

Three Men With Ladders --- Which Are You?

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"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.

"And I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth: Lo, there thou hast that is thine."

St. Matthew xxv., 24:25

OVER and over we must keep saying to ourselves, "I shall do better. I shall overcome past mistakes; from now on I shall go upward, NOT sit still or go down."

Man is mentally what a young child is physically. He walks a few steps, stumbles and falls, then rises and walks on again.

Sometimes a little thing, like a picture on this page, starts the train of thought that leads a man upward. A picture tells us in a second what words cannot tell us in an hour.

Do you doubt it? Ask yourself what would be the effect if the living head of a big snake should rise above this newspaper as you hold it. What words could produce the effect in your mind of such a PICTURE?

Any man, old or young, may see in this picture his own life as it is today.

Brain, character, ambition, physical and mental power constitute a man's ladder.

Each of us is climbing up, striving for what is better, going downward, or idly sitting still, DOING NOTHING.

The great majority, like the man sitting on the ladder, do little, one way or the other.

We have our moments of youth, with its ambition, enthusiasm, pitiful, boundless hope and self-confidence. We dream and tell others what we shall do—and then youth is gone.

The rest of life is more or less taking things as they come, like a floating twig that drifts and turns as the current takes it.

You ought to say TO YOURSELF and to the men and women around you what you would say to the men in this picture.

To the man going down into the pit of vice and failure you would call out a bitter, earnest warning, trying to persuade, frighten or shame him into a better use of his ladder.

To the man climbing upward you would speak encouragingly, urging him not to be frightened by the steepness of the cliff or discouraged by the great height of real achievement.

And the man sitting still—what would you say to him, who is most nearly like all of us?

He is too dull and indifferent to climb upward, without even the energy to go wrong—the dull, mentally tired, indifferent man, who takes things as they come.

How many millions there are of such men! Each has SOME POWER, some opportunity which is HIS LADDER.

BUT HE WILL NOT CLIMB.

Of such men there are a thousand kinds, and they have a thousand reasons for sitting instead of climbing. These are the things they say, while others climb and reach the heights above them:

"I NEVER HAD A CHANCE—what is the use of my trying?"

"If I work hard, the employer gets the benefit—I get nothing. I shall take things easily."

"SOME time, SOME day, when things are different, I am going to do SOMETHING worth while."

"I never had any luck. Those that pass me are luckier."

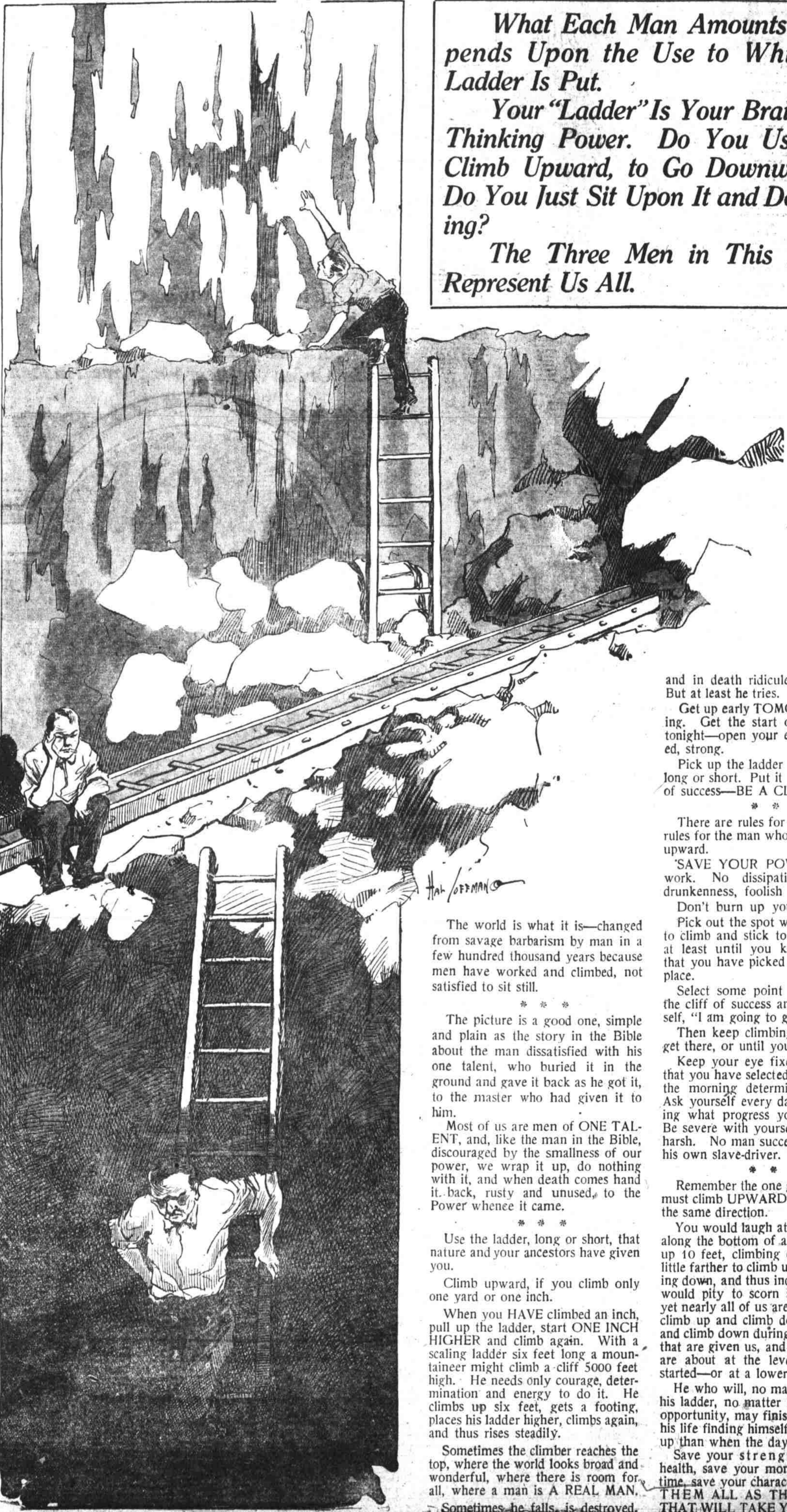
"Life soon ends—peace of mind is the chief thing. Why should I worry and tire myself, when I know that I will soon be dead, anyhow? The whole thing will make no difference in a hundred years."

