

UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT

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The late President made himself a constant source of inspiration to fellow patients at Warm Springs, the project into which he put most of his fortune

Here, from Franklin D. Roosevelt's physician, is the story of the late President's long and unflinching fight against paralysis, an inspiring, unforgettable epic of personal courage

IN LOOKING backward over the trail of twelve years as physician to Franklin D. Roosevelt, an incident that stands out as sharply as any is a certain Marine's meeting with the President. The time was the summer of 1944, and the place was Aiea Heights Naval Hospital in Honolulu which was receiving each day more and still more casualties from the Marianas. Mr. Roosevelt was paying a visit to the patients, and as he wheeled slowly into one of the wards this particular Marine—maimed and morose—lifted himself on one elbow from his bed of pain and exclaimed, with a wide grin: "Gee, the President!"

The Marine's reaction was one that only a disabled man can experience. To put it crudely, it was a demonstration of inspiration that swells the mind when sight gives proof that a physical handicap can be overcome.

Today, that inspiration, transmitted to the wounded everywhere, must shine as brightly for the veteran who faces life anew with a physical handicap.

Throughout my years as the late President's physician, the thing that amazed me most, and still amazes me, is that not one of his many visitors ever regarded the President as a cripple. Nor did any of the millions who saw him and listened to him as he campaigned or made the coast-to-coast tours that were his keenest pleasure. As he sat, only his wrestler's torso showing above table or desk, he exhaled fitness and well-being. Even when he stood, braces plainly evident, the single impression was one of strength and vitality.

It was what he himself had *willed*. As a usual thing, he avoided allusion to that black morning in Campobello when he awakened to find that his legs would not lift him from the bed. But once, as we sat alone, some turn of the conversation unlocked his lips.

It was a bad moment, he confessed, when the doctors told him that it was not rheumatism, not prostration, but infantile paralysis. All the horror of a lifetime of helplessness swept over him but, after the first rush of anguish and despair, he made up his mind to "lick it." Never would he think of himself as a cripple, forced to sit on the sidelines and live by proxy. He determined so to crowd his life with interests that no thought of infirmity could ever intrude. He admitted that it was hard going for a long, weary while, what with constant pain and the slowness of improvement, but in time his mind took full command, and courage became a habit of life.

What made the struggle more remarkable was the background of the man. Here was no weakling, born puny and used to illness, but one who could have posed for the sculptors of ancient Greece. As a youngster he lived in the open, riding, climbing and running; at Harvard he rowed on the crew, and until his thirty-ninth year he gloried in a strength and vigor that defied fatigue. All of his earlier intimates stress a love of life that manifested itself in a driving energy and eager interests that took no account of body strain. Out of many stories of his tirelessness, I remember particularly Colonel Harry Roosevelt's melancholy tale of a visit that F.D.R. made to Haiti in 1917 when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

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Careful planning made it possible for Mr. Roosevelt to make hundreds of public appearances. Only near-accident occurred at the acceptance-speech dinner in Philadelphia in 1936 (below) when a bolt in one of his braces failed

"I was in charge of the Marines at the time," Harry related, "and when Frank arrived, everybody thought that it would be the usual visit of inspection, meaning dinners and receptions. Instead of that, he dragged us off on a pedestrian tour, on fire to see the life of the people and the resources of the country. Our hike from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haitien carried us over rugged mountain ranges, and daily marches were from dawn to dark. Reaching the north coast, all of us half dead, we came to the old castle of Emperor Christophe, perched on top of a 4,000 foot peak. When the Secretary decided to climb the steep ascent, at least he had the heart to call for volunteers, and two thirds of the party were sensible enough to refuse. I was one of the stupid third, and while Frank came down as fresh as when he started, the rest of us went to bed."

