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Quotes by Bierce, Ambrose

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Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce (born June 24, 1842, Horse Cave Creek, Meigs County, Ohio, USA date of death uncertain, possibly December 1913 or early 1914, presumably in Mexico) was an American satirist, critic, poet, short story writer, editor, and journalist.

Abstainer. A weak man who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Absurdity. A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Consult. To seek another's approval of a course already decided on.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Age. That period of life in which we compound for the vices that remain by reviling those we have no longer the vigor to commit.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Forgetfulness. A gift of God bestowed upon debtors in compensation for their destitution of conscience.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Deliberation. The act of examining one's bread to determine which side it is buttered on.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Destiny. A tyrant's authority for crime and a fool's excuse for failure.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Consul. In American politics, a person who having failed to secure an office from the people is given one by the Administration on condition that he leave the country.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Divorce. A resumption of diplomatic relations and rectification of boundaries.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Dog. A kind of additional or subsidiary Deity designed to catch the overflow and surplus of the world's worship.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Opiate. An unlocked door in the prison of Identity. It leads into the jail yard.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Duty. That which sternly impels us in the direction of profit, along the line of desire.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Education is that which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Egotist. A person of low taste, more interested in himself than me.

- Bierce, Ambrose

An egotist is a person interested in himself than in me!

- Bierce, Ambrose

Enthusiasm. A distemper of youth, curable by small doses of repentance in connection with outward applications of experience.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Experience is a revelation in the light of which we renounce our errors of youth for those of age.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Experience. The wisdom that enables us to recognize in an undesirable old acquaintance the folly that we have already embraced.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Faith. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Fidelity. A virtue peculiar to those who are about to be betrayed.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Edible. Good to eat and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

- Bierce, Ambrose

To apologize is to lay the foundation for a future offense.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A funeral is a pageant whereby we attest our respect for the dead by enriching the undertaker.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Future: That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.

- Bierce, Ambrose

The gambling known as business looks with severe disfavor on the business known as gambling.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Alliance. In international politics, the union of two thieves who have their hands so deeply inserted in each other's pockets that they cannot separately plunder a third.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Ambition. An overmastering desire to be vilified by enemies while living and made ridiculous by friends when dead.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Genealogy. An account of one's descent from an ancestor who did not particularly care to trace his own.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Confidante. One entrusted by A with the secrets of B confided to herself by C.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Habit is a shackle for the free.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Happiness is an agreeable sensation, arising from contemplating the misery of others.

- Bierce, Ambrose

An account, mostly false, of events, mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Historian. A broad -- gauge gossip.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Alien. An American sovereign in his probationary state.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Impartial. Unable to perceive any promise of personal advantage from espousing either side of a controversy.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Insurance: An ingenious modern game of chance in which the player is permitted to enjoy the comfortable conviction that he is beating the man who keeps the table.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Impiety. Your irreverence toward my deity.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Witticism. A sharp and clever remark, usually quoted and seldom noted; what the Philistine is pleased to call a joke.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Knowledge is the small part of ignorance that we arrange and classify.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Laughter -- An interior convulsion, producing a distortion of the features and accompanied by inarticulate noises. It is infectious and, though intermittent, incurable.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Litigant. A person about to give up his skin for the hope of retaining his bones.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Laziness. Unwarranted repose of manner in a person of low degree.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Learning. The kind of ignorance distinguishing the studious.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Life. A spiritual pickle preserving the body from decay.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Acquaintance: a degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Acquaintance. A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to.

- Bierce, Ambrose

An acquaintance is someone we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Architect. One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Admiral. That part of a warship which does the talking while the figurehead does the thinking.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A temporary insanity curable by marriage.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A man is known by the company he organizes.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Incompatibility. In matrimony a similarity of tastes, particularly the taste for domination.

- Bierce, Ambrose

The world has suffered more from the ravages of ill-advised marriages than from virginity.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Marriage. The state or condition of a community consisting of a master, a mistress and two slaves, making in all, two.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Before undergoing a surgical operation, arrange your temporal affairs. You may live.

