

Say Hello to
your very own book of
Quotes



QuotationsBook

Quotes by Chesterfield, Lord

from QuotationsBook.com

The Earls of Chesterfield were an aristocratic family from Derbyshire, England. Their ancestral seat is Bretby Hall at Bretby, Derbyshire, and their family name is "Stanhope". Upon the death of the thirteenth Earl, the title became extinct, as no more male descendants of the first Earl were living.

Advice is seldom welcome; and those who want it the most always like it the least.

- Chesterfield, Lord

In matters of religion and matrimony I never give any advice; because I will not have anybody's torments in this world or the next laid to my charge.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The heart never grows better by age; I fear rather worse, always harder. A young liar will be an old one, and a young knave will only be a greater knave as he grows older.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Be wiser than other people, if you can; but do not tell them so.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The only solid and lasting peace between a man and his wife is, doubtless, a separation.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Any affectation whatsoever in dress implies, in my mind, a flaw in the understanding.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The difference between a man of sense and a fop is that the fop values himself upon his dress; and the man of sense laughs at it, at the same time he knows he must not neglect it.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Our own self-love draws a thick veil between us and our faults.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Let your enemies be disarmed by the gentleness of your manner, but at the same time let them feel, the steadiness of your resentment.

- Chesterfield, Lord

There is a sort of veteran woman of condition, who, having lived always in the grand monde, and having possibly had some gallantries, together with the experience of five and twenty or thirty years, form a young fellow better than all the rules that can be given him. Wherever you go, make some of those women your friends; which a very little matter will do. Ask their advice, tell them your doubts or difficulties as to your behavior; but take great care not to drop one word of their experience; for experience implies age, and the suspicion of age, no woman, let her be ever so old, ever forgives.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed.

- Chesterfield, Lord

When a person is in fashion, all they do is right.

- Chesterfield, Lord

As fathers commonly go, it is seldom a misfortune to be fatherless; and considering the general run of sons, as seldom a misfortune to be childless.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Firmness of purpose is one of the most necessary sinews of character, and one of the best instruments of success. Without it genius wastes its efforts in a maze of inconsistencies.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Women who are either indisputably beautiful, or indisputably ugly, are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces: for every woman who is not absolutely ugly, thinks herself handsome.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Little, vicious minds abound with anger and revenge, and are incapable of feeling the pleasure of forgiving their enemies.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Wrongs are often forgiven, but contempt never is. Our pride remembers it forever. It implies a discovery of weakness, which we are more careful to conceal than a crime.

Many a man will confess his crimes to a friend; but I never knew a man that would tell his silly weaknesses to his most intimate one.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Most people enjoy the inferiority of their best friends.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Horse-play, romping, frequent and loud fits of laughter, jokes, and indiscriminate familiarity, will sink both merit and knowledge into a degree of contempt. They compose at most a merry fellow; and a merry fellow was never yet a respectable man.

- Chesterfield, Lord

A constant smirk upon the face, and a whiffing activity of the body, are strong indications of futility.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The scholar without good breeding is a nitpicker; the philosopher a cynic; the soldier a brute and everyone else disagreeable.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Good breeding is the result of good sense, some good nature, and a little self-denial for the sake of others.

- Chesterfield, Lord

To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Great merit, or great failings, will make you respected or despised; but trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done or neglected, will make you either liked or disliked in the general run of the world.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Whoever is admitted or sought for, in company, upon any other account than that of his merit and manners, is never respected there, but only made use of. We will have such-a-one, for he sings prettily; we will invite such-a-one to a ball, for he dances well; we will have such-a-one at supper, for he is always joking and laughing; we will ask another because he plays deep at all games, or because he can drink a great deal. These are all vilifying distinctions, mortifying preferences, and exclude all ideas of esteem and regard. Whoever is had (as it is called) in company for the sake of any one thing singly, is singly that thing, and will never be considered in any other light; consequently never respected, let his merits be what they will.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Men, as well as women, are much oftener led by their hearts than by their understandings.

- Chesterfield, Lord

I am convinced that a light supper, a good night's sleep, and a fine morning, have sometimes made a hero of the same man, who, by an indigestion, a restless night, and rainy morning, would have proved a coward.

- Chesterfield, Lord

History is but a confused heap of facts.

- Chesterfield, Lord

I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetites of the brute may survive.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Inferiority is what you enjoy in your best friends.

- Chesterfield, Lord

There is nothing that people bear more impatiently, or forgive less, than contempt: and an injury is much sooner forgotten than an insult.

- Chesterfield, Lord

If ever a man and his wife, or a man and his mistress, who pass nights as well as days together, absolutely lay aside all good breeding, their intimacy will soon degenerate into a coarse familiarity, infallibly productive of contempt or disgust.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Knowledge may give weight, but accomplishments give luster, and many more people see than weigh.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Learning is acquired by reading books, but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various facets of them.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Observe it, the vulgar often laugh, but never smile, whereas well-bred people often smile, and seldom or never laugh. A witty thing never excited laughter, it pleases only the mind

and never distorts the countenance.

