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Quotes by Johnson, Samuel

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Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was an English critic, poet and essayist.

A fly may sting a stately horse and make him wince; but one is but an insect, and the other is a horse still.

- Johnson, Samuel

Adversity is the state in which man mostly easily becomes acquainted with himself, being especially free of admirers then.

- Johnson, Samuel

The trade of advertising is now so near perfection that it is not easy to propose any improvement. But as every art ought to be exercised in due subordination to the public good, I cannot but propose it as a moral question to these masters of the public ear, whether they do not sometimes play too wantonly with our passions.

- Johnson, Samuel

Promise, large promise, is the soul of an advertisement.

- Johnson, Samuel

The advice that is wanted is commonly not welcome and that which is not wanted,

evidently an effrontery.

- Johnson, Samuel

When I was as you are now, towering in the confidence of twenty-one, little did I suspect that I should be at forty-nine, what I now am.

- Johnson, Samuel

At seventy-seven it is time to be in earnest.

- Johnson, Samuel

Small debts are like small gun shot; they are rattling around us on all sides and one can scarcely escape being wounded. Large debts are like canons, they produce a loud noise, but are of little danger.

- Johnson, Samuel

I have always considered it as treason against the great republic of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him.

- Johnson, Samuel

Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment.

- Johnson, Samuel

Some desire is necessary to keep life in motion, and he whose real wants are supplied

must admit those of fancy.

- Johnson, Samuel

If your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance.

- Johnson, Samuel

Dictionaries are like watches; the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to be quite true.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few.

- Johnson, Samuel

Lexicographer: a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.

- Johnson, Samuel

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance.

- Johnson, Samuel

Disappointment, when it involves neither shame nor loss, is as good as success; for it supplies as many images to the mind, and as many topics to the tongue.

- Johnson, Samuel

No man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation.

- Johnson, Samuel

Disease generally begins that equality which death completes.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither the sooner in a gray one.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him great.

- Johnson, Samuel

Read your own compositions, and when you meet a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.

- Johnson, Samuel

What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.

- Johnson, Samuel

A am a great friend of public amusements, they keep people from vice.

- Johnson, Samuel

The love of life is necessary to the vigorous prosecution of any undertaking.

- Johnson, Samuel

His scorn of the great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises.

- Johnson, Samuel

In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath.

- Johnson, Samuel

Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is not true that people are naturally equal for no two people can be together for even a half an hour without one acquiring an evident superiority over the other.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is better that some should be unhappy than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality.

- Johnson, Samuel

They teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master.

- Johnson, Samuel

Exercise is labor without weariness.

- Johnson, Samuel

I know not anything more pleasant, or more instructive, than to compare experience with expectation, or to register from time to time the difference between idea and reality. It is by this kind of observation that we grow daily less liable to be disappointed.

- Johnson, Samuel

As to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors; nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that pursues fame with just claims, trusts his happiness to the winds; but he that endeavors after it by false merit, has to fear, not only the violence of the storm, but the leaks of his vessel.

- Johnson, Samuel

To get a name can happen but to few; it is one of the few things that cannot be brought. It is the free gift of mankind, which must be deserved before it will be granted, and is at last unwillingly bestowed.

- Johnson, Samuel

Parents and children seldom act in concert: each child endeavors to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents, and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children.

- Johnson, Samuel

Shame arises from the fear of men, conscience from the fear of God.

- Johnson, Samuel

Fear is implanted in us as a preservative from evil; but its duty, like that of other passions, is not to overbear reason, but to assist it. It should not be suffered to tyrannize

- Johnson, Samuel

Fly fishing may be a very pleasant amusement; but angling or float fishing I can only compare to a stick and a string, with a worm at one end and a fool at the other.

- Johnson, Samuel

Just praise is only a debt, but flattery is a present.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nothing flatters a man as much as the happiness of his wife; he is always proud of himself as the source of it.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are few things that we so unwillingly give up, even in advanced age, as the supposition that we still have the power of ingratiating ourselves with the fair sex.

- Johnson, Samuel

When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.

- Johnson, Samuel

Extended empires are like expanded gold, exchanging solid strength for feeble splendor.

- Johnson, Samuel

A man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything than he does of his dinner.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who does not mind his belly, will hardly mind anything else.

- Johnson, Samuel

All theory is against freedom of the will; all experience for it.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test.

- Johnson, Samuel

If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone; one should keep his friendships in constant repair.

- Johnson, Samuel

I look upon every day to be lost, in which I do not make a new acquaintance.

- Johnson, Samuel

Never, my dear Sir, do you take it into your head that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem; I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety.

