

Dictionary of Quotable Definitions

Indispensable for writers and public speakers—
a vast collection of great quotations
assembled under more than 1500 alphabetically
arranged subject headings

Edited by
Eugene E.
Brussell

*Dictionary
of Quotable
Definitions*

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**What a "quotable definition" is—
and how speakers and writers will make best use of
this reference work**

Some years ago, when I started writing for periodicals and making occasional talks, I also started a file for my personal use containing "definitions" on various subjects which I felt would enhance what I was trying to say. This book is a result of that file.

The DICTIONARY OF QUOTABLE DEFINITIONS is different from other major quotation books. A book of quotations is, after all, a collection of famous or worthwhile sayings. It can be arranged in a number of ways: by author, subject, or on historical principles. The DICTIONARY OF QUOTABLE DEFINITIONS is organized on yet another plan: in it *aphorism and metaphor replace the straight dictionary meaning*. It is, then, neither a conventional dictionary nor a mere book of quotations.

The DICTIONARY OF QUOTABLE DEFINITIONS is for the speaker or writer, the businessman, public figure, lecturer, author, clergyman, teacher, student—anyone desiring to address others effectively and without unnecessary verbiage. This practical aspect of *communication* guided the choice of each entry. Appropriateness, pithiness, worthiness all played a role in selection. The user now has a key reference source for witty, incisive, and illuminating definitions; each far beyond the range of a standard dictionary.

Many of these definitions will not be found in standard books of quotations. Included are definitions of a timely nature from holy works and from the religiously committed such as Tillich and Buber. Science-oriented thinkers such as Born and Russell are also included. And, of course, many entries are of a humorous nature, for one of my goals was to resurrect for the reader the pungent line at the expense of the dull and obvious.

Because of the simple, orderly plan in which its material is organized, the reader will find the DICTIONARY OF QUOTATIONS extremely easy to use. The book opens with a complete listing of *subjects*, so you may make your selection of which to explore without having to go through the body of the text. Subjects are arranged alphabetically, and then alphabetically by the author's last name within each. Anonymous entries are placed under the last author entry. Translations are tailored for modern usage, and exact sources are given after periodical entries whenever possible. Cross-references are supplied throughout the work to facilitate the finding of

additional material. This direct method will save the researcher much time and effort in comparison with the indexing systems employed in the more conventional, standard books of quotations.

Preparation of the book was a labor, but one of love—and fun to do. It is something special to “live” in the company of Plato, Samuel Johnson, H.L. Mencken, and all the others, sacred and profane, whose thoughts are distilled here. Thanks to them we can perceive the glories and ills of our human condition as they saw them—and impart their wisdom to countless others.

Eugene E. Brussell

A

ABILITY

(Consists) mainly in a high degree of solemnity. *Ambrose Bierce*

(That which distinguishes) able men from dead ones. *Ambrose Bierce*

The heart to conceive, the understanding to direct, or the hand to execute. *Junius*

Trying all things; achieving what you can. *Adapted from Herman Melville*

The art of getting credit for all the home runs that somebody else hits. *Casey Stengel*

The explanation of your success. *Harry Thompson*

A poor man's worth. *Matthew Wren*

See also GENIUS, INSTINCT, SKILL, TALENT, WORK.

ABNORMAL

Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal. *Ambrose Bierce*

To have intelligence, character or genius; to be less stupid than one's neighbor; to be better than the worst; to be one's self. *Elbert Hubbard*

See also ECCENTRICITY, GENIUS.

ABOMINATION

A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. A heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren. *Bible: Proverbs, VI, 16-19.*

ABORTION

Nothing but murder. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Any operation which directly destroys either the unborn child or the mother.

Decree of the Tribunal of the Holy Office, May 28, 1884

Infanticide. *Flavius Josephus*

The direct murder of the innocent. *Pope Pius XI*

A capital crime. *Talmud: Sanhedrin, 57b, c.*

A precipitation of murder. He also is a man who is about to be one. *Tertullian*

See also BIRTH CONTROL, POPULATION, POPULATION EXPLOSION.

