

# MOTTOES THAT HAVE GUIDED PROMINENT MEN TO SUCCESS

"Never Complain, Never Explain" Is President Taft's Favorite—Rules of Life of Carnegie, Bishop Greer, W. C. Brown, and Others.



John W. Gates and His Grandson.

By E. J. Edwards.

**H**AVE you a working motto? "The American people like to be humbugged," said P. T. Barnum. And by that motto, which he coined, he lived, and by it gained great material success and international notoriety.

"Don't keep a rag-bag," was a fundamental motto of A. T. Stewart.

That pioneer American merchant prince was accustomed once a week, and sometimes oftener, to go up and down the aisles of his store, stopping at various counters and fingering dry goods or fancy goods or the many little articles displayed on the notion counter. "How is this article selling?" or, "What is the demand for these goods?" he would ask. If the reply was that the article or goods in question was selling rapidly, Mr. Stewart would say no more, but pass on. But if he discovered that the demand was falling off for a certain article or a certain line of goods, or else that there was not a ready sale for the article or goods because of the price, he would say: "Put these things on a special table and mark the price down until you can sell them. Don't keep a rag-bag."

It was his rule—or motto—that gave rise to the bargain counter as we know it to-day; and in his long career as a merchant it enabled him to turn everything he had to sell into cash as speedily as possible.

After Martin Van Buren, three times candidate for the Presidency, once successfully, had retired to private life, he was asked by a friend what he regarded as the most important and successful of the rules of conduct which he had worked out and followed while he was in political life.

"It is a very simple rule," the ex-President replied. "You can put it in three words: 'Never write letters!'"

Then Mr. Van Buren went on to say that he had known of several cases where letters had turned up which had seriously affected the political fortunes of their writers. Written records, he said, were always permanent evidence;

private conversation was the safer way for a politician. And to emphasize his confidence in the rule that he swore by Mr. Van Buren added: "I would rather travel a hundred miles by stagecoach or packetboat than write one political letter."

Until his closing years there lived in the central part of New York State a man whose life was almost contemporaneous with the nineteenth century. In his later years he was a member of the New York State Legislature, where he had great influence. His name was David Gray, and he was so popular with every one he knew that he was universally called "Uncle David." He was successful in his business, that of an apple commission merchant.

One day, when he was a member of the Legislature, "Uncle David" was asked by a friend how he accounted for his success, not only as a business man, but as a politician.

"Well," replied Uncle David, "when I was a young man I picked up a motto which I thought was the best guide for a young man to follow. It was this: 'Fair play and half the road.' I painted it on my wagons, and I practiced it as thoroughly as I preached it. That is all there is to the success I have had, and I have been pretty fortunate, and had a mighty good time in my life."

Until William H. Taft was called from the bench by President McKinley to enter public life as an executive, his career had been the quiet one of a judge. When he accepted the call he knew that no longer would he escape being a target for public attack, often sincere, often inspired by animosity.

One of the old friends of his (Taft's) father, had been an intimate friend of William H. Seward. In conversation with the civil war Secretary of State, at a time when Mr. Seward had been severely attacked politically, his friend asked him why he did not reply. Mr. Seward answered:

"Early in my political life I made it a rule never to reply to personal criticisms, never to defend myself from political attack. That rule I have followed faithfully. I never complain and I never ex-

plain, and I feel that my adherence to this rule has made me what I am."

This authenticated anecdote Mr. Taft had heard from his own father. Right at the start of his career in public life he adopted Seward's rule as his own and took it with him to the Philippines. Since then it has been impossible for any of those who have pleaded with him to make some personal statement in answer to some specific attack upon him to prevail upon Mr. Taft to do so. "Never complain, never explain," has been Mr. Taft's motto ever since he became a public servant.

Some time in the early eighties the late James D. Layng, who at that time was the General Manager of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, was making a tour of inspection over that road. He

gave orders to the engineer of the train to stop at a little town about forty miles northwest of Chicago. As he was leaving the train he looked across the street and saw standing in the door of the general store a thick-set man, without coat or waistcoat, and with a wilted shirt front and collar—for the day was very hot.

"Hullo, John," said the General Manager.

"How goes it with you, Jim?" asked the young storekeeper.

They spoke with that familiarity because they were friends; the young man's name was John W. Gates. After a little conversation Mr. Gates said: "I'm going to pull out. There's nothing more for me here. I've got all there was in this orange."

Mr. Layng asked the young storekeeper what he was going to do.

"I'm going to make some money, and I know where to make it," was the reply.

"I have learned two things since I have been in this store. One is: 'If you want business, you've got to go after it.' The other is: 'Money makes more money.' Now I am going out to get business. It never comes in. And I have got a little money—not much—but if you have got money, you can make money."

Long afterward when Mr. Layng heard that John Gates was the most successful commercial traveler in the Southwest, and that he had developed a remarkable gift of approaching men of capital and persuading them to his view, he was reminded of this talk.

At the time he was beginning the organization of the Carnegie Steel Company, Andrew Carnegie reasoned in this way: "In order to be successful in business of the kind I purpose, it is necessary that we find a ready market, a constantly increasing market, and ultimately a very great market for our products. Now, what is the best way to secure that market?"

