

PREFACE

There are countless books of quotations available in the market – good, bad and indifferent. Some writers find it quite easy and convenient to put together whatever quotations they lay their hands on, without realizing their value, relevance and representativeness. Some books are so voluminous that they put the general reader off. Some are concerned with a particular subject, theme or field; for example, humour, satire, love or life. Some are dedicated entirely to one author, poet or dramatist. These books may have their use for some special groups of readers. What the present book purports to be is a concise collection of meaningful and thought-provoking quotations on the variegated aspects of human life and the world.

It is not humanly possible to bring out a comprehensive, exhaustive and all-inclusive book of quotations. One has to select and choose. And there is no guarantee that any kind of selection will be without any flaws or shortcomings. One can only make the best possible efforts.

Why do we need a book of quotations? Down the ages, rulers, kings and dictators, thinkers, philosophers and psychologists, scientists, historians and researchers, travellers, adventurers and explorers, divines, theologians and prophets, leaders, politicians and statesmen and writers, poets and playwrights, in all parts of the world, have given us the essence of their experiences, the pearls of wisdom, from which we can benefit immensely. Their observations are a historical record of the thought, culture and ethos of their times. They provoke us to think, to imagine, to philosophize. They stimulate us to attempt something new and different. They add to our knowledge and broaden the horizons of our mind. They are pleasurable in themselves. They are valuable and useful for students, writers and general readers.

The criterion for selecting the quotations for the present book has been quite simple. It has been noted that the quotations have a direct bearing on the topic under which they

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have been placed. They are as brief as possible. Brevity, however, has not been allowed to obfuscate the sense of what a particular author wants to suggest. They increase our knowledge, afford us pleasure and awaken our interest. Irrelevant, dull and unnecessarily lengthy quotations have not been included. The temptation to make the book voluminous has been scrupulously resisted.

The reader should keep in mind that the quotations should be read, understood and utilized in the spirit in which they have been written by their creators. Some quotations are factual; they try to explain a particular aspect of life or a specific point of view. Reflective quotations compel you to ponder, deliberate and decide. Humorous quotations are obviously meant to tickle you, but remember, they too are food for thought. The same holds good in the case of satirical remarks; they mock people, ideas and institutions, but they contain some deep truth. A paradox is a statement containing opposite ideas that make it seem absurd or unlikely, although it is or may be true. Paradoxical quotations are quite amusing and present some fact or the other in a brilliant manner. Some quotations contain oxymorons. An oxymoron is a rhetorical figure of speech in which contradictory terms are used together, often for emphasis or effect. Aphorisms are pithy comments; they are very brief but highly meaningful. Poetic quotations have a charm of their own. Some observations have become proverbial

Though the source of most of the quotations is very well-known, the authenticity of some of them cannot be unquestionably affirmed. Sometimes there is some uncertainty about the period, time and date when a particular remark was made. Sometimes the source of a saying is not known. One particular quotation may be attributed to two or more authors. The exact words of a quotation may vary in different books, particularly when the statement was made in a language other than English. A French sentence, for example, can be translated into English in different ways. Sometimes, the reader will find that the same quotation has been repeated at different places. This is because the quotation is relevant to all the topics under which it has been placed.

All the quotations have been selected for their worth and

merit, irrespective of the fact whether their authors are famous and well-known or rather obscure and unknown. Whether an author is important, renowned or historically important, depends on our own knowledge, understanding and interest. Sometimes, lesser known people make a very interesting observation, which is worth quoting. And great persons are apt to say something that looks rather dull and plain. Similarly, not all comments are perspicuous, crystal clear and intelligible. Sometimes, a quotation taken from some speech, essay or article contains periphrastic phrases and expressions and long-winded sentences, resulting in confusion and ambiguity. These factors have been taken into account.

It does not, however, mean that all such observations have been excluded. Sometimes a meaningful statement or passage, howsoever long, has been considered worthy of being included. It also does not follow that all relevant, striking and interesting quotations have invariably found a place in this book. Omissions, sometimes quite serious, cannot altogether be ruled out. A compiler works under many constraints. His memory cannot be infallible and his sources cannot be absolute, thorough and unlimited.

Quotations should not be taken as irrefutable conclusions on a particular subject, topic or issue. They are the subjective views, personal expressions or witty statements of those who have written them. The reader will frequently find contradictory opinions of various thinkers on any given matter. Some swear by religion while others consider it pernicious. Some extol the virtues of democracy while others find it totally flawed. Some realize the importance of history while others find it nothing but falsehood. Some find honesty to be an enviable quality, others ridicule it as being impractical and worthless.