With such a past he might well have experienced revolt against his helplessness, or felt a pang of envy when he saw others engaging in sports that he had loved and from which he was now forever barred. Out of the testimony of the family and my own observations, I can say truthfully that no one ever saw him indulge in so much as a moment of self-pity. During his Navy years, he had turned to golf for exercise, and at Warm Springs I always knew an ache of the heart when he followed us around the course in his car. It did not seem possible that he could watch unmoved, and yet as he jeered at bad shots, and cheered good ones, it was as gaily as though he himself had a club in his hand.

It is inevitable that historians will devote their entire attention to the history that F.D.R. made. Nevertheless, it would be nothing short of tragedy if Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President, pushed Franklin D. Roosevelt, the *man*, out of mind and memory, for I believe that no life in our time was more instinct with courage, so rich in inspiration, or better fitted to serve as a pattern and example. Today, particularly, when a world war has maimed its thousands, compelling so many of America's youth to start civilian careers under cruel handicaps, the story of Franklin D. Roosevelt's victorious struggle stands as an inspiration.

Coming on the scene some ten years after his affliction, I had no firsthand knowledge of the struggle throughout that trying period. From Mrs. Roosevelt, "Louie" Howe and others of the family circle, however, I gained a clear picture of what he and they themselves had been called upon to endure.

The early days of Mr. Roosevelt's paralysis were days that all the Roosevelts tried to forget. Weary weeks in the hospital, and then weeks at home when he lay in heavy casts. Every day a little of the plaster was chipped out at the back, but while those who loved him were often in tears, he bore the torture uncomplainingly, and with never a break in his cheerful fortitude.

By summer he had progressed sufficiently to insist on crutches, and in the quiet of Hyde Park he spent patient, pain-filled hours developing the muscles that would permit their fullest use.

In keeping with his pledge never to accept invalidism, he took the presidency of the Boy Scout Foundation and the chairmanship of an American Legion campaign and, as movement became easier, resumed his old interest in national affairs. The Democratic convention in 1924, however, was his first public appearance since his attack, and when he stood up in Madison Square Garden and made the stirring Happy Warrior speech that placed Governor Smith in nomination, even opposed delegations cheered him for his courage.

Sometime during that summer, George

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Sometime during that summer, George Foster Peabody, the banker and philanthropist, had bought an old health resort at Warm Springs in western Georgia. Its chief feature was a pool with a temperature of 89 degrees, and a very high specific gravity due to double molecules of magnesium and calcium, and Mr. Peabody reported that many victims of infantile paralysis had received marked benefits there.

Devising His Own Treatment

Deeply impressed, F.D.R. went to Warm Springs that fall, renting one of the cottages that surrounded the ancient wooden hotel. There was no doctor in charge at the time, and he evolved his own methods of treatment. He taught himself to use his legs in the water, to get his feet down and walk around on the bottom, and varied this by clinging to the side of the pool, and going through exercises that stretched his atrophied muscles. In six weeks he made more progress than in the whole three years since Campobello.

Called back to New York, he put his affairs in order, and returned to Warm Springs in April, 1925, planning a long stay. A reporter for an Atlanta paper arrived in search of a feature, and wrote an article called *Swimming Back to Health*, which was reprinted all over the country. As a result, victims of infantile paralysis began to pour into Warm Springs from every section, crowding the resort far beyond its capacity. Cheerfully, compassionately, F.D.R. helped to settle them, explaining the stretching treatment that he had devised for himself, and even supervising the water exercises that had worked such marked improvement in his own case.

In 1934, at a Thanksgiving Day party given for his fellow patients, he touched intimately on some of those early experiences. "During that first year," he said, "I was doctor and physiotherapist rolled into one. On returning in 1926, and finding that more sufferers had arrived, we managed to arrange for adequate medical supervision. Housing, however, remained a problem, and along with the care of patients, we toiled at running a hotel. A five-piece band also represented a gamble of magnitude, for our resources only justified three pieces."

Convinced of the curative value of the waters, and eager to have other victims of infantile paralysis receive the benefits, F.D.R. brought Warm Springs to the attention of the Orthopedic Association, then meeting at Atlanta. On receiving a favorable report, he bought the property from Mr. Peabody and incorporated the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation as a nonprofit institution. About twelve hundred acres were taken over, together with the buildings, and fully two thirds of F.D.R.'s personal fortune went into the project.

