

# **SOME SUCCESSFUL AMERICANS**

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Some successful Americans by Sherman Williams

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AMERICANS**

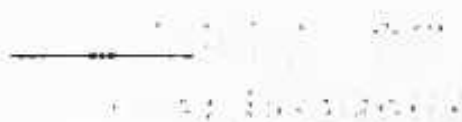


# SOME SUCCESSFUL AMERICANS

BY

SHERMAN WILLIAMS

FORMERLY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AT  
GLENS FALLS, N.Y.



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## PREFACE

As superintendent of schools I frequently talked with boys who were in doubt as to what they should do in life, and who felt that there were very few opportunities in the business world of to-day for those without money and influence. Of course there never was a time when the demand for capable, industrious, energetic, and honest young men so far outran the supply as at present. A personal talk with a boy would generally convince him of this; but for one boy who would come and talk with me about it there were probably several others who were also thinking, but who would not come to me, and many more who were not even thinking. This led me to do something in school in the way of a study of the lives of men and women who had made a success in life in the face of what are called adverse circumstances.

When I began institute work I urged upon teachers the importance of taking up this matter, and was met with the statement that unless one had access to a fair library the work could not be done, as there was no one book that could be used to advantage; that while there were many excellent biographies and works of collective biography, there was none which dealt with both men and women, with those working in very different fields of labor, and which dealt only with those who had had to make their own way in life. It was desirable and almost necessary to

have a book which met these conditions. It was also desirable that it should deal only with Americans and with those who were no longer living, as the complete life should be studied.

I saw the force of these statements and have endeavored to make such a book as these teachers feel they need. It goes without saying that these sketches are so brief that very much must be omitted in each life. Teachers should encourage their pupils to read more complete biographies, not merely of these men and women, but of many others as well. A well-written biography is as interesting as a novel, and far more profitable reading.

SHERMAN WILLIAMS.

May 2, 1904.



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# SOME SUCCESSFUL AMERICANS

## TO THE READER

THIS little volume tells the story of a few men and women who began life under what are generally considered adverse circumstances and who yet were remarkably successful. The sketches cover a wide range of callings, extend over a considerable period of time, and represent different portions of our country.

These few men and women, however, typify a very large class. More than three fourths of the leaders in industries, professions, and other callings began life without money or influence. You can scarcely find a single manager of a great manufactory who did not come up from the ranks. Permit me to call your attention to a few who have made their way up from humble beginnings.

Philip Armour lived on a farm till he was twenty.

Oakes Ames, the great shovel manufacturer, was the son of a blacksmith.

Henry Burden, the inventor and famous maker of horseshoes, was a farmer's son.

Isaac Babbitt, inventor of the metal that bears his name, was a goldsmith.

Ephraim Bell, founder of the celebrated agricultural works and inventor of a reaper, a harvester, and a mower, began life as a carpenter.

Charles Brush, the noted electrician, spent his early years upon a farm.