two barbells which he grasped with a 'hook' grip and lifted simultaneously. The right barbell weighed $330\frac{3}{4}$ lb. (150 kilos) whilst the left-hand barbell weighed $286\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (130 kilos). Both bars were lifted from the floor to the hang and held in correct erect finishing position for three seconds. The feat being performed in Leipzig on 9th November, 1934.

595 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Four Finger Two-hands Dead Lift

This lift was made by Hermann using the first two fingers of each hand only. It was not regarded in any way as his maximum and was lifted by him purely as a demonstration lift on 30th November, 1933, in Leipzig.

Two-hands 'Bent Arm' Dead Lift

Using a grip with the over-hand style and both arms half bent at right angles to the floor, the bar being lifted from the floor to waist high, Hermann has raised a barbell weighing 441 lb., performed 5th May, 1932, in Leipzig.

SUPPORTING FEATS, INCLUDING FEATS OF LEG
AND BODILY STRENGTH

The following performances have been established by Hermann at various stages of his career and clearly demonstrate his all-round bodily strength, when applied to supporting feats and other feats performed in lifting heavy and awkward objects, carrying and supporting enormous weights in various positions.

The 'Plank' Feat

This feat which was also a favourite with Arthur Saxon in his act was performed by Görner on many occasions. It was usually included as a regular item in his nightly circus performance and on 12th October, 1927, in London, he performed this feat with a total of 4,123 lb. which weight was made up of 24 men sitting on a plank which, in turn, was supported on the soles of the feet whilst Hermann was lying on his back. In his nightly performance, Hermann allowed 16 men to sit on the plank and never at any time paid any heed to the weights of each volunteer. In this feat it was said that Arthur Saxon had supported a weight of 3,200 lb. with a total of 20 men.

The 'Human Bridge' Support

This extraordinary and dangerous feat consisted of carrying the entire weight of a motor-car holding six men, which was driven over a specially constructed bridge under which Hermann stood forming the human support at one end, the bridge resting on his shoulders as he stood erect under it. The weight of the car and passengers totalled 4,000 lb. Görner was the only man in the world to practise this outstanding supporting feat. During his tour with Pagel's in South Africa, he performed a similar feat except that here the bridge was supported by his feet whilst Hermann was lying on his back beneath the bridge. The car, in this instance, being a Mercedes Benz carrying seven passengers. This supporting feat was also once featured by the Saxon brothers in their act, but in their case two of the brothers acted as the human support of the bridge by lying beneath it on their backs and carrying the weight on their four legs. In Hermann's case, he took the entire weight alone. The only other man known to have featured a similar act solo is the German Strong Man and Wrestler, Henry Steinborn.

The 'Merry-Go-Round' Support

This feat consisted of supporting a small Merry-Go-Round on which eight persons enjoyed a ride. Hermann supported on his feet whilst lying on his back the whole contraption, which weighed in excess of 2,300 lb. This feat was performed nightly during his stay in England and during his tours of South Africa.



Hermann Görner with Otto Brauer—in stage costume.

'Tomb of Hercules' Feat

This feat performed with a platform resting on knees and chest, whilst Hermann reclined on a box holding up the platform on which twelve persons were standing, was performed nightly in 1927, when he was in England, at the conclusion of a stage act in which as the opening piece six dancing girls performed a ballet dance on the platform supported by Hermann. The whole platform with this load was supported by Görner for as long as eight minutes on occasions.

Lifting a Car with Driver

This feat was performed as an impromptu feat of strength by Hermann in 1920, when grasping the front axle of a car in which the driver was seated, Hermann stood erect and then walked in a semi-circle carrying the weight of the car with him, whilst the two rear wheels rested on the ground. The total weight was 3,042½ lb. and the poundage actually lifted was estimated to work out at 1,362½ lb. Performed 25th September, 1920.

Resisting the Efforts of Sixteen Men

This feat was performed whilst Hermann was in England in 1927 and was carried out by Hermann climbing ten steps of a ladder whilst sixteen men unsuccessfully endeavoured to pull him down by means of a rope attached to his body and held by the men "tug-o'-war" fashion.

Carrying a Grand Piano

As a result of a wager, Hermann had a grand piano weighing 1,444 lb. strapped to his back

after which he successfully essayed a walk of 52½ feet. This amazing stunt was carried out in Leipzig on 3rd June, 1921. Needless to say, Herman won his wager!

Carrying 100 Bricks—Weight over 1,000 lb.

This feat was carried out by stacking 100 bricks into a special hod the whole load then being taken from the trestle and carried on his shoulders up the staircase of a piano factory in Leipzig, performed on 10th May, 1912. The total weight being 1,124½ lb.

Walking with over 1,000 lb. on the Shoulder

This feat was performed by carrying on the right shoulder a special bar to which was attached two barrels, on each barrel being two men. The total weight was 1,104½ lb. The bar with its load was lifted and shouldered off the ground and then Hermann walked the length of the circus arena and twirled round before replacing the whole load on the ground. This extraordinary feat was performed by Hermann at every performance during his stay with Pagel's circus in Capetown, South Africa, in 1935.

Walking and Carrying 661 lbs.