A New Call to Public Life

In 1928, he went to Houston to place Governor Smith in nomination a second time. The movement to draft Mr. Roosevelt for the New York gubernatorial race not only started without his knowledge, but met with his instant and vigorous protest. At the time he was beginning to walk without even the aid of a cane, and his physicians assured him that if he kept up his swimming and exercises, and avoided the cold northern winters, he might expect increasing improvement. To quit Warm Springs for the strain of a campaign might well mean the loss of all that he had gained.

The steady and powerful pressure of party leaders finally won his consent, but only after he had received assurances that Warm Springs would not suffer from what he regarded as his desertion. Neither as governor of New York, nor as President of the United States, was the Georgia project ever far from his thoughts, and I will never forget his pride and happiness when 1938 saw the incorporation of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. Others contributed money and effort, but it was the guiding hand and compassionate heart of Franklin D. Roosevelt that built up a small, run-down health resort into a great national undertaking with 3,000 chapters, offering treatment to five to six hundred patients a year from every state in the Union, regardless of race, creed and ability to pay.

Once committed to running for governor, he campaigned with vigor and zest, making as many as fifteen speeches a day, and while Governor Smith was lost to sight under the Hoover landslide, failing to carry New York, Roosevelt won. As he had feared, braces be-

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came a necessity, and their weight distorted his muscles and put increasing strain on his back. Moreover, the press of official duties led to the neglect of his physical condition, compelling him to depend too much on his crutches and less on systematic exercise.

What he counted on, however, was retirement after one term, or possibly two. Mr. Hoover's election lifted Republicans to an all-time high, and Democratic prospects were so hopeless that many prophesied the party's dissolution.

A change came with thunderbolt suddenness. One day there was the confident promise of a continuing and increasing prosperity, and the next saw wholesale unemployment, crashing banks and breadlines. Governor Roosevelt was renominated by acclamation in 1930, and when the votes were counted, he had won by the unprecedented plurality of 725,000 and had become the strongest Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1932.

Again, as in 1928, F.D.R. was faced with a momentous decision. First, there was the strain of a nation-wide campaign, and in event of victory, the burdens of the great office. Clearly, inescapably, he saw that a declaration of candidacy meant the surrender of his hope for complete recovery, and pain-filled years of dependence on the braces that he hated.

As we sat together one evening in the White House, he told me of the considerations that had led him to yield to the insistence of Farley and Howe. The country lay prostrate under a weight of misery and fear, with courage and initiative no more than memories. The cause, as he saw it, was a persistence in the misconception of the federal government as a sovereign power—aloof, remote and magisterial—above and apart from people and their daily life. What had to be done was to bring government down into the world of work where it could see and serve the country's needs, correcting every injustice and evil inequality.

My appointment as White House physician came as a complete surprise. While I had known the new President when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, it was as a junior officer. My duty in 1932 was head of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Department at the Washington Navy Hospital as well as instructor at the Naval Medical School. What could an eye, ear and throat man possibly have to offer a victim of infantile paralysis?

"Quit worrying," said Cary Grayson, who brought the news and laughed when he gave me his advice. "He's as strong as a horse, with the exception of a chronic sinus condition which makes him susceptible to colds. That's where you come in."

Just as my appointment was a surprise, even more surprising was my first discussion with the President as to his care and treatment. I found a man who had a clear insight into his own condition and I saw that my work was to be made easy.

Planning needed to be done to protect this man against all possible dangers. His secretaries, the secret service and my own office formed a team in this important work, taking meticulous care of all arrangements when on tour, keeping a ceaseless watch in handling crowds and screening visitors. That no incident occurred during the years shows how well that job was done.

