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Quotes by Hamilton, Edith

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Edith Hamilton (August 12, 1867 - May 31, 1963) was a classicist and educator before she became a writer on mythology. Her most famous books are *The Greek Way* (1930) and *Mythology* (1942). *Mythology* remains in print after six decades and is still used as an introductory text to mythology in high schools and colleges; a mark of its status is that study guides to the book exist.

When the freedom they wished for most was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free and was never free again.

- Hamilton, Edith

Mind and spirit together make up that which separates us from the rest of the animal world, that which enables a man to know the truth and that which enables him to die for the truth.

- Hamilton, Edith

A people's literature is the great textbook for real knowledge of them. The writings of the day show the quality of the people as no historical reconstruction can.

- Hamilton, Edith

The fundamental fact about the Greek was that he had to use his mind. The ancient

priests had said, Thus far and no farther. We set the limits of thought. The Greek said, All things are to be examined and called into question. There are no limits set on thought.

- Hamilton, Edith

Theories that go counter to the facts of human nature are foredoomed.

- Hamilton, Edith

None but a poet can write a tragedy. For tragedy is nothing less than pain transmuted into exaltation by the alchemy of poetry.

- Hamilton, Edith

There are few efforts more conducive to humility than that of the translator trying to communicate an incommunicable beauty. Yet, unless we do try, something unique and never surpassed will cease to exist except in the libraries of a few inquisitive book lovers.

- Hamilton, Edith

Civilization...is a matter of imponderables, of delight in the things of the mind, of love of beauty, of honor, grace, courtesy, delicate feeling. Where imponderables, are things of first importance, there is the height of civilization, and, if at the same time, the power of art exists unimpaired, human life has reached a level seldom attained and very seldom surpassed.

- Hamilton, Edith

What the people wanted was a government which would provide a comfortable life for

them, and with this as the foremost object ideas of freedom and self-reliance and service to the community were obscured to the point of disappearing. Athens was more and more looked on as a co-operative business possessed of great wealth in which all citizens had a right to share. Athens had reached the point of rejecting independence, and the freedom she now wanted was freedom from responsibility. There could be only one result. If men insisted on being free from the burden of a life that was self-dependent and also responsible for the common good, they would cease to be free at all. Responsibility was the price every man must pay for freedom. It was to be had on no other terms.

- Hamilton, Edith

He was, first and last, the born fighter, to whom the consciousness of being matched against a great adversary suffices and who can dispense with success. Life for him was an adventure, perilous indeed, but men are not made for safe havens. The fullness of life is in the hazards of life. And, at the worst, there is that in us which can turn defeat into victory.

- Hamilton, Edith



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