Thus talks the man sitting on the ladder. You would say to him:

GET UP AND CLIMB!

Better fall and break your neck trying than stay flat on the ground like a turtle or a clam.

It is worth while to try, if only for the sake of



What Each Man Amounts to Depends Upon the Use to Which the Ladder Is Put.

Your "Ladder" Is Your Brain, Your Thinking Power. Do You Use It to Climb Upward, to Go Downward, or Do You Just Sit Upon It and Do Nothing?

The Three Men in This Picture Represent Us All.

and in death ridiculed as a failure. But at least he tries.

Get up early TOMORROW morning. Get the start of a long sleep tonight—open your eyes fresh, rested, strong.

Pick up the ladder of your power, long or short. Put it against the cliff of success—BE A CLIMBER!

There are rules for everything and rules for the man who means to climb upward.

"SAVE YOUR POWER for your work. No dissipation, gambling, drunkenness, foolish late hours.

Don't burn up your ladder.

Pick out the spot where you mean to climb and stick to THAT spot—at least until you know positively that you have picked out the wrong place.

Select some point above you on the cliff of success and say to yourself, "I am going to get THERE."

Then keep climbing until you do get there, or until you die.

Keep your eye fixed on the spot that you have selected. Start out in the morning determined to climb. Ask yourself every day in the evening what progress you have made. Be severe with yourself, critical and harsh. No man succeeds who is not his own slave-driver.

Remember the one great rule: You must climb UPWARD always, and in the same direction.

You would laugh at a man running along the bottom of a cliff, climbing up 10 feet, climbing down, going a little farther to climb up 10 feet, coming down, and thus indefinitely. You would pity to scorn such a man—yet nearly all of us are like him. We climb up and climb down, climb up and climb down during the few years that are given us, and at the end we are about at the level whence we started—or at a lower level.

He who will, no matter how short his ladder, no matter how slight his opportunity, may finish every day of his life finding himself a little higher up than when the day began.

Save your strength, save your health, save your money, save your time, save your character, AND USE THEM ALL AS THE LADDER THAT WILL TAKE YOU HIGHER.

The world is what it is—changed from savage barbarism by man in a few hundred thousand years because men have worked and climbed, not satisfied to sit still.

The picture is a good one, simple and plain as the story in the Bible about the man dissatisfied with his one talent, who buried it in the ground and gave it back as he got it, to the master who had given it to him.

Most of us are men of ONE TALENT, and, like the man in the Bible, discouraged by the smallness of our power, we wrap it up, do nothing with it, and when death comes hand it back, rusty and unused, to the Power whence it came.

Use the ladder, long or short, that nature and your ancestors have given you.

Climb upward, if you climb only one yard or one inch.

When you HAVE climbed an inch, pull up the ladder, start ONE INCH HIGHER and climb again. With a scaling ladder six feet long a mountaineer might climb a cliff 5000 feet high. He needs only courage, determination and energy to do it. He climbs up six feet, gets a footing, places his ladder higher, climbs again, and thus rises steadily.

Sometimes the climber reaches the top, where the world looks broad and wonderful, where there is room for all, where a man is A REAL MAN.

Sometimes he falls, is destroyed,