A Salvaged Acceptance Speech

But there were some close calls. On the night of his acceptance speech at Philadelphia in 1936, for example, there was a narrow escape from disaster. A crowd of more than 100,000 cheering persons filled the stadium as Mr. Roosevelt entered from the rear of the crowded platform. Bands played and floodlights gleamed on his smiling face. He advanced a few steps toward the speakers' stand and then—it seemed to the crowd—was surrounded by his Cabinet officers and friends on the platform, including such tall men as Jim Farley and Homer Cummings. What actually had happened was that a bolt in one of his braces sheared off and the President sagged toward the floor, clinging to the arm of his son, James. His typewritten speech fell from his hand and the pages were scattered and stepped on. Half a dozen men quickly stepped in front of him and for a short time he was completely hidden from the crowd as Gus Gennerich, a bodyguard who was constantly prepared for such emergencies, put a new bolt into place. The manuscript was gathered up—some of the pages out of place—and a moment later Mr. Roosevelt continued to the speakers' stand, smiling broadly as if he had merely stopped to greet his friends.

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The crowd never knew what had happened, and few spectators noticed as Mr. Roosevelt quickly reshuffled the misplaced pages of his speech.

The work of the team was made harder by the President's complete disregard of himself. Following the inaugural address of 1937, which was made in a driving rain, the secret service tried to prevail upon him to ride in a closed car. His answer was typical: "The people have been standing in the rain for hours to see me; I can do as much." So he rode back to the White House in the open car amid the cheering throng that lined Pennsylvania Avenue.

It is rare indeed for anyone to consider the Presidency in the light of a *job*, but a conscientious chief executive is called upon for more downright drudgery than any other official in the world. The position still runs along the lines laid down in 1787, when the population of the entire country totaled less than that of New York City today, with the result that the duties are a queer, impossible jumble of tremendous problems and absurd clerical routine calculated to break the strongest.

The President, in no doubt as to the burden he must carry, agreed with me on the necessity of a fixed regimen that would order every hour of the day with machinelike exactitude. Certain hours for work, certain hours for sleep, regular exercise, and careful attention to diet.

Temperate in all things, he ate and drank in strict accordance with the rules that I laid down. He liked fish and game, but avoided sweets out of a dread of putting on weight, and his one dissipation was an occasional hot dog and a glass of beer on motor trips and picnics. As a usual thing, he took a cocktail before dinner but every so often would cut them out for weeks at a time. His nights offered no problem, for he had trained himself to go to sleep within five minutes after turning out the light. No worry was ever carried to bed.

What helped immeasurably was the swimming pool that had been installed in the West Terrace. The cost of construction had been met by the contributions of friends, and it was a fine affair, fifty feet long, fifteen feet wide and nine feet deep at one end. Out of his love for the water, it was easy to persuade the President that the day's work must stop at 5:30, giving him an hour in the pool before dinner.

This hour was the happiest in the whole day, for his mighty back muscles made him the equal of any, and he loved to duck and wrestle and race. Having mastered the Australian crawl, he loved it, but I made him stop all underwater swimming because of his sinus. Always, as at Warm Springs, a part of the time was given over to muscle-stretching exercises that he himself had worked out. After the swim, he took his place on a rubbing table, and Chief Petty Officer George Fox, now a commander, the best man in the service in physical therapy, gave him a deep massage.

In the beginning of our association, I urged rest periods, particularly a nap after luncheon, but I soon discovered that what refreshed him most was not a discontinuance of activity but a change of pace. When he felt fatigue, he would turn to his stamp collection, numbering around 30,000, and put everything else out of his mind.

At the outset I also learned the uselessness of trying to cut down on his list of visitors. People were as necessary to him as meat and drink, and until our entry into the war, no President ever kept a wider open door.

At first I was also disposed to counsel against travel, but I found that it was helpful rather than hurtful. The President slept in a berth even better than in his bed at the White House, and changes of scene and contacts with people refreshed and invigorated him. Curiously enough, when he was out of doors, away from walls, he seemed impervious to weather changes, enduring extremes of heat and cold, and unaffected by exposure.

