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# Quotes by James, Henry

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Henry James, OM (April 15, 1843 – February 28, 1916), son of Henry James Sr. and brother of the philosopher and psychologist William James and diarist Alice James, was an American-born author and literary critic of the late 19th and early 20th century. He spent much of his life in Europe and became a British subject shortly before his death. He is primarily known for novels, novellas and short stories based upon themes of consciousness.

In art economy is always beauty.

- James, Henry

If I were to live my life over again, I would be an American. I would steep myself in America, I would know no other land.

- James, Henry

The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implications of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it --this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience.

- James, Henry

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of

huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue.

- James, Henry

Deep experience is never peaceful.

- James, Henry

The fatal futility of Fact.

- James, Henry

I am blackly bored when they are at large and at work; but somehow I am still more blackly bored when they are shut up in Holloway and we are deprived of them.

- James, Henry

The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life.

- James, Henry

The time-honored bread-sauce of the happy ending.

- James, Henry

It is, I think, an indisputable fact that Americans are, as Americans, the most self-conscious people in the world, and the most addicted to the belief that the other nations of the earth are in a conspiracy to under value them.

- James, Henry

The face of nature and civilization in this our country is to a certain point a very sufficient literary field. But it will yield its secrets only to a really grasping imagination. To write well and worthily of American things one need even more than elsewhere to be a master.

- James, Henry

No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools -- no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class -- no Epsom nor Ascot! Some such list as that might be drawn up of the absent things in American life.

- James, Henry

Ideas are, in truth, force.

- James, Henry

The terrible fluidity of self-revelation.

- James, Henry

Do not mind anything that anyone tells you about anyone else. Judge everyone and everything for yourself.

- James, Henry

Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind.

And the third is to be kind.

- James, Henry

Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular, so long as you have your life. If you haven't had that what have you had?

- James, Henry

Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.

- James, Henry

Cats and monkeys; monkeys and cats; all human life is there.

- James, Henry

It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature.

- James, Henry

The superiority of one man's opinion over another's is never so great as when the opinion is about a woman.

- James, Henry

She had an unequalled gift... of squeezing big mistakes into small opportunities.

- James, Henry

Money's a horrid thing to follow, but a charming thing to meet.

- James, Henry

To read between the lines was easier than to follow the text.

- James, Henry

In museums and palaces we are alternate radicals and conservatives.

- James, Henry

I think patriotism is like charity -- it begins at home.

- James, Henry

It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.

- James, Henry

Summer afternoon -- summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.

- James, Henry

I hate American simplicity. I glory in the piling up of complications of every sort. If I could pronounce the name James in any different or more elaborate way I should be in favor of doing it.

- James, Henry

The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel, without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting.

- James, Henry

What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?

- James, Henry

Experience was to be taken as showing that one might get a five-pound note as one got a light for a cigarette; but one had to check the friendly impulse to ask for it in the same way.

- James, Henry

Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.

- James, Henry

To treat a big subject in the intensely summarized fashion demanded by an evening's traffic of the stage when the evening, freely clipped at each end, is reduced to two hours

and a half, is a feat of which the difficulty looms large.

- James, Henry

Though there are some disagreeable things in Venice there is nothing so disagreeable as the visitors.

- James, Henry

A man who pretends to understand women is ad manners. For him to really to understand them is bad morals.

- James, Henry

He is outside of everything, and alien everywhere. He is an aesthetic solitary. His beautiful, light imagination is the wing that on the autumn evening just brushes the dusky window.

- James, Henry

I hold any writer sufficiently justified who is himself in love with his theme.

- James, Henry

One might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left.

- James, Henry

People talk about the conscience, but it seems to me one must just bring it up to a certain point and leave it there. You can let your conscience alone if you're nice to the second housemaid.

- James, Henry

To criticize is to appreciate, to appropriate, to take intellectual possession, to establish in fine a relation with the criticized thing and to make it one's own.

- James, Henry

Of course you're always at liberty to judge the critic. Judge people as critics, however, and you'll condemn them all!

- James, Henry





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