- Bierce, Ambrose

An accident is an inevitable occurrence due to the actions of immutable natural laws.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Miss: A title with which we brand unmarried women to indicate that they are in the market.

Miss, Misses (Mrs.) and Mister (Mr.) are the three most distinctly disagreeable words in

the language, in sound and sense. Two are corruptions of Mistress, the other of Master. If we must have them, let us be consistent and give one to the unmarried man. I venture to suggest Mush, abbreviated to MH.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Convent. A place of retirement for women who wish for leisure to meditate upon the sin of idleness.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A body of water occupying about two-thirds of a world made for man, who has no gills.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Optimism. The doctrine or belief that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly.

- Bierce, Ambrose

An optimist is a proponent of the doctrine that black is white.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Patience. A minor form of despair disguised as a virtue.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Patriotism. Combustible rubbish ready to the torch of any one ambitious to illuminate his name.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Peace, in international affairs, is a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A lowly virtue whereby mediocrity achieves a glorious success.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Philanthropist. A rich (and usually bald) old gentleman who has trained himself to grin while his conscience is picking his pocket.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing.

- Bierce, Ambrose

All are lunatics, but he who can analyze his delusion is called a philosopher.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Physician -- One upon whom we set our hopes when ill and our dogs when well.

- Bierce, Ambrose

To bother about the best method of accomplishing an accidental result.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Politeness -- The most acceptable hypocrisy.

- Bierce, Ambrose

What is a democrat? One who believes that the republicans have ruined the country.

What is a republican? One who believes that the democrats would ruin the country.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Irreligion. The principal one of the great faiths of the world.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Eulogy. Praise of a person who has either the advantages of wealth and power, or the consideration to be dead.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Admiration; is our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Pray. To ask the laws of the universe to be annulled on behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A prejudice is a vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Prophecy: The art and practice of selling one's credibility for future delivery.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Nominee. A modest gentleman shrinking from the distinction of private life and diligently seeking the honorable obscurity of public office.

- Bierce, Ambrose

The act of repeating erroneously the words of another.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Insurrection. An unsuccessful revolution; disaffection's failure to substitute misrule for bad government.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Religion. A daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Revolution is an abrupt change in the form of misgovernment.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Saint. A dead sinner revised and edited.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Erudition. Dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Backbite. To speak of a man as you find him when he can't find you.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Success is the one unpardonable sin against one's fellows.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Beauty. The power by which a woman charms a lover and terrifies a husband.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Bigot, one who is obstinately and zealously attached to an opinion that you do not entertain.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Bore -- a person who talks when you wish him to listen.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Corporation. An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual

responsibility.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Don't steal; thou it never thus compete successfully in business. Cheat.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Calamities are of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.

- Bierce, Ambrose

To be positive: to be mistaken at the top of one's voice.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Heaven lies about us in our infancy and the world begins lying about us pretty soon afterward.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Take not God's name in vain; select a time when it will have effect.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Think twice before you speak to a friend in need.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Appeal. In law, to put the dice into the box for another throw.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Trial. A formal inquiry designed to prove and put upon record the blameless characters of judges, advocates and jurors.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Truth -- An ingenious compound of desirability and appearance.

- Bierce, Ambrose

They say that hens do cackle loudest when there is nothing vital in the eggs they have laid.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Bride. A woman with a fine prospect of happiness behind her.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Wit. The salt with which the American humorist spoils his intellectual cookery by leaving it out.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Woman absent is woman dead.

- Bierce, Ambrose

When in Rome, do as Rome does.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Compromise. Such an adjustment of conflicting interests as gives each adversary the satisfaction of thinking he has got what he ought not to have, and is deprived of nothing except what was justly his due.

- Bierce, Ambrose

The Senate is a body of old men charged with high duties and misdemeanors.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Conservative. A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from a Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A coward is one who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Creditor. One of a tribe of savages dwelling beyond the Financial Straits and dreaded for their desolating incursions.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Abscond. To move in a mysterious way, commonly with the property of another.

- Bierce, Ambrose

The covers of this book are too far apart.

- Bierce, Ambrose

A cynic is a blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, and not as they ought to be.

- Bierce, Ambrose



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