Following Doctor's Orders

Throughout his first administration, and well into his second, no doctor ever had a more satisfactory patient than the President. Despite the press of domestic affairs, he held to his regimen and heeded all of my suggestions with only amiable protests now and then. A bit too heavy, perhaps, for his weight was around 190, but otherwise he was in the pink. Even his legs, due to exercise and massage, had improved to a point where I considered it safe to discard one of the braces.

But when war started in Europe there be-

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gan a battle with the President that continued to the day of his death. His passionate concern ended all thought of self. More and more he drove himself relentlessly, and every day was a fight to make him observe his regimen. Seeing the danger to America so clearly himself, he blamed himself for his failure to give equal vision to the people as a whole.

It was this consideration, and nothing else, that made him decide to stand for re-election in 1940. Of my own intimate knowledge, and others close to the President will bear me out, I can say that retirement at the end of his second term had been the dearest wish of his heart and soul. Hyde Park called him, and in numberless conversations he had discussed plans that involved the development of the estate, with time for writing and a continuance of interest in public affairs.

His ultimate decision proceeded solely from a deep conviction that the most momentous years of the Republic lay ahead, and that it was his obligation to let the people balance his offer of leadership against the claims of others. There was no doubt in my mind then, and there is none today, that his candidacy was motivated by purest patriotism and entailed personal sacrifice.

After the votes were counted, the President's physical condition became a primary subject of discussion. Checkups, made from head to foot, showed nothing organically wrong, but as I pointed out, another four years of wearing effort precluded all hope of improvement. The very best that could be expected was the prevention of deterioration, and this called for a return to his regimen, and strict adherence to rules of daily conduct. After listening carefully to what he must do, and what he could not do, the President nodded his head and we shook hands on the agreement.

Even so, there was the job that had to be done, and the increase in pressure was steady and relentless. After a crowded day, it became more and more his habit to go over stacked papers in the evening, penciling comment, suggestions, instructions and decisions. It did not seem possible that human strength could stand the strain, but always he seemed to find new wells of the spirit on which to draw.

Above and beyond the weight of domestic problems, there was the terrifying march of Hitler's armed hordes across the map of Europe, and his certainty that Germany's paranoiac dream of world dominion would yet involve the United States. From the first shot of war, his mind concerned itself with the need for some statement of faith—an affirmation of democratic principles—that would serve to hearten and strengthen the peoples of the earth in their fight against totalitarianism. All of us close to him knew that this was in the back of his thought, pushing to the front whenever the burdens of the day permitted.

This Fishing Trip Made History

Throughout the spring of 1941 he was more reserved than usual, less inclined for company, and it worried me no little. When we left Washington on August 5, 1941, however, supposedly for a fishing trip, I noted a recovery of his usual gaiety of spirit, and put it down to the lift that a vacation at sea always gave him. Not until the historic meeting with England's Prime Minister, and the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter, did I realize that the change was due to the fact that he had decided on a course of action.

The meeting with Mr. Churchill, and the world's favorable reception of the Charter, sent F.D.R. back to Washington in top form, but soon the rising menace of Japan began to claim his attention and on December 7th came Pearl Harbor.

The Pearl Harbor attack put a pressure on the President that never lifted. With the flower of America's youth fighting and dying on land and sea, he looked on any sparing of himself as betrayal. My pleas and protests were brushed aside, and the best I could do was to save as much of his regimen as possible and watch for danger signs.

In the summer of 1942, the long, dragging weeks of getting ready for the invasion of North Africa put a heavy additional strain on the President, and worse still were the anxious hours when he waited for news of the landings. Even victory brought little relief, for a hue and cry started up against any arrangement with "infamous" Admiral Darlan and the "Vichy crowd."

The necessity of a decision on the next military move led the President to suggest the Casablanca conference with Mr. Churchill. In talking over the proposed journey, I mentioned the dangers of air travel, and the risks in a war zone, but these fears had no place in his mind. All he wanted to know was how

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he stood physically, and when thorough checkups showed nothing more alarming than the effects of strain, the discussion ended.

