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Quotes by Karl Kraus

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Karl Kraus (April 28, 1874 - June 12, 1936) was an eminent Austrian writer and journalist, known as a satirist, essayist, aphorist, playwright, and poet. He is generally considered one of the foremost German-language satirists of the 20th century, especially known for his witty criticism of the press, German culture, and German politics.

Matrimony is the union of meanness and martyrdom.

-Karl Kraus

The press, that goiter of the world, swells up with the desire for conquest and bursts with the achievements which every day brings. A week has room for the boldest climax of the human drive for expansion.

-Karl Kraus

In these great times which I knew when they were this small; which will become small again, provided they have time left for it in these times in which things are happening that could not be imagined and in which what can no longer be imagined must happen, for if one could imagine it, it would not happen; in these serious times which have died laughing at the thought that they might become serious; which, surprised by their own tragedy, are reaching for diversion and, catching themselves red-handed, are groping for words... in these times you should not expect any words of my own from me -- none but these words which barely manage to prevent silence from being misinterpreted.

-Karl Kraus

The immorality of men triumphs over the amorality of women.

-Karl Kraus

Morality is a venereal disease. Its primary stage is called virtue; its secondary stage, boredom; its tertiary stage, syphilis.

-Karl Kraus

News reports stand up as people, and people wither into editorials. Clichés walk around on two legs while men are having theirs shot off.

-Karl Kraus

Progress celebrates victories over nature. Progress makes purses out of human skin. When people were traveling in mail coaches, the world got ahead better than it does now that salesmen fly through the air. What good is speed if the brain has oozed out on the way? How will the heirs of this age be taught the most basic motions that are necessary to activate the most complicated machines? Nature can rely on progress; it will avenge it for the outrage it has perpetrated on it.

-Karl Kraus

Progress, under whose feet the grass mourns and the forest turns into paper from which

newspaper plants grow, has subordinated the purpose of life to the means of subsistence and turned us into the nuts and bolts for our tools.

-Karl Kraus

The psychoanalysts pick our dreams as if they were our pockets.

-Karl Kraus

The ultimate aim of psychoanalysis is to attribute art to mental weakness, and then to trace the weakness back to the point where, according to analytic dogma, it originated -- namely, the lavatory.

-Karl Kraus

When a culture feels that its end has come, it sends for a priest.

-Karl Kraus

Scandal begins when the police put a stop to it.

-Karl Kraus

Science is spectral analysis. Art is light synthesis.

-Karl Kraus

The world has become uglier since it began to look into a mirror every day; so let us

settle for the mirror image and do without an inspection of the original.

-Karl Kraus

Intercourse with a woman is sometimes a satisfactory substitute for masturbation. But it takes a lot of imagination to make it work.

-Karl Kraus

Sexuality poorly repressed unsettles some families; well repressed, it unsettles the whole world.

-Karl Kraus

He who sleeps half a day has won half a life.

-Karl Kraus

Stupidity gets up early; that is why events are accustomed to happening in the morning.

-Karl Kraus

Do not learn more than you absolutely need to get through life.

-Karl Kraus

Language is the mother of thought, not its handmaiden.

-Karl Kraus

Journalist: a person without any ideas but with an ability to express them; a writer whose skill is improved by a deadline: the more time he has, the worse he writes.

-Karl Kraus

If the reporter has killed our imagination with his truth, he threatens our life with his lies.

-Karl Kraus

Sentimental irony is a dog that bays at the moon while pissing on graves.

-Karl Kraus

Democracy divides people into workers and loafers. It makes no provision for those who have no time to work.

-Karl Kraus

It is the style of idealism to console itself for the loss of something old with the ability to gape at something new.

-Karl Kraus

A man's eroticism is a woman's sexuality.

-Karl Kraus

Adults who still derive childlike pleasure from hanging gifts of a ready-made education on the Christmas tree of a child waiting outside the door to life do not realize how unreceptive they are making the children to everything that constitutes the true surprise of life.

-Karl Kraus

Education is a crutch with which the foolish attack the wise to prove that they are not idiots.

-Karl Kraus

The sound principle of a topsy-turvy lifestyle in the framework of an upside-down world order has stood every test.

-Karl Kraus

The discovery of the North Pole is one of those realities which could not be avoided. It is the wages which human perseverance pays itself when it thinks that something is taking too long. The world needed a discoverer of the North Pole, and in all areas of social activity, merit was less important here than opportunity.

-Karl Kraus

Democracy means the opportunity to be everyone's slave.

-Karl Kraus

Culture is the tacit agreement to let the means of subsistence disappear behind the purpose of existence. Civilization is the subordination of the latter to the former.

-Karl Kraus

Squeeze human nature into the straitjacket of criminal justice and crime will appear.

-Karl Kraus

Corruption is worse than prostitution. The latter might endanger the morals of an individual, the former invariably endangers the morals of the entire country.

-Karl Kraus

My unconscious knows more about the consciousness of the psychologist than his consciousness knows about my unconscious.

-Karl Kraus

A child learns to discard his ideals, whereas a grown-up never wears out his short pants.

-Karl Kraus

The esthete stands in the same relation to beauty as the pornographer stands to love, and the politician stands to life.

-Karl Kraus

Children play soldier. That makes sense. But why do soldiers play children?

-Karl Kraus

An aphorism can never be the whole truth; it is either a half-truth or a truth-and-a-half.

-Karl Kraus

Experiences are savings which a miser puts aside. Wisdom is an inheritance which a wastrel cannot exhaust.

-Karl Kraus

War: first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied that he too is suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost.

-Karl Kraus

How is the world ruled and led to war? Diplomats lie to journalists and believe these lies when they see them in print.

-Karl Kraus

The closer the look one takes at a word, the greater distance from which it looks back.

-Karl Kraus

This is something that I cannot get over -- that a whole line could be written by half a man, that a work could be built on the quicksand of a character.

-Karl Kraus

A writer is someone who can make a riddle out of an answer.

-Karl Kraus



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