

Dale Carnegie

5-Minute Biographies

Author of "How to Win Friends and Influence People."



HOWARD THURSTON

The Missionary Who Got on the Wrong Train—And Became a Famous Magician

One cold night, a half century ago, a crowd was pouring out of McVicker's Theatre in Chicago. It was a laughing, happy crowd—a crowd that had been entertained by Alexander Herrman, the great magician of that day.

A shivering newsboy stood on the sidewalk, trying to sell copies of the Chicago Tribune to the crowd. But he was having a tough time of it. He had no overcoat, he had no home, and he had no money to pay for a bed. That night, after the crowd faded away, he wrapped himself in newspapers and slept on top of an iron grating which was warmed slightly by the furnace in the basement, in an alley back of the theatre.

As he lay there, hungry and shivering, he vowed that he too would be a magician. He longed to have crowds applauding him, wear a fur-lined coat, and have girls waiting for him at the stage door. So he made a solemn vow that when he was a famous magician, he would come back and play as a headliner in the same theatre.

That boy was Howard Thurston—and twenty years later he did precisely that. After his performance he went out in the alley and found his initials where he had carved them on the back of the theatre a quarter of a century before when he had been a hungry, homeless newsboy.

At the time of his death—April 13, 1936—Howard Thurston was the acknowledged dean of magicians, the king of ledgerhead-main. During his last forty years he had traveled all over the world, time and again, creating illusions, mystifying audiences, and making people gasp with astonishment. More than sixty million people paid admissions to his show, and his profits were almost two million dollars.

Shortly before his death, I spent an evening with Thurston in the theatre, watching his act from the wings. Later we went up to his dressing room and he talked for hours about his exciting adventures.

When he was a little boy, his father whipped him cruelly because he had driven a team of horses too fast. Blind with rage, he dashed out of the house, slammed the door, ran screaming down the street and disappeared. His mother and father never saw or heard from him again for five years. They feared he was dead.

And he admitted that it was a wonder he wasn't killed; for he became a hobo, riding in box cars, begging, stealing, sleeping in barns and haystacks and deserted buildings. He was arrested dozens of times, chased, cursed, kicked, thrown of trains and shot at.

He became a jockey and a gambler; at seventeen years of age, he found himself stranded in New York without a dollar and without a friend. Then a significant thing happened. Drifting into a religious meeting, he heard an evangelist preach on the text, "There Is a Man in You."

Deeply moved, and stirred as he had never been stirred before in his life, he was convinced of his sins. So he walked up to the altar and with tears rolling down his cheeks, was converted. Two weeks later, this erstwhile hobo was out preaching on a street corner in Chinatown.

He was happier than he had even been before, so he decided to become an evangelist, enrolled in the Moody Bible School at Northfield Massachusetts, and worked as a janitor to pay for his board and room.

He was eighteen years old then, and up to that time, he had never gone to school more than six months in his life. He had learned to read by looking out of box car doors at signs along the railway and asking other tramps what they meant. He couldn't write or figure or spell. So he went to his classes in the Bible School and studied Greek and biology in the daytime, and studied reading and writing and arithmetic at night.

He finally decided to become a medical missionary and was on his way to attend the University of Pennsylvania when a little thing happened that changed the entire course of his life.

On his way from Massachusetts to Philadelphia, he had to change trains at Albany. While waiting for his train, he drifted into a theatre and watched Alexander Herrman perform tricks of magic that

kept the audience popt-eyed with wonder. Thurston had always been interested in magic. He had always tried to do card tricks. He longed to talk to his idol, his hero, Herrman the Great Magician. He went to the hotel and got a room next to Herrman's; he listened at the keyhole and walked up and down the corridor, trying to summon up enough courage to knock, but he couldn't.

The next morning he followed the famous magician to the railway station, and stood admiring him with silent awe. The magician was going to Syracuse. Thurston was going to New York—at least he thought he was. He intended to ask for a ticket to New York; but by mistake he too asked for a ticket to Syracuse.

That mistake altered his destiny. That mistake made him a magician instead of a medical missionary.

At the flood tide of his fame Thurston got almost a thousand dollars a day for his show. But I often heard him say that the happiest days of his life were when he was getting a dollar a day for doing card tricks for a medicine show. His name was painted in blazing red letters across a streaming banner, and he was billed as "Thursday, the Magician of the North." He was from Columbus, Ohio but that is North, if you are from Texas.

His success was due to at least two things. First, he had the ability to put his personality across the footlights. He was a master showman, he knew human nature; and he said those qualities were just as important for a magician as a knowledge of magic. Everything he did, even the intonations of his voice and the lifting of an eyebrow, had been carefully rehearsed in advance, and his actions had been timed to split seconds.

And second, he loved his audience. Before the curtain went up, he stood in the wings, jumping up and down and kept saying "I love my audience. I love to entertain them."

He knew that if he wasn't happy no one else would be.