If I had had any doubts as to the President's fitness, they would have been removed by the way he handled himself in the trying conference at Casablanca. Argument is a weary business, especially when edged by irritation, but never once did he abate his reasonableness or show impatience.

After Casablanca there were important matters to be discussed with the President of Liberia, and we took off for the short hop down the coast. President Barclay and his cabinet were entertained at luncheon, and after finishing a private discussion, F.D.R. dragged us out into the burning sun for a tour of the Firestone rubber plantation. He seemed to find it intensely interesting, but the rest of the party, dripping sweat, cursed every tree.

Back in Bathurst, we took off at eleven o'clock for the night flight to Brazil. At Natal we breakfasted with Admiral Ingram on the Black Hawk, and when President Vargas came aboard at ten, F.D.R. went into a huddle with him that lasted well into the afternoon. Knowing what he had been through—days of incessant mental and physical strain—I watched for evidence of fatigue, but could not see even a trace.

The President's birthday—January 30th—found us headed for home, and by good chance the plane was over Haiti as we ate a festal luncheon in honor of the occasion. The pilot circled low, and Mr. Roosevelt recalled his tour of the island in 1917, pointing out the mountain trails climbed on the hard journey from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haitien. As he reminisced of those days when none had been more swift or strong, there must have been an ache of heart, yet no shadow of it could be detected in eyes or voice.

The months that followed Casablanca were wearing ones, but Allied successes lessened the nervous strain, and the President not only picked up weight but lost some of his care lines. In August he went to Quebec for another meeting with the Prime Minister. All of it was wine to him, and I began to share his own belief in his capacity to carry any load.

As summer gave way to fall, and arrangements were completed for the Big Three conference at Teheran, my one insistence was on a more leisurely manner of travel. I knew that the journey to Teheran would be more arduous than the Casablanca trip. The President yielded amiably enough and instead of flying across the Atlantic we took a battleship, giving him a week of needed rest at sea. Taking a plane from Oran, we broke our flight at Tunis, and spent a day driving over the battlefields where Allied armies shattered Rommel's supposedly invincible Afrika Korps. That night we were in the air again for the 1,700-mile hop to Cairo and, after his meeting with Chiang Kai-shek, on to Teheran.

The Casablanca flight had bored the President, for he missed seeing towns and people, but now the pilot flew low, and we looked down on Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho, the Jordan and the Dead Sea. After dreary travel over the wastes of Iraq, we circled several times over fabulous Bagdad before coming to Teheran.

The results of the Teheran conference are now history, written large for all men to see and judge. Mr. Churchill is reported to have said that he noted signs of deterioration in the President during the Teheran meetings. I cannot believe that he ever made any such statement, for every fact in the case refutes it. At the end, F.D.R. was tired, of course, but my examination found him so fit that I did not think it necessary to urge any change in the exacting itinerary that had been planned for the homeward trip: Cairo, Malta, Sicily, Tunis and Dakar, with work and conferences everywhere.

Back home after a strenuous five weeks, the sea trip had erased the President's fatigue lines, and put him back in good shape. At a press conference the afternoon of his return, the correspondents all agreed that he "looked in the pink."

As always, he went to Hyde Park for Christmas, but problems followed him, and just to make things worse, he had the bad luck to contract influenza. Despite treatment, the attack hung on, and left behind a nagging inflammation of the bronchial tubes, with coughing snells that racked him by day and broke his rest at night. Nothing, however, could induce him to "take it easy." My one victory was in persuading him not to deliver his annual message to Congress in person. His bronchitis and certain Congressional opposition irritated him and upset his usual cool balance.

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Finally I insisted, demanding that he leave the White House and its many cares for a full month at least. He gratefully accepted Bernie Baruch's offer of his South Carolina plantation as a quiet retreat. By the time of his return to Washington, he was in fine trim again, although too low in weight for my liking.

Nevertheless, it was during this South Carolina stay, when bronchitis was the President's one and only trouble, that the country filled with every manner of wild, reckless rumor about his physical condition. It was whispered that he had suffered a stroke, that he suffered from a malignant ailment, or that he had undergone this and that major operation. Even the most authoritative denials failed to check the sweep of these vicious and utterly baseless lies.