- Johnson, Samuel

The endearing elegance of female friendship.

- Johnson, Samuel

To let friendship die away by negligence and silence is certainly not wise. It is voluntarily to throw away one of the greatest comforts of the weary pilgrimage.

- Johnson, Samuel

The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal.

- Johnson, Samuel

The future is purchased by the present.

- Johnson, Samuel

Tomorrow is an old deceiver, and his cheat never grows stale.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsociable man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good.

- Johnson, Samuel

Our tastes greatly alter. The lad does not care for the child's rattle, and the old man does not care for the young man's whore.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, he throws away his money without thought and without merit. I do not call a tree generous that sheds its fruit at every breeze.

- Johnson, Samuel

Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.

- Johnson, Samuel

A man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated, has not the art of getting drunk.

- Johnson, Samuel

There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking; as there are fruits that are not good until they are rotten.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that fails in his endeavors after wealth or power will not long retain either honesty or

courage.

- Johnson, Samuel

To be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition, the end to which every enterprise and labor tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging.

- Johnson, Samuel

I am willing to love all mankind, except an American.

- Johnson, Samuel

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

- Johnson, Samuel

The Supreme end of education is expert discernment in all things -- the power to tell the good from the bad, the genuine from the counterfeit, and to prefer the good and the genuine to the bad and the counterfeit.

- Johnson, Samuel

I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It

is of no moment to the happiness of an individual.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are minds so impatient of inferiority that their gratitude is a species of revenge, and they return benefits, not because recompense is a pleasure, but because obligation is a pain.

- Johnson, Samuel

He was dull in a new way, and that made many think him great.

- Johnson, Samuel

No one ever became great by imitation.

- Johnson, Samuel

The superiority of some men is merely local. They are great because their associates are little.

- Johnson, Samuel

Avarice is generally the last passion of those lives of which the first part has been squandered in pleasure, and the second devoted to ambition. He that sinks under the fatigue of getting wealth, lulls his age with the milder business of saving it.

- Johnson, Samuel

While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till grief be digested, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it.

- Johnson, Samuel

Where grief is fresh, any attempt to divert it only irritates.

- Johnson, Samuel

We are inclined to believe those whom we don not know because they have never deceived us.

- Johnson, Samuel

The habit of looking on the best side of every event is worth more than a thousand pounds a years.

- Johnson, Samuel

The chains of habit are generally too week to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, that all who are happy, are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally satisfied, but not equally happy. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness.

- Johnson, Samuel

To strive with difficulties, and to conquer them, is the highest human felicity.

- Johnson, Samuel

We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found; and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself.

- Johnson, Samuel

Happiness is not a state to arrive at, rather, a manner of traveling.

- Johnson, Samuel

For who is pleased with himself.

- Johnson, Samuel

Claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy.

- Johnson, Samuel

Great abilities are not requisite for an Historian; for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any degree; only about as much as is used in the lowest kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and coloring, will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is, indeed, at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honor, and fictitious benevolence.

- Johnson, Samuel

No money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction.

- Johnson, Samuel

The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure, but from hope to hope.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nothing is more hopeless than a scheme of merriment.

- Johnson, Samuel

Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain; and expectations improperly indulged must end in disappointment.

- Johnson, Samuel

I hate mankind, for I think of myself as one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am.

- Johnson, Samuel

I am a great friend to public amusements, for they keep the people from vice.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is very strange, and very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, a man may be so much of everything, that he is nothing of anything.

- Johnson, Samuel

As peace is the end of war, so to be idle is the ultimate purpose of the busy.

- Johnson, Samuel

Perhaps man is the only being that can properly be called idle.

- Johnson, Samuel

Were it not for imagination a man would be as happy in arms of a chambermaid as of a duchess.

- Johnson, Samuel

Almost all absurdity of conduct arises from the imitation of those who we cannot

resemble.

- Johnson, Samuel

No man was ever great by imitation.

- Johnson, Samuel

I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

- Johnson, Samuel

So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other.

- Johnson, Samuel

No man is much regarded by the rest of the world. He that considers how little he dwells upon the condition of others, will learn how little the attention of others is attracted by himself. While we see multitudes passing before us, of whom perhaps not one appears to deserve our notice or excites our sympathy, we should remember, that we likewise are lost in the same throng, that the eye which happens to glance upon us is turned in a moment on him that follows us, and that the utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear is to fill a vacant hour with prattle, and be forgotten.