ABSENCE

A woman's great strength. *Emile C. Alain*

(To be) superseded in the consideration and affection of another. *Ambrose Bierce*

Absence is to love what wind is to fire; it extinguishes the small, it enkindles the great.
Comte de Bussy-Rabutin

The pain without the peace of death.
Thomas Campbell

The common cure of love.
Miguel de Cervantes

Every little absence is an age.
John Dryden

(That which) sharpens love.
Thomas Fuller

The enemy of love. *Italian Proverb*

Absence and death are the same—only that in death there is no suffering.
Walter Savage Landor

The invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty.
Walter Savage Landor

That which extinguishes small passions and increases great ones. *La Rochefoucauld*

Death. . . to them that love. *Philip Sidney*

The cure for love. *Spanish Proverb*

That which makes the heart grow fonder—of somebody else. *Anon.*

ABSOLUTE

Nothing more than the deceased spirit of theology and thus a belief in pure phantoms.
Ludwig A. Feuerbach

The finalities of the earlier ages.
A. Eustace Haydon

God. . . all else is relative. *Will Herberg*

Everything absolute belongs to pathology.
Friedrich W. Nietzsche

See also FANATICISM, IDEALS, TRUTH.

ABSTAINER

A weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure.
Ambrose Bierce

Whereby a man refraineth from anything which he may lawfully take.
Thomas Elyot

ABSTINENCE

A peculiarly fitting and appropriate method of self-denial and self-discipline.

John C. Ford

The best safeguard of morals and health.
Robert E. Lee

The beginning of saintliness.
Moses Luzzato

The surety of temperance. *Plato*

Something good in its place. . . if forbidden food, forbidden sexual indulgence, forbidden money present themselves.

Joseph Saiida

Something that is beneficial as long as it does not harm anybody.

Adapted from Mark Twain

The virtue of those too ill or too old to enjoy life. *Anon.*

See also ABSTAINER, CONTINENCE, MODERATION, SELF-DENIAL, TEMPERANCE.

ABSTRACTION

The concreteness of Idealists.
Eugene E. Brussell

What the eye sees before habit sets up its categories.
John Ciardi

The intellectual's favorite pastime.
Aldous Huxley

See also IDEALS, PHILOSOPHER, SCIENCE.

ABSURDITY

See FOOLISHNESS, RIDICULOUSNESS.

ABYSS

The measureless gulf between literature and the American magazine. *Elbert Hubbard*

The distance between a thinker and an editorial writer. *Elbert Hubbard*

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Simply a way of saying that we get the best results in education and research if we leave their management to people who know something about them. *Robert M. Hutchins*

Read this to mean imposing by violence anti-academic conditions on our schools and

universities. Dissenters are shouted down, not allowed to speak, or the microphone is wrestled from them. Discussion exists only among those who agree. They demand that others follow democratic rules that they themselves defy. *Henry J. Taylor*

The right . . . to study, discuss, and write about facts and ideas without restrictions, other than those imposed by conscience and morality.

*Yale University, Report
Advisory Committee, 1952.*

ACADEMY

A modern school where football is taught. *Ambrose Bierce*

An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught. *Ambrose Bierce*

A society promoting the love of the static, immobile. *Adapted from Elbert Hubbard*

Pertaining to fossils; vegetative; parasitic—the opposite of change. *Elbert Hubbard*

They commit their pupils to the theatre of the world, with just taste enough of learning to be alienated from industrious pursuits, and not enough to do service in the ranks of science. *Thomas Jefferson*

See also COLLEGE, SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY.

ACCENT

When foreign, something frequently maintained to give one an exotic flavor. *Eugene E. Brussell*

A kind of chanting; all men have accent of their own,—though they only notice that of others. *Thomas Carlyle*

The soul of talk; it gives it feeling and verity. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

See also ELOQUENCE, LANGUAGE, SPEECH.

ACCEPTANCE

The truest kinship with humanity. *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*

A treason. *Robert Frost*

To go with the drift of things,
To yield with a grace to reason,

And bow and accept the end
Of a love or a season?

