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# PROMISING LADDERS for WILLING CLIMBERS

## The Many Ways to the Top That Await Young Men

IS THE day of opportunity past in America?

The question is one which is being asked by millions of young Americans, who have the examples of the famous leaders of industry, trade and finance, in earlier generations, to emulate, while they think they perceive, in the aggregations of capital today, only so many insurmountable obstacles to every form of individual enterprise.

This question, so momentous to every class of the population, has been answered recently by a number of the very men whose existence has been supposed to debar

world asked of his father.

The conditions, unaltered, call for the men unchanged—save for this one difference: The bias then, was for men advanced in years to occupy all positions of responsibility; the tendency now is in favor of the youngest whose judgment can possibly be deemed ripe enough for the offices to be filled.

The country has come to appreciate the value of energy—of plain, unalloyed hustle and push. There is so much more to be accomplished, on a scale so much more extensive, that vitality is at a premium, where, formerly, it was a thing to be judiciously repressed.

There are very few young men, in or out of work today, who would not consider themselves pretty well fixed if they could secure the job of senior vice president of the New York Central Railroad—and of all the other roads that go to make up the great Vanderbilt system.

There are a good many thousand men on those very roads into whose heads the idea never enters that they, or any of their kind, could ever land such a job in a thousand years.

Well, W. C. Brown, the young-looking man you would meet if you had business with the senior vice, up in the Grand Central offices, landed it within twenty-eight years from the time when he held a minor post as train dispatcher in the West.

A long time to wait—twenty-eight years; but then, he was making, all the while, a better

position for himself, and was earning a better and better income. His start was as low as that of any man who ever worked on a railroad, except, possibly, that of Edison, who began as a newsboy.

Back in the seventies the name of W. C. Brown was entered on the payroll of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul road, as that of a section hand, whose job was a good deal tougher than that of the section hand nowadays. Those were the years when the United States had wood to burn, and burned it, until now it is hard up for matchsticks.

Section Hand Brown, very proud of his rating because everybody knew he was a mere kid of 18, made good with the strongest of them, wooding the engines; and if any boy of 16, or any man of 26, for that matter, thinks it is an easy thing to heave cordwood for locomotives, let him hunt out some stray "jerkwater" road and try it.

The kid, Brown, had a chance now and then to give the station agent a lift in his spare time. The station agent was a human sort of a man, as most men are. He was willing to reciprocate.

If the obliging kid wanted to loaf about the office at night after his wood-heaving was done and practice on the telegraph instrument, the agent had no objections. So Brown grew to be a telegraph operator, as plenty of other boys have grown, somehow or other.

Within half a dozen years he was holding



W. H. Truesdale, Who Sees Many Ladders.



Theodore P. Shonts, (Photo Copyright 1908 by C.M. Bell)



William C. Brown, An Energetic Climber of Railroad Ladders.



Geo. B. Cortelyou, Secretary of the Treasury.

all others from the chance to rise—and it has been answered, somewhat earlier, by those men in the actions that speak more loudly than any words can possibly be uttered.

The answer is unanimously that this is not only the day, but the age of opportunities greater than the country ever knew before.

Conditions which the man aiming at a career must encounter now have changed only in one respect. The country at large is holding out more ladders than ever up which the young man can climb to the top.

It is, in fact, the age of the young man, the era in which every factor is being combined to equip the energies of youth with the knowledge which, formerly, came only with years.

### MEN WHO HAVE CLINCHED SUCCESS

James J. Hill, the great railroad man of the Northwest, was in early life a laborer on the docks at St. Paul.

John Mitchell, the world-famous leader of mine workers, began life as a mine boy.

Theodore P. Shonts, president of the Interborough lines of New York city, was a water boy on a construction train in Iowa.

W. H. Truesdale, president of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, began by clerking in a western freight house.

William C. Brown, senior vice president of the Vanderbilt system, was a section hand on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad.

Oscar G. Murray, president of the Baltimore and Ohio, was a ticket agent on the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad, in Texas.

Frederick J. Delano, who won a reputation as president of the Wabash, was a journeyman machinist on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

George B. Harris, who rose to be president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy road, was a clerk to a paymaster on the Hannibal and St. Joseph road.