All quotations will, however, compel you to think. They will not only amuse you, they will enhance your understanding of human life. Life is too complex to be reduced to a simple definition; and all viewpoints should, therefore, be pondered over. The more you interact with great minds of all ages, the more enriched you will feel intellectually, morally and spiritually. You will gain a different perspective every time you look at things afresh.

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There have been great thinkers and prolific writers who have seen life from close quarters and who have commented, very wisely, on its various facets. Their books are a treasure trove of guiding principles, benchmarks and beacons that lead ordinary mortals through the labyrinthine, tortuous and baffling course of life successfully. Shakespeare is universally acknowledged as the greatest poet-dramatist of all times. He is naturally the most oft-quoted of all. Great poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Browning and Tennyson have contributed immensely to our literary heritage. There have been great ancient thinkers and inimitable modern poets, writers and philosophers. In fact, every age has produced eminent writers of all hues. Mavericks like Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, G K Chesterton and many others have enriched our life. There are some who have given us practical lessons on the affairs of the world. The writings of Bacon, Emerson, Thomas Jefferson, La Rochefoucauld, Molière, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain and Voltaire, to name only a few of them, are singularly enjoyable, instructive and pragmatic. All these will always find a place in every book of quotations.

As far as possible, full and complete names of the authors have been given. If, for some reason, this is not done, no confusion can possibly be created, for the surname or the pseudonym given is too well-known.

It is hoped that the book will serve its desired purpose and the readers will benefit from it in the fullest possible measure. All constructive suggestions for the improvement of the book will be gratefully acknowledged and, depending upon their feasibility, will be implemented in the ensuing editions.

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LIST OF SUBJECTS

A

Ability	Absence	Absurdity	Accidents
Achievement	Actions	Actors	Addiction
Admiration	Adversity	Advertising	Advice
Age	Agreement	Alcohol	Ambassador
Ambition	America	Ancestry	Anger
Animals	Apathy	Apology	Appearances
Architecture	Argument	Aristocracy	Army
Arrogance	Art	Assassination	Astronomy
Atheism	Atom	Audiences	Authority
Autobiography			

B

Babies	Bachelors	Beauty	Beginning
Behaviour	Belief	(The) Bible	Biography
Birth	Blacks	Blessings	Blindness
Body	Boldness	Books	Bores
Borrowing	Brevity	Brotherhood	Bureaucracy
Business			

C

Canada	Capitalism	Cards	Caution
Censorship	Change	Character	Charity
Charm	Children	Christianity	(The) Church
Cinema	Cities	Citizens	Civilization
Civil Rights	Classes	Committees	Communication
Communism	Companions	Comparisons	Competence
Conceit	Conformity	Conscience	Conservatives
Consistency	Conversation	Countryside	Courage
Courtesy	Creativity	Credulity	Creed
Crime (and Punishment)		Criticism	Cruelty
Culture	Curiosity	Curses	Custom

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Cynicism

D

Dance	Danger	Day	Death
Deception	Defeat	Democracy	Desire
Despair	Destiny	Determination	
Devil	Diaries	Dictators	Difference
Dignity	Diplomacy	Disappointment	
Discontent	Discovery	Disease	Disillusionment
Distance	Distrust	Doctors	Dogs
Doing	Doubt	Drama	Dreams
Drinking	Drugs	Duty	

E

(The) Earth	(The) East	Eating	
Ecology / Environment		Economics	Editors
Education	Effort	Egoism / Egotism	
Emotion	Endurance	Enemies	England / English
Enthusiasm	Envy	Equality	Error
Escape	Eternity	Ethics and Morality	
Evening	Evidence	Evil	Evolution
Examinations	Example	Excellence	Excess
Excuses	Execution	Existence	Expectation
Expediency	Experience	Experts	Eyes

F

Facts	Failure	Faith	Falsehood
Fame	Familiarity	Family	Fanaticism
Fascism	Fashion	Faults	Fear
Feminism	First Impressions		Flattery
Flowers	Foolishness	Force	Forgiveness
Fortune	France	Frankness	Freedom
French Revolution		Friendship	Future

G

Gambling / Games		Garden	Generalizations
Generations	Generosity	Genetics / Heredity	
Genius and Talent		Germany	Giving / Gifts

Glory	God / Gods	Goodness	Governments
Grace	Greatness	Greece	Greed
Growth	Guilt	Guns	

H

Habits	Happiness	Haste	Hatred
Health	Heart	Heaven and Hell	
Hedonism	Heroism	History	Home
Honesty	Honour	Hope	Hospitality
Humanity	Humility	Humour	Husbands
Hypocrisy			