I asked Doctor Frank Lahey, of Boston, and Doctor James Paullin, of Atlanta, to come to Washington for consultation with our naval specialists. Their findings, on the whole, gave no room whatsoever for anxiety or even apprehension. All of the physical findings were within normal limits; the kidneys functioning perfectly and the heart handling its load satisfactorily, even after the flu and bronchitis. Both physicians, however, were in agreement that the President must "slow down."

Doctor Paullin, in particular, made quite an impression with a comparison that he instituted between the human body and an automobile. "Let's assume," he said, "that you're setting out on a 10,000-mile trip in a brand-new machine. Hitting on every cylinder, you burn up the road for 8,000 miles, hitting a 70-mile-an-hour clip. By that time the tires are worn. The car, of course, is good enough to finish the journey, but not at high speed."

The President laughed, although a bit ruefully, and agreed to quit burning up the road, "maybe not as slow as 35 miles an hour, but much less than 70 anyway." For a while he followed orders as obediently as could have been wished, with splendid results. Getting him to put on weight, however, proved a chore, for he took an almost boyish pride in his flat stomach.

His improvement was fortunate, for two other trips became imperative—one to the Pacific, where he conferred with General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz on the final drive against Japan's home islands, and the other to Quebec for a meeting with Mr. Churchill. He returned from both journeys in better shape than when he started, buoyantly convinced that victory was assured.

Meanwhile came another of those tremendous decisions from which his life had permitted no escape. Would he stand for a fourth term?

Again, as in 1940, one of the determining factors was his physical condition, and again the same answer was returned by consultants. Every possible checkup proved him organically sound, but there was his age to be considered, and twelve years of grueling strain such as no other President in history had ever been called on to bear. With proper care, and the aid afforded by his indomitable spirit, the chances were good that he might get through, but a continuance of the load might well mean disaster. With these judgments spread clearly before him, he made his choice, confident that he could find the strength to reach the road's end.

Rumors and Innuendoes

His one concession was a promise to avoid the exhaustions of the usual campaign, but when all of the old malignancies about his health revived, with new and specific charges that he was a physical and mental wreck, he could not be restrained. We did manage to have him speak from his chair at the Statler Hotel meeting, but when it came to the New York trip, there was a return to the heavy braces that were a constant nuisance.

The four-hour ride in a drenching rain was not as bad as it looked, for the President was warmly wrapped, but I brought every known protest to bear against the Brooklyn speech, when he would have to stand. Senator Wagner, however, was a lifelong friend, and nothing could stop him from speaking in behalf of Bob's re-election. Afterward, at top speed, we hustled him to a Coast Guard barracks, where there was a brisk rubdown and a change of clothes from the skin out.

Quite frankly, I disliked the stress and strain that the campaign placed on him, but the manner in which he came through it made me begin to share the President's own faith in the unconquerability of his *will*. He was tired, and confessed it, but gaily confident that a few weeks at Warm Springs would

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work its usual miracle. Unhappily, he ran into cold, rainy weather, and the expected benefits did not materialize.

Back at the White House, pressure increased instead of lightened. At the turn of the year the President became convinced that marching events compelled another conference of the Big Three, and arrangements were made for the Yalta conference.

It has come to be accepted as a fact by many that the President was not himself at Yalta, either physically or mentally. There is just as much truth in the charge as there was in the whisper about his "breakdown" in Teheran. He knew fatigue, of course, for the sessions were exhausting, but never once was there a loss of vigor or clarity.

The Crimea conference did not end the list of Presidential chores by any means, and had there been any honesty in his enemies, the manner in which he completed an exhausting itinerary should have silenced the reports about his "complete breakdown."

When Prime Minister Churchill took both of F.D.R.'s hands upon parting at Alexandria, neither of the two strong, vital men had any prescience that they were never to see each other again. They talked of another meeting that would be in either Washington or London. Vital was the right word for the President as we sailed away from Alexandria for home. At a luncheon given for the correspondents, he talked for two hours, going over Yalta highlights, and all agreed that he was never in better form.