Having given much thought to this general proposition, Mr. Carnegie reduced his reasoning to a very simple, easily understood rule. It was this: "The highest product possible at the smallest cost of manufacture, and at the same time of

the highest quality." On this rule is based his fortune.

For twenty years before David H. Greer was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Eastern New York he had a National reputation as a pulpit orator both in Providence, R. I., which was one of his earlier charges after his graduation from an Ohio college, and at St. Bartholomew's Church, New York, which is the church of the

"Know the people, know the country, know the markets" is the rule which, faithfully followed, finally made W. C. Brown President of one of America's great trunk lines. Mr. Brown was trained for his career as President of the New York Central in the West, especially in Iowa and contiguous States, and there, even when he was in lowly positions, he began unconsciously practicing the rule which has led to his acquiring probably

circumstances; never indorse any paper unless there is real value behind it, sufficient to meet it.

"There were times when I was seriously tempted to break this rule. But I always rigidly observed it. I now know that had I not made that rule and followed it, I should have met disaster in my business career."

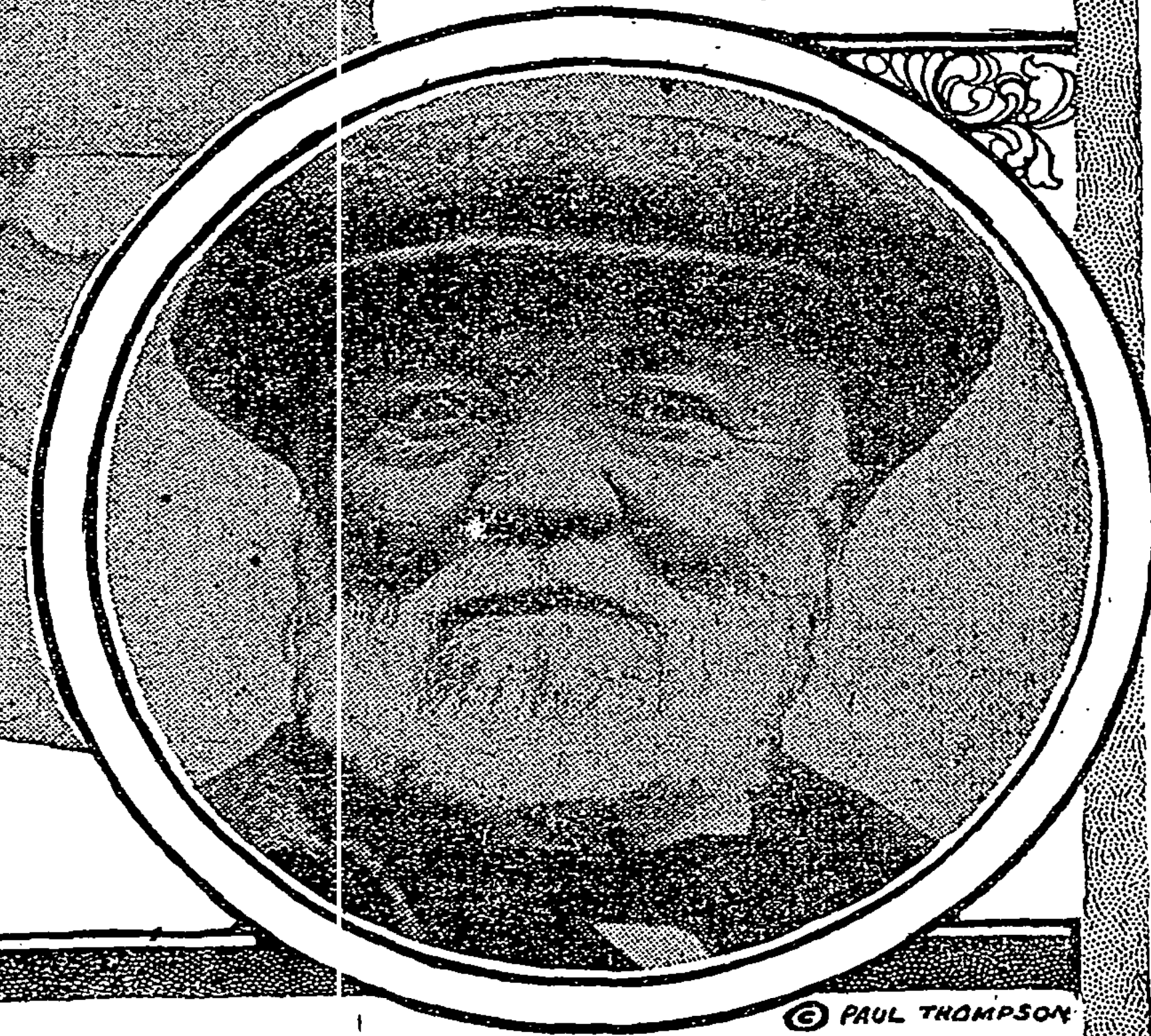
From the financial point of view, probably the greatest triumphs ever made in the United States by one whose vocation was that of an editor and publisher have been those secured by Frank A. Munsey. He is now esteemed one of the very rich men of the United States, having become a capitalist—that is to say, a man who has money in such great amounts that he is able to invest it largely in important enterprises and in various securities. Yet for some years after Mr. Munsey came to New York he knew what it was to struggle, to face adverse circumstances, with the chances greatly against success.