Robert Frost

What makes any event put on a new face.
Adapted from Henry S. Haskins

The art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.

Russell Lynes

ACCIDENT

An inevitable occurrence due to the action of immutable natural laws.

Ambrose Bierce

An event happening unexpectedly and without fault; if there is any fault, there is liability. *Thomas M. Cooley*

A condition in which presence of mind is good, but absence of body better.

Foolish Dictionary

Accidents exist only in our heads, in our limited perceptions. They are the reflections of the limit of our knowledge.

Franz Kafka

Accidents are accidents only to ignorance. *George Santayana*

There is no such thing . . . What we call by that name is the effect of some cause which we do not see. *Voltaire*

A surprise arranged by nature. *Anon.*

See also CHANCE, FORTUNE, LIFE, LUCK.

ACCOMPLICE

One associated with another in crime, having guilty knowledge and complicity, as an attorney who defends a criminal, knowing him guilty. *Ambrose Bierce*

ACHIEVEMENT

That which is socially useful.
Adapted from Alfred Adler

The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust. *Ambrose Bierce*

A bondage. It drives us to a higher achievement. *Albert Camus*

Finding out what you would be; then doing what you have to do.

Adapted from Epictetus
Presupposes taking risks and making efforts.
Karen Horney

Building a house, begetting a son, or writing a book.
Italian Proverb

To attempt the impossible. *Anon.*

See also ACTION, DEEDS, SUCCESS.

ACQUAINTANCE

A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

Ambrose Bierce

A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to.

Ambrose Bierce

Anyone who has refused us a loan.

Elbert Hubbard

A friend who has borrowed money from you.

Anon.

ACTING

A poor traditionary fame.

William Combe

The art of speaking in a loud clear voice and the avoidance of bumping into furniture.

Adapted from Alfred Lunt

The lowest of art; if it is an art at all.

George Moore

Acting isn't really a creative profession. It's an interpretative one.

Paul Newman

An art which consists of keeping the audience from coughing.

Ralph Richardson

To hold as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.

William Shakespeare

A sad business where you crawl from hope to hope.

Walter Slezak

The moving picture of nature.

William Winter

See also ACTOR, HOLLYWOOD, MOVIE, THEATER.

ACTION

Coarsened thought—thought become concrete, obscure, and unconscious.

Henry A. Amiel

That which gives meaning to the world.

Adapted from Leo Baeck

What matters... We are present where we act.

Henri Bergson

Your business.

Bhagavad-Gita

Our epochs.

Lord Byron

The end of man is an action, not a thought.

Thomas Carlyle

The proof, the criterion, of the Holy Spirit.

Hermann Cohen

The only things in life in which we can be said to have any property.

Charles Caleb Colton

A man's action is only a picture book of his creed.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

To think.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

John Fletcher

The soul of all action is blindness. He who knows, cannot act any longer. Knowing means foregoing action.

Egon Friedell

The proper Fruit of Knowledge.

Thomas Fuller

For most men... a delaying tactic.

Max Galnick

Into the midst of things.

Horace

The great end of life.

Thomas Henry Huxley

The normal completion of the act of will which begins as prayer. That action is not always external, but it is always some kind of effective energy.

William R. Inge

The best interpreters of... thoughts.

John Locke

Man's destiny and duty in this life.

Dean Mansel

To befriend any one on God's account, and to be at enmity with whosoever is the enemy of God.

Mohammed

Desire and force . . . desire causes our voluntary acts, force our involuntary.

Blaise Pascal

(That which) must be shown, by each of us in his appointed place, not merely in the patience, but in the activity of our hope . . . our labor.

John Ruskin

Action is eloquence.

William Shakespeare

The only road to knowledge.

George Bernard Shaw

That which justifies itself only through morality.

Theodore Snyderman

The first task of life.

William G. Sumner

Simply the refuge of people who have nothing whatever to do.

Oscar Wilde

The basis of action is lack of imagination. It is the last resource of those who know not how to dream.

Oscar Wilde

Action is transitory, a step, a blow, The motion of a muscle—this way or that.