- Chesterfield, Lord

In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Wear your learning like a watch and do not pull it out merely to show you have it. If you are asked for the time, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly unasked.

- Chesterfield, Lord

One should always think of what one is about: when one is learning, one should not think of play: and when one is at play, one should not think of one's learning.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket: and do not merely pull it out and strike it; merely to show that you have one.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Politeness is as much concerned in answering letters within a reasonable time, as it is in returning a bow, immediately.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Most maxim-mongers have preferred the prettiness to the justness of a thought, and the turn to the truth; but I have refused myself to everything that my own experience did not justify and confirm.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Speak of the moderns without contempt, and of the ancients without idolatry.

- Chesterfield, Lord

A man's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Manners must adorn knowledge, and smooth its way through the world.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Prepare yourself for the world, as the athletes used to do for their exercise; oil your mind and your manners, to give them the necessary suppleness and flexibility; strength alone will not do.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Ceremony is necessary as the outwork and defense of manners.

- Chesterfield, Lord

A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he

does with a sprightly and forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters.

- Chesterfield, Lord

I find, by experience, that the mind and the body are more than married, for they are most intimately united; and when one suffers, the other sympathizes.

- Chesterfield, Lord

A weak mind is like a microscope, which magnifies trifling things, but cannot receive great ones.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Patience is the most necessary quality for business, many a man would rather you heard his story than grant his request.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable. However, they who aim at it, and persevere, will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Persist and persevere, and you will find most things that are attainable, possible.

- Chesterfield, Lord

If you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

- Chesterfield, Lord

He makes people pleased with him by making them first pleased with themselves.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Pleasure is a necessary reciprocal. No one feels, who does not at the same time give it.

To be pleased, one must please. What pleases you in others, will in general please them in you.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Our prejudices are our mistresses; reason is at best our wife, very often heard indeed, but seldom minded.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no delay, no procrastination; never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

- Chesterfield, Lord

If you can once engage people's pride, love, pity, ambition (or whatever is their prevailing passion) on your side, you need not fear what their reason can do against you.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Lord Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known.

- Chesterfield, Lord

It is commonly said that ridicule is the best test of truth; for that it will not stick where it is not just. I deny it. A truth learned in a certain light, and attacked in certain words, by men of wit and humor, may, and often doth, become ridiculous, at least so far, that the truth is only remembered and repeated for the sake of the ridicule.

- Chesterfield, Lord

In the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Most people have ears, but few have judgment; tickle those ears, and depend upon it, you will catch those judgments, such as they are.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill received, as your

person, though ever so well-proportioned, would if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Men will not believe because they will not broaden their minds.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Let blockheads read what blockheads wrote.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Buy good books, and read them; the best books are the commonest, and the last editions are always the best, if the editors are not blockheads.

- Chesterfield, Lord

No man tastes pleasures truly, who does not earn them by previous business; and few people do business well, who do nothing else.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your word.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Character must be kept bright as well as clean.

- Chesterfield, Lord

You must look into people, as well as at them.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The world can doubtless never be well known by theory: practice is absolutely necessary; but surely it is of great use to a young man, before he sets out for that country, full of mazes, windings, and turnings, to have at least a general map of it, made by some experienced traveler.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Take care in your minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves.

- Chesterfield, Lord

I recommend you to take care of the minutes, for the hours will take care of themselves.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Let them show me a cottage where there are not the same vices of which they accuse the courts.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Vice, in its true light, is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight; and would hardly ever

seduce us, if it did not at first wear the mask of some virtue.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Wit is so shining a quality that everybody admires it; most people aim at it, all people fear it, and few love it unless in themselves. A man must have a good share of wit himself to endure a great share of it in another.

- Chesterfield, Lord

A wise man will live as much within his wit as within his income.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The more one works, the more willing one is to work.

- Chesterfield, Lord

The world is a country which nobody ever yet knew by description; one must travel through it one's self to be acquainted with it.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Young men are apt to think themselves wise enough, as drunken men are apt to think themselves sober enough.

- Chesterfield, Lord

For my own part, I would rather be in company with a dead man than with an absent one; for if the dead man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt; whereas the absent one, silently indeed, but very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Take the tone of the company you are in.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Never hold anyone by the button or the hand in order to be heard out; for if people are unwilling to hear you, you had better hold your tongue than them.

- Chesterfield, Lord

Custom has made dancing sometimes necessary for a young man; therefore mind it while you learn it, that you may learn to do it well, and not be ridiculous, though in a ridiculous act.

- Chesterfield, Lord



QuotationsBook