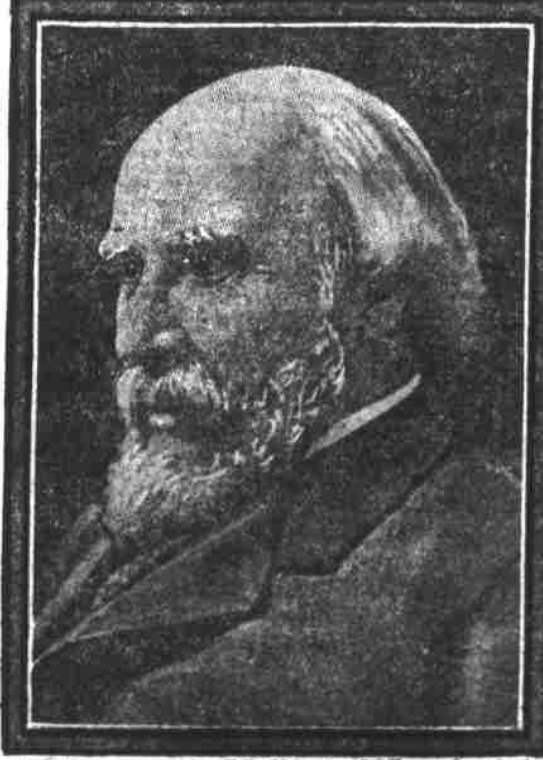
United States Senator A. J. Beveridge, of Indiana, was a farm boy and "lumber jack."

Speaker Joseph G. Cannon was a clerk in a grocery store.

Governor John A. Johnson, of Minnesota, clerked in a grocery store and also delivered laundry from his mother's washtub.

George B. Cortelyou, secretary of the treasury, began his career as a stenographer at the age of 20; and he is only 46 now.

THERE is, according to these men, whose names have become household words in America—some from coast to coast, and others among vast divisions of the nation, either in sections bounded by local fame or in classes combined into some great industry—no difference whatever between the qualities demanded today of the rising man and those the



James J. Hill, the Wonderful "Man of the Northwest."



John Mitchell, who Climbed from a Coal Mine (Photo by Allen Draycott)

down a job as train dispatcher on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy road. On Sunday night, in the winter of 1877-78, there was a peculiarly fierce snowstorm, one that fairly overwhelmed Jerry Hosford, the superintendent of the road's stockyards at East Burlington, because Hosford had between 300 and 400 carloads of stock on his hands, and the cattle stood a fair chance of being dead before morning. Dispatcher Brown was doing his regular trick, from 4 in the afternoon until midnight.

The head of the Burlington system was T. J. Potter, who had lain awake half the night worrying over the chaos in which his road would be in the morning. He was up early Monday and out to see how things had gone. He encountered Hosford, on his way home, looking as though he had been carrying around the burden of the United States since midnight, and waving a weary hand in farewell to a young fellow who looked as tired as he.

### HIS HARD WORK REWARDED

"Things had over at the yards?" asked Potter, prepared for the worst.

"They would have been," was the superintendent's reply, "if it wasn't for that young fellow who just left me. There was the biggest raft of stock you ever saw, with the snow simply burying them alive."

"We were about swamped after midnight, when he came over from the dispatcher's office and said his trick was done; wanted to know whether I could use him. Said he used to be a section hand, and knew how it was. He must have been three or four section hands, from the way he turned in and rustled those steers. We've got every blamed one of them in the sheds—and he didn't quit until I did. We came over together."

"What's his name?" Potter inquired. "A man like that is worth watching."

"He sure is. His name's W. C. Brown."

Now, if that same W. C. Brown had been a studious reader of articles on "How to Climb to the Top," and had been laying for such a chance for a grandstand play from the hour when he first began to wood engines, he would have missed it, because none of these studious grandstand players ever, by any chance, stay out of bed when it is snowing blizzards at midnight and they have been working eight hours that day.

He wasn't. He was one of those about whom the studious grandstanders study. He worked because he wanted to work to advance himself, precisely as all other young fellows work, more or less ambitiously. But he had,

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