I

Ideas and Ideals		Idleness	Ignorance
Illness	Imagination	Immortality	Imprisonment
Indecision	Individuality	Innocence	Innovation
Institutions	Insults	Integrity	Intellect
Introduction	Invention	Ireland	Italy

J

The Japanese	Jealousy	Jerusalem	Jews
Journalism	Judgement	Jury	Justice

K

Killing	Kindness	Knowledge
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L

Labour	Language	Last Words	Laughter
Law and Lawyers		Leadership	Learning
Leisure and Retirement		Liberals	Life
Literature	Logic	London	Loneliness
Los Angeles	Love	Loyalty	Luxury
Lying			

M

Madness	Majority / Minority	Mankind
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Manners	March	Marriage	Martyrdom
Materialism	Mathematics	May	(The) Media
Medicine	Mediocrity	Melancholy	Memory
Mid-life Crisis		Middle Class	
(The) Military / Militarism		Mind	Misanthropy
Mistakes	Modern Times		Modesty
Money	Moon	Morning	Motives
Murder	Music	Mysticism	

N

Names	Nationalism	Nature	Neighbours
New Year	New York	Night	Nonsense
Nostalgia	Novels	Novel Truths	November
	Nuclear Weapons		

O

Obedience	Obituaries	Ocean	Old Age
Opinions	Opportunity	Optimism / Pessimism	
Oratory	Originality		

P

Pacifism	Painting	Parenthood	
Parapsychology / Precognition			Paris
Parting	Passion	Past	Patience
Patriotism	People	Perfection	
Perseverance and Persistence			
Philosophy and Philosophers			
Physics and Cosmology		Plagiarism	Plays
Pleasure and Pain		Poetry and Poets	
Politics	Posterity	Poverty	Power
Praise	Prayer	Prejudice	Present
Pride and Vanity		Principles	Problems
Procrastination		Progress	Property
Prudence		Psychiatry / Psychoanalysis	

Q

Questions Quotations

R

Racism	Radicals	Reading	
Reality and Illusion		Reason	Reform
Regret	Religion	Responsibility	
Revenge	Revolution / Rebellion		Riches
Rights	Rome	Royalty	
Rules	Russia		Ruin

S

Saints	Sayings	Scepticism	Science
Scotland	Seasons	Security	Self
Service	Sex	Sexes	Shakespeare
Silence	Simplicity	Sin	Sky
Skylark	Sleep	Small Things	Smoking
Snow	Society	Solitude	Sorrow
Soul	Space	Speech	Sports
Spring	State	Statistics	Strength
Stubbornness		Stupidity	Style
Subjectivity	Success	Suffering	Suicide
Summer	Superiority	Supernatural	Superstition
Survival	Switzerland	Sympathy	

T

Taste	Taxation	Teaching	Technology
Temptation	Theatre	Thinking and Thought	
Tiger	Time	Tolerance	Transience
Translation	Travel	Trees	Triviality
Trouble	Trust / Mistrust		Truth
Tyranny and Tyrants			

U

Understanding
Urbanization

Unity

Universe

V

Value Values
Verbosity Victory
Virtue and Vice
Vocation

Variety Venice
Violence and Force
Visions and Visionaries

W

War and Peace
Winter Wisdom
Wonder Words
Writing and Writers

Wealth Weather
Wit Women
Work

Y

Yesterday Yielding Youth

Z

Zeal Zoos

A

ABILITY

Natural abilities are like natural plants that need pruning by study.

— **Francis Bacon**

Natural ability without education has more often raised a man to glory and virtue than education without natural ability.

— **Cicero**

A man may be so much of everything that he is nothing of anything.

— **Samuel Johnson**

Since we cannot know all that is to be known of everything, we ought to know a little about everything.

— **Blaise Pascal**

Men take only their needs into consideration — never their abilities.

— **Napoleon Bonaparte**

People are always ready to admit a man's ability after he gets there.

— **Bob Edwards**

There is something that is much more scarce, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability.

— **Robert Half**

We all have ability. The difference is how we use it.

— **Stevie Wonder**

Executive ability is deciding quickly and getting somebody else to do the work.

— **John G. Pollard**

The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators.

— **Edward Gibbon**

He is able who thinks he is able.

— **The Buddha**

If we really did all the things we were capable of, we would actually be astounded.

— **Thomas Edison**

Ability is of little account without opportunity.

— **Napoleon Bonaparte**

A skill, like an appetite, demands to be used; once you have a skill you are absolutely energized.

— **Eric Hoffer**

Ability will never catch up with the demand for it.

— **Malcolm S Forbes**

Big jobs usually go to the men who prove their ability to outgrow small ones.

— **Emerson**

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

— **Theodore Roosevelt**