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Good In Something
Speaker Pullfast—Nothing that is false ever does anybody any good.

Old Mr. Groot (in audience)—Yer're wrong, Stranger. I have false teeth and they do me a lot of good.

RUSK

Miss Mamie Isaacs, who has completed a course in beauty at the Hinshaw Beauty School, North Wilkesboro has come home to stay until she attends the State Board of Examination.

Mrs. Alex Gentry of the Friendship community has been a guest in the home of her granddaughter, Mrs. Kermit Corder, the past week. Mr. and Mrs. Corder had as Sunday guests Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Grady Corder, all of Fairview; also Mr. and Mrs. Lester Sloop and children of Friendship. Master Everett Sloop remained to spend the week.

Misses Mamie and Beulah Shore accompanied by Miss Nora Shore, all of near Yadkinville, were recent visitors in the home of Mrs. Vance Burch.

Mr. Sid Gough, a former resident of this community, but now of Winston-Salem, was a Sunday visitor here.

Clarence Greenwood spent Thursday in Mt. Airy.

Miss Virena Robinson of New York City was a recent guest of W. S. White.

Mrs. U. C. Whitaker who has been ill is improving.

Mr. J. S. Hill made a business trip to Pilot Mtn. Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Wilmoth of Elkin, are house guests of Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Wilmoth.

Mr. Paul Burch of Mtn. Park, was here a short while Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. Felix Layne of Elkin, were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Humphries.

Miss Mattie Ruth Wilmoth of North Wilkesboro, spent the week-end here with home folks.

Mr. R. A. Jenkins of Winston-Salem was the week-end guest of his family.

Mrs. Mason Miller and children of Elkin visited her sister, Miss Opal White and Mrs. W. S. White the past week-end.

Mr. W. C. Martin of High Point was among the week-end visitors here.

Mr. Will Snow of Elkin, was a Sunday visitor here.

Messrs G. P. Jenkins and Tom Ring made a business trip to Winston-Salem, Monday.

Mr. L. White, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. White and Little Peggy Jo Martin spent an enjoyable outing near Kapps' mill where they were joined by a party of friends the past week-end.

Mr. H. C. Jenkins and family of State Road accompanied by Mrs. Ila Burch and children visited friends in Boonville, Sunday.

The Difference

Janey—Black hens are smarter than white hens, aren't they, mummy?

Mother—What makes you ask such a silly question?

Janey—Well, black hens can lay white eggs, but white hens can't lay black eggs, can they?

Yes: Why?

Husband—Why does a woman say she has been shopping when she hasn't bought a thing?

Wife—Why does a man say he's been fishing when he hasn't caught a thing?

Local Men Witness Execution at Raleigh

(Continued from page one)

the container of acid, were placed small white balls of cyanide. Then the door of the chamber was closed and the death machinery was ready to work.

Hardly had the attendants closed the air tight door than the balls of cyanide were released to drop into the acid, creating deadly hydrocyanic gas which curled upward like so much cigar smoke. The negro, Mr. Pulp said, appeared to hold his breath for a moment as the deadly fumes reached his nostrils, then suddenly opened his mouth and inhaled deeply, as if trying to get it over with as soon as possible. In a few minutes he appeared as a man in a drunken stupor, and at one point gave evidence of being in great agony, his eyes rolling and his head moving from side to side. Finally, about 10 minutes after the deadly gas had found his lungs, his head drooped forward upon his chest. He was dead.

Both Mr. Pulp and Mr. Shugart stated that the execution, as wit-

Crossing Guard Held



LOS ANGELES, Cal. . . . Albert Dyer, 32-year-old WPA crossing guard employed in Centinela Park, Inglewood, in his cell after he confessed to the slaying of three young girls.

nessed through a small glass window, was quite impressive, and expressed the belief that if every prisoner, no matter on what charge convicted, was forced to witness a similar execution, murder would be decreased by a substantial margin.

HEALTH NOTES

SURRY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RALPH J. SYKES, M. D., Health Officer

This disease is a dangerous and highly contagious disease which is spread by the cough and discharge from the throat and nose. Whooping Cough is catching from its earliest stages, before the characteristic cough appears and the person remains infectious through the fourth week of the disease.

The first sign of whooping cough usually appears early in the second week after exposure. The disease starts with the symptoms of a cold, that is, a running nose, a rather tight dry cough and frequently a slight fever. From one to two weeks later the cough becomes worse and the child begins to have separated spells of cough-

ing. He coughs several times on one outgoing breath and then draws in his breath with a sudden crowing sound or whoop. In three to four weeks the attacks become lighter and finally the whooping and vomiting, if present, will disappear.

The important question is how to protect others. As soon as the child is suspected of having whooping cough call the doctor and go by his advice. The doctor will report the case to the Health Department who will quarantine the case to prevent the spread of the disease.

Whooping cough itself is usually thought of as a rather mild disease but it can leave a person with a weak body and especially weak lungs which will be susceptible to other diseases.

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