William Wordsworth

See also ACHIEVEMENT, DEEDS, GREATNESS, HERO, LIVING, MORALITY, RELIGION, WORK.

ACTOR

Rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars.

Act of Parliament, 1597.

A sculptor who carves in snow.

Lawrence Barrett

Casual laborers.

Lillian Braithwaite

A favored class—as they are merry folk who give pleasure, everyone favors and protects them.

Miguel de Cervantes

A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race.

George Crabbe

A nuisance in the earth, the very offal of society.

Timothy Dwight

A musician who plays on a home-made instrument—himself.

Helen Hayes

The only honest hypocrite.

William Hazlitt

No better than creatures set upon tables . . . to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.

Samuel Johnson

Men who sleep till noon, and spend the afternoon calling on women.

George Jean Nathan

A man with an infinite capacity for taking praise.

Michael Redgrave

They are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.

William Shakespeare

Actors are like politicians, and politicians are like actors. They both spend time each day contemplating their image. They both have a desire to be loved.

Gore Vidal

One who is no better than the director.

Anon.

A man who can walk to the side of a stage, peer into the wings filled with dust . . . and say "What a lovely view there is from this window."

Anon.

A puppet under its own power.

Anon.

A person who makes faces for a living.

Anon.

One who creates illusion in order to reveal reality.

Anon.

See also ACTING, HOLLYWOOD, MOVIE, STAR-LET.

ADAM

The luckiest man—he had no mother-in-law.

Sholom Aleichem

A man without a navel.

Thomas Browne

(One who) sinned when he fell from Contemplation. Since then, there has been division in man.

Jacques Maritain

The goodliest man of men.

John Milton

Adam was created single to teach us that to destroy one person is to destroy a whole world, and to preserve one person is to preserve a whole world.

Mishna

Originally one, he has fallen, and, breaking up . . . he has filled the whole earth with the pieces.

Saint Augustine

(A man who) when he said a good thing . . . knew nobody had said it before.

Mark Twain

The first great benefactor of our race. He brought death into the world.

Mark Twain

The first man to tell anybody about his operation. *Anon.*

The only human to escape teething pains. *Anon.*

See also CREATION (WORLD), MAN.

ADMIRAL

That part of a war-ship which does the talking while the figure-head does the thinking. *Ambrose Bierce*

Admirals extoll'd for standing still
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill. *William Cowper*

See also GENERAL, MILITARISM, WAR.

ADMIRATION

A very short-lived passion, that immediately decays upon growing familiar with its object. *Joseph Addison*

Our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves. *Ambrose Bierce*

A youthful fancy which scarcely ever survives to mature years. *Josh Billings*

Ignorance. *Thomas Fuller*

A form of shamefaced flattery. *Elbert Hubbard*

Approbation, heightened by wonder and surprise, constitutes the sentiment. *Adam Smith*

One of the most bewitching, enthusiastic passions of the mind... it arises from novelty and surprise, the inseparable attendants of imposture. *William Warburton*

See also FAME, REVERENCE.

ADOLESCENCE

A phase of transition from childhood to manhood, a phase of uprootedness and drastic change. *Eric Hoffer*

A kind of emotional seasickness. Both are funny, but only in retrospect. *Arthur Koestler*

Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth. When thought is speech, and speech is truth. *William Shakespeare*

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy. *William Shakespeare*

A house on moving day—a temporary mess. *Julius E. Warren*

In America a period of time spent as if it were the last fling at life, rather than a preparation for it. *Anon.*

That period in life in which the young feel a great urge to answer the telephone. *Anon.*

That period in life when one's parents become more difficult. *Anon.*

That period in life when a boy refuses to believe that someday he'll be as stupid as his parents. *Anon.*

That period when the young feel their parents should be told the facts of life. *Anon.*

A stage between infancy and adultery. *Anon.*

When Humpty-Dumpty is replaced by hanky-panky. *Anon.*

See also CHILDREN, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, YOUTH.

