

# William Graham Sumner Quotes

*Men, War, Class, Law, Land, Life, Effort, Winning, Order, Political, Liberty,  
Believe, Thinking, Views, Foundation, Vices, Real, Book, Character, Peace*

Great captains of industry are as rare as great generals

~William Graham Sumner

If I want to be free from any other man's dictation, I must understand that I can have no other man under my control.

~William Graham Sumner

The type and formula of most schemes of philanthropy or humanitarianism is this: A and B put their heads together to decide what C shall be made to do for D. . . . I call C the Forgotten Man.

~William Graham Sumner

Undoubtedly there are, in connection with each of these things, cases of fraud, swindling, and other financial crimes; that is to say, the greed and selfishness of men are perpetual.

~William Graham Sumner

He who would be well taken care of must take care of himself.

~William Graham Sumner

If you live in a country run by committee, be on the committee.

~William Graham Sumner

The State cannot get a cent for any man without taking it from some other man, and this latter must be a man who has produced and saved it. This latter is the Forgotten Man

~William Graham Sumner

There is no boon in nature. All the blessings we enjoy are the fruits of labor, toil, self-denial, and study.

~William Graham Sumner

We shall find that every effort to realize equality necessitates a sacrifice of liberty.

~William Graham Sumner

Any one who believes that any great enterprise of an industrial character can be started without labor must have little experience of life.

~William Graham Sumner

It is the tendency of the social burdens to crush out the middle class, and to force society into an organization of only two classes, one at each social extreme.

~William Graham Sumner

The forgotten man... He works, he votes, generally he prays, but his chief business in life is to pay.

~William Graham Sumner

A wiser rule would be to make up your mind soberly what you want, peace or war, and then to get ready for what you want; for what we prepare for is what we shall get.

~William Graham Sumner

A good father believes that he does wisely to encourage enterprise, productive skill, prudent self-denial, and judicious expenditure on the part of his son.

~William Graham Sumner

Who is the Forgotten Man? He is the clean, quiet, virtuous, domestic citizen, who pays his debts and his taxes and is never heard of out of his little circle.

~William Graham Sumner

The great force for forging a society into a solid mass has always been war.

~William Graham Sumner

Men never cling to their dreams with such tenacity as at the moment when they are losing faith in them, and know it, but do not dare yet to confess it to themselves.

~William Graham Sumner

I have lived through the best years of this country's history. The next generations are going to see war and social calamities. I am glad I don't have to live on into them.

~William Graham Sumner

I never have known a man of ordinary common-sense who did not urge upon his sons, from earliest childhood, doctrines of economy and the practice of accumulation.

~William Graham Sumner

Civil liberty is the status of the man who is guaranteed by law and civil institutions the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare.

~William Graham Sumner

The men who start out with the notion that the world owes them a living generally find that the world pays its 'debt' in the penitentiary or the poor house.

~William Graham Sumner

History is only a tiresome repetition of one story.

~William Graham Sumner

We throw all our attention on the utterly idle question whether A has done as well as B, when the only question is whether A has done as well as he could.

~William Graham Sumner

It is often said that the earth belongs to the race, as if raw land was a

boon, or gift.

~William Graham Sumner

The great hindrance to the development of this continent has lain in the lack of capital.

~William Graham Sumner

I have before me a newspaper slip on which a writer expresses the opinion that no one should be allowed to possess more than one million dollars' worth of property.

~William Graham Sumner

The taxing power is especially something after which the reformer's finger always itches.

~William Graham Sumner

Men educated in [the critical habit of thought]are slow to believe. They can hold things as possible or probable in all degrees, without certainty and without pain.

~William Graham Sumner

There ought to be no laws to guarantee property against the folly of its possessors.

~William Graham Sumner

One thing must be granted to the rich: they are goodnatured.

~William Graham Sumner

It is remarkable that jealousy of individual property in land often goes along with very exaggerated doctrines of tribal or national property in land.

~William Graham Sumner

Moreover, there is an unearned increment on capital and on labor, due

to the presence, around the capitalist and the laborer, of a great, industrious, and prosperous society.

~William Graham Sumner

The truth is that cupidity, selfishness, envy, malice, lust, vindictiveness, are constant vices of human nature.

~William Graham Sumner

The lobby is the army of the plutocracy.

~William Graham Sumner

But we have inherited a vast number of social ills which never came from Nature. They are the complicated products of all the tinkering, muddling, and blundering of social doctors in the past.

~William Graham Sumner

History is only a tiresome repetition of one story. Persons and classes have sought to win possession of the power of the State in order to live luxuriously out of the earnings of others

~William Graham Sumner

The aggregation of large fortunes is not at all a thing to be regretted.

~William Graham Sumner

There is no such thing on this earth as something for nothing.

~William Graham Sumner

Then, again, the ability to organize and conduct industrial, commercial, or financial enterprises is rare; the great captains of industry are as rare as great generals.

~William Graham Sumner

It generally troubles them [the reformers] not a whit that their remedy implies a complete reconstruction of society, or even a reconstitution of

human nature.

~William Graham Sumner

Darwin was as much of an emancipator as was Lincoln.

~William Graham Sumner

What is the real relation between happiness and goodness? It is only within a few generations that men have found courage to say that there is none.

~William Graham Sumner

A fool is wiser in his own house than a sage is in another man's house.

~William Graham Sumner

It is the greatest folly of which a man can be capable to sit down with a slate and pencil to plan out a new social world.

~William Graham Sumner

If America becomes militant, it will be because its people choose to become such; it will be because they think that war and warlikeness are desirable.

~William Graham Sumner

What we prepare for is what we shall get

~William Graham Sumner

Hunger, love, vanity, and fear. There are four great motives of human action.

~William Graham Sumner

The millionaires are a product of natural selection ... the naturally selected agents of society for certain work. They get high wages and live in luxury, but the bargain is a good one for society.

~William Graham Sumner

Society needs first of all to be free from meddlers that is, to be let alone.

~William Graham Sumner

If you allow a political catchword to go on and grow, you will awaken some day to find it standing over you, arbiter of your destiny, against which you are powerless.

~William Graham Sumner

There is no device whatever to be invented for securing happiness without industry, economy, and virtue.

~William Graham Sumner

What man ever blamed himself for his misfortune?

~William Graham Sumner

Furthermore, the unearned increment from land appears in the United States as a gain to the first comers, who have here laid the foundations of a new State.

~William Graham Sumner

If you want war, nourish a doctrine. Doctrines are the most frightful tyrants to which men ever are subject.

~William Graham Sumner

Nine-tenths of our measures for preventing vice are really protective towards it, because they ward off the penalty.

~William Graham Sumner

We live in a war of two antagonistic ethical philosophies, the ethical policy taught in the books and schools, and the success policy.

~William Graham Sumner



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