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Quotes by Amiel, Henri Frederic

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Henri Frdric Amiel (September 27, 1821 - May 11, 1881) was a Swiss philosopher, poet and critic.

To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The best path through life is the highway.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Destiny has two ways of crushing us -- by refusing our wishes and by fulfilling them.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Doing easily what others find difficult is talent; doing what is impossible for talent is genius.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To do easily what is difficult for others is the mark of talent. To do what is impossible for talent is the mark of genius.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

It is by teaching that we teach ourselves, by relating that we observe, by affirming that we examine, by showing that we look, by writing that we think, by pumping that we draw water into the well.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Analysis kills spontaneity. The grain once ground into flour springs and germinates no more.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Great men are true men, the men in whom nature has succeeded. They are not extraordinary -- they are in the true order. It is the other species of men who are not what they ought to be.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To live we must conquer incessantly, we must have the courage to be happy.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Every life is a profession of faith, and exercises an inevitable and silent influence.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Clever people will recognize and tolerate nothing but cleverness.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Mutual respect implies discretion and reserve even in love itself; it means preserving as much liberty as possible to those whose life we share. We must distrust our instinct of intervention, for the desire to make one's own will prevail is often disguised under the mask of solicitude.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Life is short and we have never too much time for gladdening the hearts of those who are travelling the dark journey with us. Oh be swift to love, make haste to be kind.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

We become actors without realizing it, and actors without wanting to.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Women wish to be loved not because they are pretty, or good, or well bred, or graceful, or intelligent, but because they are themselves.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

In every loving woman there is a priestess of the past -- a pious guardian of some

affection, of which the object has disappeared.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To marry unequally is to suffer equally.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Materialism coarsens and petrifies everything, making everything vulgar, and every truth false.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Melancholy is at the bottom of everything, just as at the end of all rivers is the sea. Can it be otherwise in a world where nothing lasts, where all that we have loved or shall love must die? Is death, then, the secret of life? The gloom of an eternal mourning enwraps, more or less closely, every serious and thoughtful soul, as night enwraps the universe.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

An error is the more dangerous in proportion to the degree of truth which it contains.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Mozart has the classic purity of light and the blue ocean; Beethoven the romantic grandeur which belongs to the storms of air and sea, and while the soul of Mozart seems to dwell on the ethereal peaks of Olympus, that of Beethoven climbs shuddering the storm-beaten sides of a Sinai. Blessed be they both! Each represents a moment of the ideal life, each does us good. Our love is due to both.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The obscure only exists that it may cease to exist. In it lies the opportunity of all victory and all progress. Whether it call itself fatality, death, night, or matter, it is the pedestal of life, of light, of liberty and the spirit. For it represents resistance -- that is to say, the fulcrum of all activity, the occasion for its development and its triumph.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Order is a great person's need and their true well being.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Order is power.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Without passion man is a mere latent force and possibility, like the flint which awaits the shock of the iron before it can give forth its spark.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The fire which enlightens is the same fire which consumes.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The man who insists upon seeing with perfect clearness before he decides, never decides. Accept life, and you must accept regret.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The philosopher is like a man fasting in the midst of universal intoxication. He alone perceives the illusion of which all creatures are the willing playthings; he is less duped than his neighbor by his own nature. He judges more sanely, he sees things as they are. It is in this that his liberty consists -- in the ability to see clearly and soberly, in the power of mental record.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Our duty is to be useful, not according to our desires, but according to our powers.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

We are never more discontented with others than when we are discontented with ourselves.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To depersonalize man is the dominant drift of our times.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

There is no respect for others without humility in one's self.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To shun one's cross is to make it heavier.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Sacrifice, which is the passion of great souls, has never been the law of societies.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Sacrifice still exists everywhere, and everywhere the elect of each generation suffers for the salvation of the rest.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Our true history is scarcely ever deciphered by others. The chief part of the drama is a monologue, or rather an intimate debate between God, our conscience, and ourselves. Tears, grieves, depressions, disappointments, irritations, good and evil thoughts, decisions, uncertainties, deliberations --all these belong to our secret, and are almost all incommunicable and intransmissible, even when we try to speak of them, and even when we write them down.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

He who asks of life nothing but the improvement of his own nature is less liable than anyone else to miss and waste life.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Self-interest is but the survival of the animal in us. Humanity only begins for man with self-surrender.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Society lives by faith, and develops by science.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The only substance properly so called is the soul.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

If nationality is consent, the state is compulsion.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Action is coarsened thought; thought becomes concrete, obscure, and unconscious.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Action and faith enslave thought, both of them in order not be troubled or inconvenienced by reflection, criticism, and doubt.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

For purposes of action nothing is more useful than narrowness of thought combined with energy of will.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Our systems, perhaps, are nothing more than an unconscious apology for our faults --a gigantic scaffolding whose object is to hide from us our favorite sin.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

So long as a person is capable of self-renewal they are a living being.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

It is not what he had, or even what he does which expresses the worth of a man, but what he is.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Charm is the quality in others that makes us more satisfied with ourselves.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Sympathy is the first condition of criticism.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

To know how to suggest is the great art of teaching. To attain it we must be able to guess what will interest; we must learn to read the childish soul as we might a piece of music.

Then, by simply changing the key, we keep up the attraction and vary the song.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Tears are the symbol of the inability of the soul to restrain its emotion and retain its self command.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

What we call little things are merely the causes of great things; they are the beginning, the embryo, and it is the point of departure which, generally speaking, decides the whole future of an existence. One single black speck may be the beginning of a gangrene, of a storm, of a revolution.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Thought is a kind of opium; it can intoxicate us, while still broad awake; it can make transparent the mountains and everything that exists.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Uncertainty is the refuge of hope.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Will localizes us; thought universalizes us.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Cleverness is serviceable for everything, sufficient for nothing.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Common sense is the measure of the possible; it is composed of experience and prevision; it is calculation applied to life.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Common sense is calculation applied to life.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Pure truth cannot be assimilated by the crowd; it must be communicated by contagion.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

Oh, order! Material order, intellectual order, moral order! What a comfort and strength, and what an economy! To know where we are going and what we want; that is order. To keep ones word, to do the right thing, and at the right time: more order. To have everything under ones hand, to put ones whole army through its manoeuvres, to work with all ones resources: still order. To discipline ones habits and efforts and wishes, to organize ones life and distribute ones time, to measure ones duties and assert ones rights, to put ones capital and resources, ones talents and opportunities to profit: again and always order. Order is light, peace, inner freedom, self-determination: it is power. To conceive order, to return to order, to realize order in oneself, around oneself, by means of oneself, this is aesthetic and moral beauty, it is well-being, it is what ought to be.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic



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