ADOLESCENT

Those who are quickest to discern hypocrisy. *Eugene E. Brussell*

One who is well informed about anything he doesn't have to study. *Marcelene Cox*
(One who) looks inward; the adult can look outward. *Pamela Frankau*

One who has reached the age of dissent. *Harold Leslie*

The awkward age when a child is too old to say something cute and too young to say something sensible. *Anon.*

ADULT

An obsolete child. *Theodore Geisel*

A kernel of instinct surrounded by a vast husk of education. *Bertrand A. Russell*

A word used to lure children to movies. *Sidney Skolsky*

One who has ceased to grow vertically but not horizontally. *Anon.*

See also AGE, MAN, MATURITY, MIDDLE-AGE, WOMAN.

ADULTERY

Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Bible: Matthew, V, 28.

Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committs adultery.

Bible: Matthew, XIX, 9.

A theme for angry verse! *William Cowper*

Usually an act done under cover of darkness and secrecy, and in which the parties are seldom surprised.

Decision of the Maryland Court of Appeals, 1931.

To set your neighbor's bed a-shaking... an ancient and long-established custom.

Juvenal

A man is guilty of adultery if he marries a divorced woman; and so is he who divorces his wife, save on the ground of misconduct, to marry again.

Firmianus Lactantius

The application of democracy to love.

Henry Louis Mencken

If a man leaves his wife and she marries another, she commits adultery.

Saint Augustine

To leave a wife who is sterile in order to take another by whom children may be had. Anyone doing this is guilty of adultery.

Saint Augustine

The dullest of themes... the romantic adulterers have been bores.

George Bernard Shaw

(The) great democratic vice.

George Bernard Shaw

See also CUCKOLD, LOVERS, LUST, MISTRESS, SEX (LOVE), SIN.

ADVANTAGE

To seize an opportunity... to know when to forego an advantage.

Benjamin Disraeli

Recognition of opportunity.

Max Gralnick

To enjoy no advantage at all.

Henry David Thoreau

See also ANCESTRY, WEALTH.

ADVENTURE

Rightly considered, only an inconvenience.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

Something you seek for pleasure, or even for profit, like a gold rush or invading a country... the thing you will to occur.

Katherine Ann Porter

ADVENTURER

An outlaw... Adventure must start with running away from home.

William Bolitho

The tremendous outsider.

William Bolitho

With the woman-adventurer all is love or hate. Her adventure is man; her type is not the prospector, but the courtesan. That is, her adventure is an escape, developing inevitably into a running fight with the institution of marriage.

William Bolitho

One who has a passion to realize the impossible.

Adapted from Isaac Wise

ADVERTISEMENTS

The principal reason why the businessman has come to inherit the earth.

James R. Adams

The mouthpiece of business.

James R. Adams

Eighty-five per cent confusion and fifteen per cent commission.

Fred Allen

The ideals of a nation.

Norman Douglas

One of the most interesting and difficult of modern literary forms.

Aldous Huxley

The only truths to be relied on in a newspaper.

Thomas Jefferson

A creator of false hunger.

Anon.

See also ADVERTISING, NEWSPAPERS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, TELEVISION COMMERCIAL.

ADVERTISING

A sort of tumor, that ends by killing the victim's sympathies. *Henry Adams*

The great art in...finding out a proper method to catch the reader's eye. *Joseph Addison*

Instruments of ambition. *Joseph Addison*

Something against nature. *Thomas Carlyle*

What you do when you can't go see somebody. *Fairfax Cone*

To avoid the concrete promise...and cultivate the delightfully vague. *John Crosby*

Its contribution to humanity is exactly minus zero. *F. Scott Fitzgerald*

The education of the public as to who you are, where you are, and what you have to offer in way of skill, talent, commodity. *Elbert Hubbard*

An organized effort to extend and intensify craving. *Aldous Huxley*

Promise—large promise—is the soul of advertising. *Samuel Johnson*

The science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it. *Stephen Leacock*

The cheapest way of selling goods, particularly if the goods are worthless. *Sinclair Lewis*

That essential American strategy. *Richard H. Rovere*

The modern substitute for argument; its function is to make the worse appear better. *George Santayana*

Millions of dollars...spent annually to entice people to dedicate themselves to the "cult of things," nice things which are phony, valueless, glamorous, sinful. *Rolan Simonitsch*

A technique which makes you believe you've longed all your life for something you've never heard of before. *Anon.*

A paying thought. *Anon.*

A medium which attempts to create a hunger for products. *Anon.*

See also ADVERTISEMENTS, NEWSPAPERS, PROPAGANDA, PUBLIC RELATIONS, TELEVISION, TELEVISION COMMERCIAL.

