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Quotes by Chapman, John Jay

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The men and woman who make the best boon companions seem to have given up hope of doing something else...some defect of talent or opportunity has cut them off from their pet ambition and has thus left them with leisure to take an interest in their lives of others. Your ambition may be, it makes him keep his thoughts at home. But the heartbroken people -- if I may use the word in a mild, benevolent sense -- the people whose wills are subdued to fate, give us consolation, recognition, and welcome.

- Chapman, John Jay

You can get assent to almost any proposition so long as you are not going to do anything about it.

- Chapman, John Jay

Good government is the outcome of private virtue.

- Chapman, John Jay

I want to find someone on the earth so intelligent that he welcomes opinions which he condemns.

- Chapman, John Jay

A political organization is a transferable commodity. You could not find a better way of killing virtue than by packing it into one of these contraptions which some gang of thieves is sure to find useful.

- Chapman, John Jay

The average educated man in America has about as much knowledge of what a political idea is as he has of the principles of counterpoint. Each is a thing used in politics or music which those fellows who practice politics or music manipulate somehow. Show him one and he will deny that it is politics at all. It must be corrupt or he will not recognize it. He has only seen dried figs. He has only thought dried thoughts. A live thought or a real idea is against the rules of his mind.

- Chapman, John Jay

If American politics does not look to you like a joke, a tragic dance; if you have enough blindness left in you, on any plea, on any excuse, to vote for the Democratic Party or the Republican Party (for at present machine and party are one), or for any candidate who does not stand for a new era, -- then you yourself pass into the slide of the magic-lantern; you are an exhibit, a quaint product, a curiosity of the American soil. You are part of the problem.

- Chapman, John Jay

Politics is organized hatred, that is unity.

- Chapman, John Jay

It is just as impossible to help reform by conciliating prejudice as it is by buying votes.

Prejudice is the enemy. Whoever is not for you is against you.

- Chapman, John Jay

All progress is experimental.

- Chapman, John Jay

The reason for the slow progress of the world seems to lie in a single fact. Every man is born under the yoke, and grows up beneath the oppressions of his age. He can only get a vision of the unselfish forces in the world by appealing to them, and every appeal is a call to arms. If he fights he must fight, not one man, but a conspiracy. He is always at war with a civilization. On his side is proverbial philosophy, a galaxy of invisible saints and sages, and the half-developed consciousness and professions of everybody. Against him is the world, and every selfish passion in his own heart.

- Chapman, John Jay

People who love soft methods and hate iniquity forget this, -- that reform consists in taking a bone from a dog. Philosophy will not do it.

- Chapman, John Jay

If you are to reach masses of people in this world, you must do it by a sign language.

Whether your vehicle be commerce, literature, or politics, you can do nothing but raise signals, and make motions to the people.

- Chapman, John Jay

There are lots of people who cannot think seriously without injuring their minds.

- Chapman, John Jay

Our goodness comes solely from thinking on goodness; our wickedness from thinking on wickedness. We too are the victims of our own contemplation.

- Chapman, John Jay

Is there something in trade that desiccates and flattens out, that turns men into dried leaves at the age of forty? Certainly there is. It is not due to trade but to intensity of self-seeking, combined with narrowness of occupation. Business has destroyed the very knowledge in us of all other natural forces except business.

- Chapman, John Jay

The world values the seer above all men, and has always done so. Nay, it values all men in proportion as they partake of the character of seers. The Elgin Marbles and a decision of John Marshall are valued for the same reason. What we feel in them is a painstaking submission to facts beyond the author's control, and to ideas imposed upon him by his vision. So with Beethoven's Symphonies, with Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations -- with any conceivable output of the human mind of which you approve. You love them because you say, These things were not made, they were seen.

- Chapman, John Jay

The fact that a man is to vote forces him to think. You may preach to a congregation by the year and not affect its thought because it is not called upon for definite action. But throw your subject into a campaign and it becomes a challenge.

- Chapman, John Jay

People get so in the habit of worry that if you save them from drowning and put them on a bank to dry in the sun with hot chocolate and muffins they wonder whether they are catching cold.

- Chapman, John Jay

Everybody in America is soft, and hates conflict. The cure for this, both in politics and social life, is the same -- hardihood. Give them raw truth.

- Chapman, John Jay

Wherever you see a man who gives someone else's corruption, someone else's prejudice as a reason for not taking action himself, you see a cog in The Machine that governs us.

- Chapman, John Jay

Try to raise a voice that shall be heard from here to Albany and watch what it is that comes forward to shut off the sound. It is not a German sergeant, nor a Russian officer of the precinct. It is a note from a friend of your fathers offering you a place in his office. This is your warning from the secret police. Why, if any of you young gentlemen have a mind to get heard a mile off, you must make a bonfire of your reputation, and a close enemy of most men who wish you well. And what will you get in return? Well, if I must for the benefit

of the economists, charge you up with some selfish gain, I will say that you get the satisfaction of having been heard, and that this is the whole possible scope of human ambition.

- Chapman, John Jay



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