- Johnson, Samuel

Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is easy to talk of sitting at home contented, when others are seeing or making shows. But not to have been where it is supposed, and seldom supposed falsely, that all would go if they could; to be able to say nothing when everyone is talking; to have no opinion when everyone is judging; to hear exclamations of rapture without power to depress; to listen to falsehoods without right to contradict, is, after all, a state of temporary inferiority, in which the mind is rather hardened by stubbornness, than supported by fortitude. If the world be worth winning let us enjoy it, if it is to be despised let us despise it by conviction. But the world is not to be despised but as it is compared with something better.

- Johnson, Samuel

I gleaned jests at home from obsolete farces.

- Johnson, Samuel

A Judge may be a farmer; but he is not to geld his own pigs. A Judge may play a little at cards for his own amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or chuck farthing in the Piazza.

- Johnson, Samuel

To cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life.

- Johnson, Samuel

To act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite human beings, Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive.

- Johnson, Samuel

I have found men to be more kind than I expected, and less just.

- Johnson, Samuel

The next best thing to knowing something is knowing where to find it.

- Johnson, Samuel

More knowledge may be gained of a man's real character by a short conversation with one of his servants than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree and ended with his funeral.

- Johnson, Samuel

Man is not weak; knowledge is more than equivalent to force.

- Johnson, Samuel

Knowledge is of two kinds: We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information about it.

- Johnson, Samuel

Knowledge always demands increase; it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but will afterwards always propagate itself.

- Johnson, Samuel

Knowledge is more than equivalent to force.

- Johnson, Samuel

Excellence in any department can be attained only by the labor of a lifetime; it is not to be purchased at a lesser price.

- Johnson, Samuel

Labor, if it were not necessary for existence, would be indispensable for the happiness of man.

- Johnson, Samuel

Language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas.

- Johnson, Samuel

I am always sorry when any language is lost, because languages are the pedigrees of nations.

- Johnson, Samuel

Language is the dress of thought.

- Johnson, Samuel

What provokes your risibility, Sir? Have I said anything that you understand? Then I ask pardon of the rest of the company.

- Johnson, Samuel

Lawyers know life practically. A bookish man should always have them to converse with.

- Johnson, Samuel

I would be loath to speak ill of any person who I do not know deserves it, but I am afraid he is an attorney.

- Johnson, Samuel

Turn on the prudent and thy heedful eyes. Observe her labors, sluggard, and be wise.

- Johnson, Samuel

Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal.

- Johnson, Samuel

Money and time are the heaviest burdens of life, and the unhappiest of all mortals are those who have more of either than they know how to use.

- Johnson, Samuel

In a man's letters you know, Madam, his soul lies naked, his letters are only the mirror of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process.

Nothing is inverted, nothing distorted, you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives.

- Johnson, Samuel

A short letter to a distant friend is, in my opinion, an insult like that of a slight bow or cursory salutation -- a proof of unwillingness to do much, even where there is a necessity of doing something.

- Johnson, Samuel

No place affords a more striking conviction of the vanity of human hopes than a public library.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that embarks on the voyage of life will always wish to advance rather by the impulse of the wind than the strokes of the oar; and many fold in their passage; while they lie waiting for the gale.

- Johnson, Samuel

We love to expect, and when expectation is either disappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting.

- Johnson, Samuel

Few enterprises of great labor or hazard would be undertaken if we had not the power of magnifying the advantages we expect from them.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nothing is more common than mutual dislike, where mutual approbation is particularly expected.

- Johnson, Samuel

The applause of a single human being is of great consequence.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea.

- Johnson, Samuel

No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned. A man in a jail has more room, better food and commonly better company.

- Johnson, Samuel

Love is the wisdom of the fool and the folly of the wise.

- Johnson, Samuel

By taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is not from reason and prudence that people marry, but from inclination.

- Johnson, Samuel

Marriage is the best state for man in general, and every man is a worst man in proportion to the level he is unfit for marriage.

- Johnson, Samuel

There is, indeed, nothing that so much seduces reason from vigilance, as the thought of passing life with an amiable woman.

- Johnson, Samuel

Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.

- Johnson, Samuel

I would advise you Sir, to study algebra, if you are not already an adept in it: your head would be less muddy, and you will leave off tormenting your neighbors about paper and packthread, while we all live together in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow.

- Johnson, Samuel

Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking.

- Johnson, Samuel

The true art of memory is the art of attention.

- Johnson, Samuel

What is read twice is usually remembered more than what is once written.

- Johnson, Samuel

Men know that women are an over-match for them, and therefore they choose the weakest or most ignorant. If they did not think so, they never could be afraid of women knowing as much as themselves.