ADVICE

The suggestions you give someone else which you hope will work for your benefit. *Ambrose Bierce*

To seek another's approval of a course already decided upon. *Ambrose Bierce*

The smallest current coin. *Ambrose Bierce*

A drug on the market; the supply always exceeds the demand. *Josh Billings*

What is best to yourself given by yourself. *Adapted from Cicero*

Like snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into, the mind. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

Something that is found in bed. *Danish Proverb*

Always a confession. *Emile Herzog*

(Something) offensive, because it shows us that we are known to others, as well as to ourselves. *Samuel Johnson*

What a man gives when he gets too old to set a bad example. *La Rochefoucauld*

A sacred thing. *Plato*

A thing sought by all, but taken by none, including the one who gives it. *Harry Ruby*

One of those injuries which a good man ought, if possible, to forgive. *Horace Smith*

A commodity more blessed to give than receive. *Anon.*

To find backing after the mind has been made up. *Anon.*

AFFECTATION

A fault. *Miguel de Cervantes*

It is a form of affectation to emphasize the fact that you do not indulge in it. *La Rochefoucauld*

An awkward and forced imitation of what should be genuine and easy, wanting the beauty that accompanies what is natural.

John Locke

The whole aim of affectation is to cheat you.

Adapted from G. H. Powell

What spoils fine faces.

Anon.

See also HYPOCRISY.

AFFECTION

A body of enigmas, mysteries, riddles wherein two so become one that they both become two.

Adapted from Thomas Browne

The purest affection the heart can hold is the honest love of a nine-year old.

Holman Day

These jets . . . which make a young world for me.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A bad adviser.

German Proverb

A woman's whole life.

Washington Irving

See also FEELING, HAPPINESS, LOVE.

AFTER-THOUGHT

A tardy sense of prudence that prompts one to try to shut his mouth about the time he has put his foot in it.

Gideon Wurdz

See also REPARTEE.

AGE

More than just youth.

Aeschylus

Always 15 years older than I am.

Bernard Baruch

Only a number, a cipher for the records.

A man can't retire his experience.

Bernard Baruch

(Something that) doesn't matter unless you're a cheese.

Billie Burke

Succeeding stages.

Thomas Campbell

A matter of feeling, not of years.

George W. Curtis

Youth is a blunder; manhood is a struggle; old age a regret.

Benjamin Disraeli

The essence of age is intellect.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Childhood is ignorant, boyhood is light-hearted, youth is rash, and old age is ill-humored.

Luis de Granada

When a man is young he writes songs; grown up, he speaks in proverbs; in old age he preaches pessimism.

Hebrew Proverb

A bad habit which a busy man has no time to form.

Emile Herzog

The most terrible misfortune that can happen to any man; other evils will mend, but this is every day getting worse.

George P. James

Age is not all decay; it is the ripening, the swelling, of the fresh life within, that withers and bursts the husks.

George Macdonald

Youth is fair, a graceful stag,

Leaping, playing in a park

Age is gray, a toothless hag,

Stumbling in the dark.

Isaac Peretz

The first forty years of life give us the text; the next thirty supply the commentary on it.

Arthur Schopenhauer

A matter of arteries.

Adapted from Thomas Sydenham

Youth is a garland of roses; old age a crown of willows.

Talmud: Sabbath, 152a.

A man is still young as long as women can make him happy or unhappy. He reaches middle age when they can no longer make him unhappy. He is old when they cease to make him either happy or unhappy.

Anon.

