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Quotes by Erasmus, Desiderius

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Desiderius Erasmus in 1523

The nearer people approach old age the closer they return to a semblance of childhood, until the time comes for them to depart this life, again like children, neither tired of living nor aware of death.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Man's mind is so formed that it is far more susceptible to falsehood than to truth.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

The more ignorant, reckless and thoughtless a doctor is, the higher his reputation soars even amongst powerful princes.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Great eagerness in the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, or honor, cannot exist without sin.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Nature, more of a stepmother than a mother in several ways, has sown a seed of evil in the hearts of mortals, especially in the more thoughtful men, which makes them dissatisfied with their own lot and envious of another s.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

What is popularly called fame is nothing but an empty name and a legacy from paganism.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

The entire world is my temple, and a very fine one too, if I'm not mistaken, and I'll never lack priests to serve it as long as there are men.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

In short, no association or alliance can be happy or stable without me. People can't long tolerate a ruler, nor can a master his servant, a maid her mistress, a teacher his pupil, a friend his friend nor a wife her husband, a landlord his tenant, a soldier his comrade nor a party-goer his companion, unless they sometimes have illusions about each other, make use of flattery, and have the sense to turn a blind eye and sweeten life for themselves with the honey of folly.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Fools are without number.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Everybody hates a prodigy, detests an old head on young shoulders.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

The fox has many tricks. The hedgehog has but one. But that is the best of all.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Time takes away the grief of men.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

A nail is driven out by another nail. Habit is overcome by habit.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

It is the chiefest point of happiness that a man is willing to be what he is.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Now I believe I can hear the philosophers protesting that it can only be misery to live in folly, illusion, deception and ignorance, but it isn't --it's human.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

They take unbelievable pleasure in the hideous blast of the hunting horn and baying of the hounds. Dogs dung smells sweet as cinnamon to them.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

What difference is there, do you think, between those in Plato's cave who can only marvel at the shadows and images of various objects, provided they are content and don't know what they miss, and the philosopher who has emerged from the cave and sees the real

things?

- Erasmus, Desiderius

I doubt if a single individual could be found from the whole of mankind free from some form of insanity. The only difference is one of degree. A man who sees a gourd and takes it for his wife is called insane because this happens to very few people.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Ask a wise man to dinner and he'll upset everyone by his gloomy silence or tiresome questions. Invite him to a dance and you'll have a camel prancing about. Haul him off to a public entertainment and his face will be enough to spoil the people's entertainment.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

By a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Amongst the learned the lawyers claim first place, the most self-satisfied class of people, as they roll their rock of Sisyphus and string together six hundred laws in the same breath, no matter whether relevant or not, piling up opinion on opinion and gloss on gloss to make their profession seem the most difficult of all. Anything which causes trouble has special merit in their eyes.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

This type of man who is devoted to the study of wisdom is always most unlucky in

everything, and particularly when it comes to procreating children; I imagine this is because Nature wants to ensure that the evils of wisdom shall not spread further throughout mankind.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Your library is your paradise.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

If you look at history you'll find that no state has been so plagued by its rulers as when power has fallen into the hands of some dabbler in philosophy or literary addict.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Whether a party can have much success without a woman present I must ask others to decide, but one thing is certain, no party is any fun unless seasoned with folly.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Jupiter, not wanting man's life to be wholly gloomy and grim, has bestowed far more passion than reason --you could reckon the ration as twenty-four to one. Moreover, he confined reason to a cramped corner of the head and left all the rest of the body to the passions.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

It is wisdom in prosperity, when all is as thou wouldn't have it, to fear and suspect the worst.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

As an example of just how useless these philosophers are for any practice in life there is Socrates himself, the one and only wise man, according to the Delphic Oracle. Whenever he tried to do anything in public he had to break off amid general laughter. While he was philosophizing about clouds and ideas, measuring a flea's foot and marveling at a midge's humming, he learned nothing about the affairs of ordinary life.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Nothing is so foolish, they say, as for a man to stand for office and woo the crowd to win its vote, buy its support with presents, court the applause of all those fools and feel self-satisfied when they cry their approval, and then in his hour of triumph to be carried round like an effigy for the public to stare at, and end up cast in bronze to stand in the market place.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Everyone knows that by far the happiest and universally enjoyable age of man is the first. What is there about babies which makes us hug and kiss and fondle them, so that even an enemy would give them help at that age?

- Erasmus, Desiderius

For them it's out-of-date and outmoded to perform miracles; teaching the people is too like hard work, interpreting the holy scriptures is for schoolmen and praying is a waste of time; to shed tears is weak and womanish, to be needy is degrading; to suffer defeat is a disgrace and hardly fitting for one who scarcely permits the greatest of kings to kiss the toes of his sacred feet; and finally, death is an unattractive prospect, and dying on a cross would be an ignominious end.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Heaven grant that the burden you carry may have as easy an exit as it had an entrance.

[Prayer To A Pregnant Woman]

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Prevention is better than cure.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Picture the prince, such as most of them are today: a man ignorant of the law, well-nigh an enemy to his people's advantage, while intent on his personal convenience, a dedicated voluptuary, a hater of learning, freedom and truth, without a thought for the interests of his country, and measuring everything in terms of his own profit and desires.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

People who use their erudition to write for a learned minority... don't seem to me favored by fortune but rather to be pitied for their continuous self-torture. They add, change, remove, lay aside, take up, rephrase, show to their friends, keep for nine years and are

never satisfied. And their futile reward, a word of praise from a handful of people, they win at such a cost -- so many late nights, such loss of sleep, sweetest of all things, and so much sweat and anguish... their health deteriorates, their looks are destroyed, they suffer partial or total blindness, poverty, ill-will, denial of pleasure, premature old age and early death.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

When I get a little money, I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

No one respects a talent that is concealed.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Concealed talent brings no reputation.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

It's the generally accepted privilege of theologians to stretch the heavens, that is the Scriptures, like tanners with a hide.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

War is delightful to those who have had no experience of it.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Great abundance of riches cannot be gathered and kept by any man without sin.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

You'll see certain Pythagorean whose belief in communism of property goes to such lengths that they pick up anything lying about unguarded, and make off with it without a qualm of conscience as if it had come to them by law.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Nothing is as peevish and pedantic as men's judgments of one another.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

[Only by] the good influence of our conduct may we bring salvation in human affairs; or like a fatal comet we may bring destruction in our train.

- Erasmus, Desiderius



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