Mr. Munsey was asked one day to what he attributed his success.

"I can put the answer in a few words," he replied. "I discovered a certain fact. I formulated it into a motto or a rule of conduct. To that rule I have faithfully adhered, and to it I owe whatever of success I have gained."

"I discovered that in my vocation—and I presume it is true in all—if you first find out what the people want and then give them what they want at a price they will pay, the people will do the rest. The discovery of this fundamental rule led, of course, to certain changes of view; as, for instance, I learned that in the world of publication, whether newspapers, manuscripts, or books, the secret of success lies not so much in organization, or in capital, but in the editorial room. There the very heart, the real vital principle, upon which is based successful publication of any kind, is to be found. And there I have adhered to the rule upon which is based such success as I had: Find out what the people want, give it to them at a fair price, and the people will do the rest."

Have you a working motto?  
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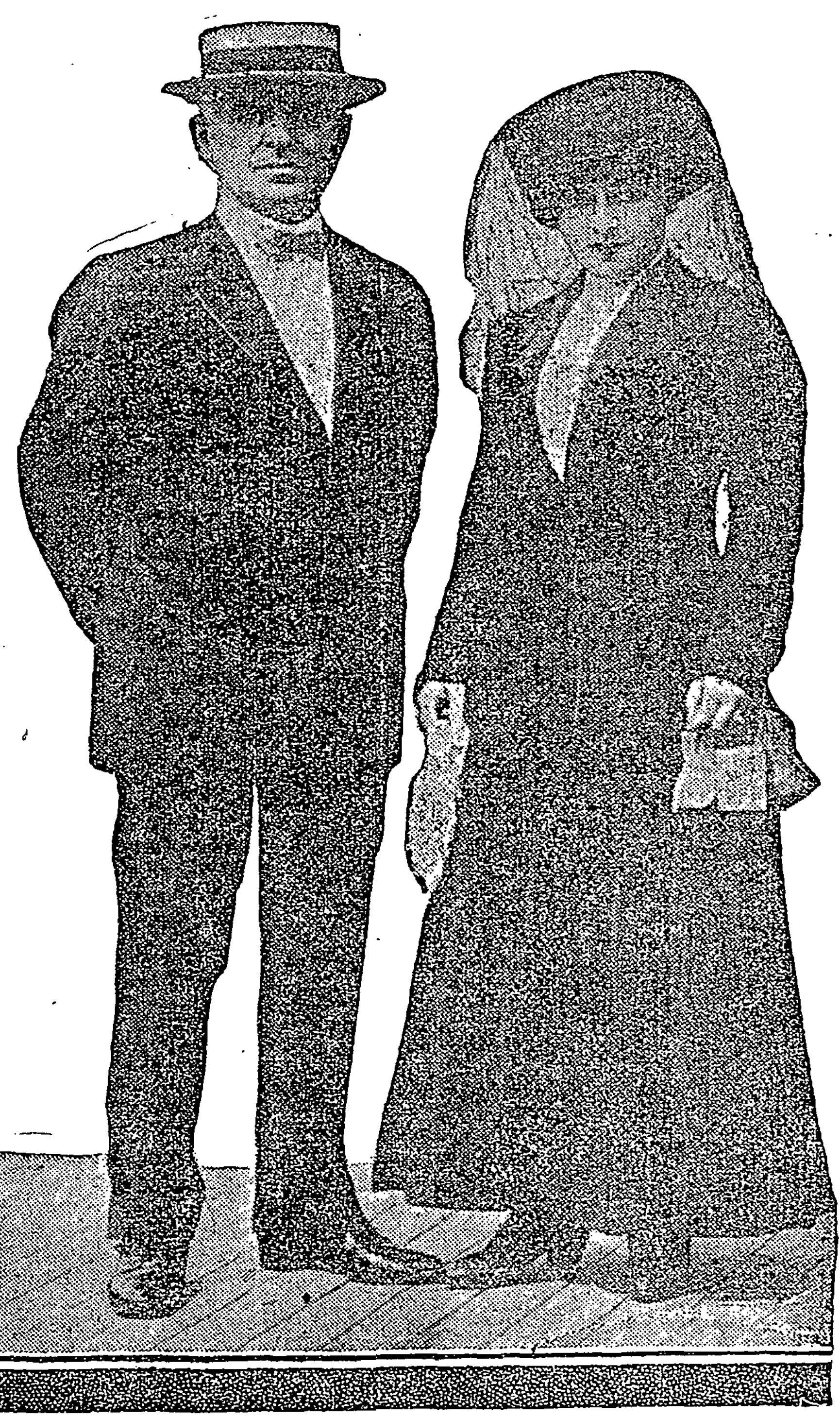
Andrew Carnegie.



A. Foster Higgins.



Bishop David H. Greer.



W. C. Brown and His Daughter.