This feat was performed every evening during his Music Hall performance in England in 1927. Hermann wore full evening dress and carried in each hand a heavy travelling trunk, the trunks opened and revealed two chorus girls inside each one. Hermann would walk on to the stage, carrying the trunks nonchalantly. After walking the length of the stage and turning round, he

would put the trunks down, whereupon the lids of the trunks opened to reveal the four dancing girls he had so easily carried.

Feats of Combined Agility and Strength

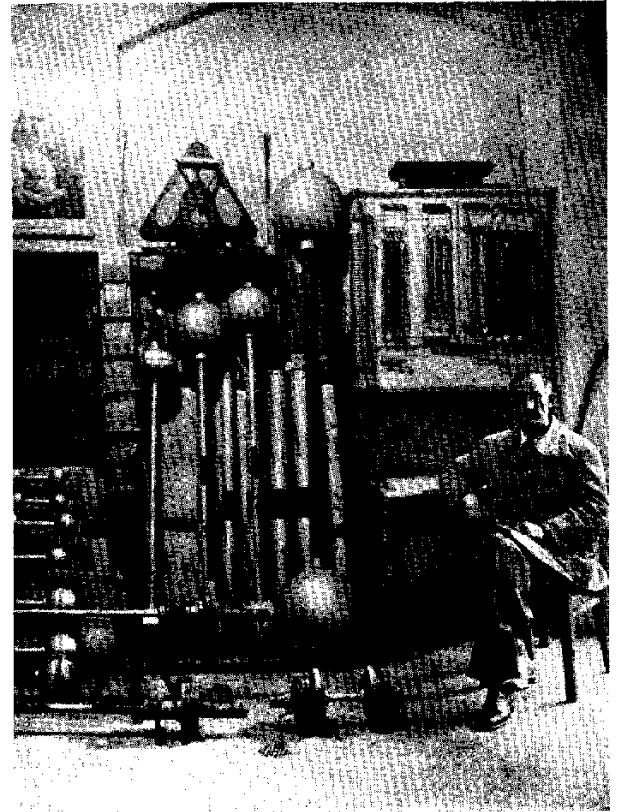
Hermann picked up four kettleweights two in each hand, a total of 441 lb., and then ran with them round the training hall in Leipzig, a distance of 78 feet. This feat was performed on 5th August, 1934. On another occasion, many years previously, on 2nd June, 1912, he sprinted 100 metres (109 yds. 13 in.) in 18.4 seconds, whilst carrying in each hand a kettlebell weighing 50 kilos, or a total weight of 220½ lb. How about trying this some time!

Before closing this formidable catalogue of some of Hermann's amazing performances, the following should also be mentioned.

He has written his name on a blackboard with a kettleweight of no less than 110¼ lb. (50 kilos) dangling from his thumb!

He has performed with a full-grown man what is known as the 'Puppet Dance'. That is, the person lifted was grasped by the elbows by the lifter—both facing the same way—and, then swung from side to side. Throughout the feat the 'puppet' is held off the ground. Hermann has performed this using as his puppet the person of Landlord Hans Preusser of Leipzig, who weighed no less than 336½ lb. Hermann handled him as an ordinary Strong Man would a woman of 6 stone.

Holding a bar behind his neck on which two men were sitting, one at each end he has jerked



Edgar Müller, the Author of this book, in a corner of his Gymnasium in Leipzig, showing part of his collection of training equipment.

this overhead and then a third man has performed a hand-stand on the centre of the bar. The total weight thus supported overhead by Hermann being $449\frac{3}{4}$ lb. This feat was performed on 25th January, 1920, in Leipzig.

Hermann has lifted a beer barrel of 200 litres which weighed no less than $595\frac{3}{4}$ lb. This he has lifted from the floor and placed on one end upon a table, thus winning a wager. Performed 9th July, 1910.

He has performed a Deep Knee Bend with $474\frac{1}{4}$ lb. The barbell being held in front of the body at the shoulders. This was performed in Leipzig on 11th May, 1920. Hermann was not fond of deep knee bending and hardly ever practised this lift. With his enormous bodily power it can be reasonably assumed that had he put in some time training on the Deep Knee Bend, he would have been capable of a poundage approaching 600. With all his feats performed after World War I, it must be remembered that he still had many shrapnel fragments embedded in his legs. If one examines closely the photograph on page 51, a dark spot can be seen just above his left knee. This was a piece of shrapnel which later worked through the skin and was removed by Hermann himself!

CHAPTER 6

His Training Methods

THIS chapter describes for the first time the training methods of Hermann Görner which he used so successfully in developing his enormous all-round bodily strength. It is believed that a careful study of his methods as related in this chapter will not only prove of great interest to readers but will also provide the seeker after strength (with a capital "S"!) with a method which he may use to his personal advantage—modified of course to suit the individual requirements of the serious Strength student.

As one would expect from the recital of his many different feats of strength, the training of Görner was of an all-round and varied nature and covered feats and exercises with weights in every conceivable manner. For convenience, I have decided to split up this chapter into sections each dealing with a phase of training, and in these sections I will endeavour to deal as thoroughly as possible with Hermann's methods—which, I might add, were also the methods I myself laid down in my own Gymnasium in Leipzig.

NUMBER OF TRAINING SESSIONS AND DURATION

The number of training sessions per week varied during Görner's career. Between the years 1905 to 1913 he trained usually five times per week, with two days of complete rest. These five sessions included two in the open air (during the summer