After a month's absence, the White House desk was piled high, and the President broke away from his regimen, turning every luncheon into a conference, skipping his rubs and working at night. I remonstrated, but he answered that there was a job that had to be done, and just so much time in which to do it. Checkups continued to be satisfactory, but when he went before Congress with his Yalta report, I noted plain evidence of fatigue both in his voice and manner.

On cleaning up his desk to a point where he could get down to Warm Springs, I sat with him for a talk about his condition, and did not mince words or pull punches. He was no longer a young man, and while there was nothing organically wrong with him, as shown by every test, exhaustion opened the door to every variety of ill. Since Yalta he had continued to lose weight, and was now at least fifteen pounds below normal. If, as planned, he wanted to go to the San Francisco conference, and then to London and possibly China, he must regain that poundage and start living within his reserves. In plain, it was mandatory that he return to the regimen that had kept him fit for twelve years.

The President made no effort to contradict or dissent, admitting that he had been driving himself too hard, and gave his solemn promise that from then on he would be a "good patient," neither "playing hookey" nor running out on a single rule.

Consequently, he departed for Warm Springs, where we felt he could gain the needed rest that would put him in shape for the coming events. As always, when I felt my presence was not needed on a Warm Springs visit, I had one of our naval medical officers cover the party. For this instance, I sent Commander Howard Bruenn, one of our fine internists, who was completely familiar with the President's condition, and with him, Lieutenant Commander George Fox, who had accompanied him on all his journeys since 1933.

From the first the daily reports were most encouraging. Best of all, perfect weather permitted long drives, and these hours in the sun gave him a fine coat of tan. Keeping strictly to the letter of our agreement, he had received only two callers—Henry Morgenthau and Sergio Osmeña, president of the Philippines. The Osmeña visit was more of a celebration than anything else, for the islands had been freed, and the President joyously outlined a broad program of reconstruction to repair the ravages of war.

When Doctor Bruenn telephoned on Thursday of the second week, April 12th, his report was even more optimistic. The President had gained back eight of his lost pounds, and was feeling so fit that he planned to attend an old-fashioned Georgia barbecue in the afternoon, and a minstrel show that evening for the Foundation's patients. Every cause for anxiety seemed to have lifted and, given another lazy, restful week, there was no reason why he should not return to Washington on April 20th to greet the Regent of Iraq.

The First Report of a Tragedy

After asking Doctor Bruenn to tell the President that I would be down for the week

Unconquerable Spirit

end, I decided to take Doctor James Paullin with me. In view of the proposed trip to San Francisco, with London and China to follow in all probability, a thorough checkup looked to be highly advisable, even if not indicated as necessary. Getting Atlanta, I made my arrangement with Doctor Paullin, and had just hung up when Bruenn called back. The President, who had been signing some documents, had fainted as he chatted with his cousins, Miss Suckley and Miss Delano, and the artist who was painting his portrait. One moment he was in health and high spirits, and the next he was inert and unconscious, slumped in his chair.

Getting Doctor Paullin again, I asked that he race at once to Warm Springs, and learned later that he made the eighty miles in an hour and twenty minutes. A second call from Doctor Bruenn stated that the attack had every appearance of a cerebral hemorrhage. I telephoned Steve Early on the instant, who got in touch with Mrs. Roosevelt, but even as we were arranging for departure, the telephone rang again, and Bruenn, with breaking voice, said that the President had passed away.

For those close to him, it will always be a bitter regret that the President could not have lived to share in the triumph that was so largely the result of his force and his vision; that he could not have lived to pour the flame of his faith into the new world organization that was the highest hope in a heart that had no room for any but high hopes. But none of those who knew him best, and loved him the most, believe that he would have voiced a protest or filed any claim of unfairness. The will to serve had carried him through killing labors, victorious over every weakness of the body until the job had been done. And with him, it was only The Job that ever counted.