At ten, a child; at twenty, wild;

At thirty, tame if ever;

At forty, wise; at fifty, rich;

At sixty, good, or never.

Anon.

The only thing that comes to us without effort.

Anon.

Your length in years.

Anon.

When one begins to exchange emotions for symptoms.

Anon.

See also MATURITY, MIDDLE AGE, OLD AGE, YOUTH.

AGGRESSION

An innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man . . . it constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture.

Sigmund Freud

The evil projected by the aggressor into the souls of those he aims to destroy or oppress.

Gustave Thibon

AGNOSTIC

One who doesn't know whether God exists, but is afraid to say so loudly in case God might hear him.

Eugene E. Brussell

A man who doesn't know whether there is a God or not, doesn't know whether he has a soul or not, doesn't know whether there is a future life or not, doesn't believe that anyone else knows any more about these matters than he does, and thinks it a waste of time to try to find out.

Richard Henry Dana

A confession of ignorance where honest inquiry might easily find the truth. "Agnostic" is but Greek for "ignoramus."

Tyron Edwards

I took thought, and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of "agnostic." It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the "Gnostic" of Church history.

Thomas Henry Huxley

The person who admits that he does not know, and is consequently open to learning.

David E. Trueblood

See also AGNOSTICISM, ATHEIST, FREE THINKERS, SKEPTIC.

AGNOSTICISM

The philosophical, ethical, and religious dry rot of the modern world.

F. E. Abbot

I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure—that is all that agnosticism means.

Clarence S. Darrow

A shadow cast by the eclipse of the supernatural... Its meaning departs when the intellectual outlook is directed wholly to the natural world.

John Dewey

A theory about knowledge and not about religion.

Richard Downey

Not open-mindedness; it is culpable inaction.

Nels F. Ferré

It is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which

logically justifies that certainty. This is what agnosticism asserts.

Thomas Henry Huxley

Not a creed, but a method, the essence of which lies in the rigorous application of a single principle... that every man should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him.

Thomas Henry Huxley

Simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that for which he has no grounds for professing to believe.

Thomas Henry Huxley

Help for the living, hope for the dead.

Robert G. Ingersoll

The everlasting perhaps.

Francis Thompson

See also AGNOSTIC, ATHEISM, ATHEIST, SKEPTIC, SKEPTICISM.

AGREEABLE

A person who agrees with me.

Benjamin Disraeli

He who is endowed with the natural bent to do acceptable things, from a delight he takes in them merely as such; the affectation of that character is what constitutes a fop.

Richard Steele

AGRICULTURE

See FARM, FARMING.

ALCOHOL

See DRINKING, WINE.

ALCOHOLIC

See DRUNKENNESS.

ALIMONY

Buying oats for a dead horse.

Arthur Baer

Billing minus cooing.

Mary Dorsey

A system which results when two people make a mistake and one of them continues to pay for it.

Jimmy Lyons

Disinterest, compounded annually.

Walter McDonald

The ransom that the happy pay to the devil.

Henry Louis Mencken

Matrimonial insurance for women paid by men for having poor judgment. *Anon.*

The cash surrender value of the American male. *Anon.*

The act of giving comfort to the enemy. *Anon.*

The high cost of leaving. *Anon.*

The male's best proof that you have to pay for your mistakes. *Anon.*

The result of marrying in haste and repenting insolvent. *Anon.*

Time balm. *Anon.*

What a woman who loved a man for all he is worth gets. *Anon.*

See also DIVORCE, MARRIAGE, WIFE.

ALLEGORY

Like so many tracts of light in a discourse, that make everything about them clear and beautiful. *Joseph Addison*

A man's life. *John Keats*

ALLIANCE

See TREATY.

ALMS

See CHARITY, PHILANTHROPY.

ALONE

See LONELINESS, SOLITUDE.

ALTRUISM

Disregarding one's own cause. *Eugene E. Brussell*

Inverted egotism. *Jacob Cohen*

Living largely for the good and happiness of others. *Adapted from Judah Moscato*

Mowing your neighbor's lawn. *Harry Thompson*

Making the common good the mark of one's aim. *Adapted from John Wise*

Slavery. *Anon.*

Desiring nothing for others that you do not desire for yourself. *Anon.*

The art of doing unselfish things for selfish reasons. *Anon.*

See also BENEVOLENCE, CHARITY, GENEROSITY, IDEALIST, PHILANTHROPY, REFORM.

AMATEUR

A public nuisance who confounds his ambition with his ability. *Ambrose Bierce*

One who practices something without hope of fame and money or of even doing it well. *Adapted from Gilbert Keith Chesterton*

See also DILETTANTE.

AMBASSADOR

In American politics, a person who having failed to secure an office from the people is given one by the Administration on condition that he leave the country.

Ambrose Bierce

(One who) should be versed in all the sciences; he should understand hints, gestures and expressions of the face; he should be honest, skillful and of good family.

Code of Manu, VII

A man whose vocabulary becomes three times as extensive and twice as indistinct as any one elses.

Adapted from John Kenneth Galbraith

The eyes and ears of states.

Francesco Guicciardini

A man who had the most money and the fewest votes. *John D. Lodge*

An honest man, sent abroad to lie for the commonwealth. *Henry Wotton*

One who makes the world safe for hypocrisy. *Anon.*

A paid political tourist. *Anon.*

A politician who is given a job abroad in order to get him out of the country. *Anon.*

See also DIPLOMAT.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Able to pick with equal skill a right-hand pocket or a left. *Ambrose Bierce*

AMBITION

The desire of rising. *Thomas Adams*

(That which) raises a secret tumult in the soul; it inflames the mind, and puts it into a violent hurry of thought. *Joseph Addison*

(That which) destroys its possessor.
Babylonian Talmud: Yoma, 86a.

Like choler, which is a humor that makes man active, earnest, full of alacrity and stirring, if it be not stopped. But if it be stopped, and cannot have its way, it becomes a dust, and thereby malign and venomous. *Francis Bacon*

An overmastering desire to be vilified by enemies while living and made ridiculous by friends when dead. *Ambrose Bierce*

Not what man does... but what man would do. *Robert Browning*

A proud covetousness, or a dry thirst of honor, a great torture of the mind, composed of envy, pride... a gallant madness, one defines it a pleasant poison.
Robert Burton

The only power that combats love.
Colley Cibber

An insatiable desire for honor, command, power, and glory. *Cicero*

The mind's immodesty.
William D'Avenant

That worst of deities... queen of wrong.
Euripides

The wings of great actions.
Johann W. Goethe

A condition inspired by the wish to be first.
Max Gralnick

The desire to excel. *Max Gralnick*

Bondage. *Ibn Gabirol*

To be unhappy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition. *Samuel Johnson*

The last affection a high mind can put off.
Ben Jonson

Avarice on stilts and masked.
Walter Savage Landor

This senseless chasing of rainbows.
Frederick Loewe

In a private man a vice... in a prince... virtue. *Philip Massinger*

The glorious fault of angels and of gods.
Alexander Pope

A secret poison. *Saint Bernard*

The shadow of a dream.
William Shakespeare

The lust for something to avoid when you have it. *John Steinbeck*

(A vice which) often puts men upon doing the meanest offices; so climbing is performed in the same posture with creeping.
Jonathan Swift

That which brings the mind into full activity. *Henry Taylor*

Nets to catch the wind. *John Webster*

The last refuge of the failure.
Oscar Wilde

Ambition has but one reward for all:
A little power, a little transient fame,
A grave to rest in, and a fading name!
William Winter

Bubbles on the rapid stream of time.
Edward Young

Achievement. *Israel Zangwill*

Aggravated itching of the palm. *Anon.*

A mental condition which compells one to work one's self to death in order to live.
Anon.

The drive that leads a few to fulfillment and many to discontent. *Anon.*

See also AVARICE, FAME, POWER, WILL.

AMBULANCE

A crash and carry car. *Anon.*

The shuttle between a speeding car and a wheelchair. *Anon.*