- Johnson, Samuel

The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are few minds to which tyranny is not delightful.

- Johnson, Samuel

Do not discourage your children from hoarding, if they have a taste to it; whoever lays up his penny rather than part with it for a cake, at least is not the slave of gross appetite; and shows besides a preference always to be esteemed, of the future to the present moment.

- Johnson, Samuel

Count on it, if a person talks of their misfortune, there is something in it that is not disagreeable to them.

- Johnson, Samuel

That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one.

- Johnson, Samuel

Whatever you have spend less.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money.

- Johnson, Samuel

Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair, the midnight murderer bursts the faithless bar; invades the sacred hour of silent rest and leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast.

- Johnson, Samuel

Difficult do you call it, Sir? I wish it were impossible.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is the only sensual pleasure without vice.

- Johnson, Samuel

The Irish are a fair people: They never speak well of one another.

- Johnson, Samuel

The noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England.

- Johnson, Samuel

Much may be made of a Scotchman, if he be caught young.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that thinks he can afford to be negligent is not far from being poor.

- Johnson, Samuel

Whoever thinks of going to bed before twelve o'clock is a scoundrel.

- Johnson, Samuel

The majority have no other reason for their opinions than that they are the fashion.

- Johnson, Samuel

Your manuscript is both good and original; but the parts that are good are not original, and the parts that are original are not good.

- Johnson, Samuel

I found your essay to be good and original. However, the part that was original was not good and the part that was good was not original.

- Johnson, Samuel

Pleasure that is obtained by unreasonable and unsuitable cost, must always end in pain.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.

- Johnson, Samuel

Pain is less subject than pleasure to careless expression.

- Johnson, Samuel

In all evils which admit a remedy, impatience should be avoided, because it wastes the time and attention in complaints which, if properly applied, might remove the cause.

- Johnson, Samuel

Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

- Johnson, Samuel

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it.

- Johnson, Samuel

Patron: One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.

- Johnson, Samuel

Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.

- Johnson, Samuel

Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye.

- Johnson, Samuel

If I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying

many things to please him.

- Johnson, Samuel

If he really thinks there is no distinction between vice and virtue, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons.

- Johnson, Samuel

A wicked fellow is the most pious when he takes to it. He'll beat you all at piety.

- Johnson, Samuel

Piety practiced in solitude, like the flower that blooms in the desert, may give its fragrance to the winds of heaven, and delight those unbodied spirits that survey the works of God and the actions of men; but it bestows no assistance upon earthly beings, and however free from taints of impurity, yet wants the sacred splendor of beneficence.

- Johnson, Samuel

If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterwards.

- Johnson, Samuel

Many things difficult in design prove easy in performance.

- Johnson, Samuel

Life must be filled up, and the man who is not capable of intellectual pleasures must content himself with such as his senses can afford.

- Johnson, Samuel

Pleasure is very seldom found where it is sought. Our brightest blazes are commonly kindled by unexpected sparks.

- Johnson, Samuel

If pleasure was not followed by pain, who would forbear it?

- Johnson, Samuel

No man is a hypocrite in his pleasures.

- Johnson, Samuel

Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.

- Johnson, Samuel

No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.

- Johnson, Samuel

They that have grown old in a single state are generally found to be morose, fretful and

captious; tenacious of their own practices and maxims; soon offended by contradiction or negligence; and impatient of any association but with those that will watch their nod, and submit themselves to unlimited authority.

- Johnson, Samuel

Politics are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it.

- Johnson, Samuel

I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I know, than all the allegorical paintings they can show me in the world.

- Johnson, Samuel

This mournful truth is everywhere confessed, slow rises worth by poverty depressed.

- Johnson, Samuel

Poverty is often concealed in splendor, and often in extravagance. It is the task of many people to conceal their neediness from others. Consequently they support themselves by temporary means, and everyday is lost in contriving for tomorrow.

- Johnson, Samuel

Resolve not to be poor: whatever you have, spend less. Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable, and others extremely difficult.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is the great privilege of poverty to be happy and yet unenvied, to be healthy with physic, secure without a guard, and to obtain from the bounty of nature what the great and wealthy are compelled to procure by the help of art.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nature makes us poor only when we want necessaries, but custom gives the name of poverty to the want of superfluities.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who praises everybody, praises nobody.

- Johnson, Samuel

The real satisfaction which praise can afford, is when what is repeated aloud agrees with the whispers of conscience, by showing us that we have not endeavored to deserve well in vain.

- Johnson, Samuel

A continual feast of commendation is only to be obtained by merit or by wealth: many are therefore obliged to content themselves with single morsels, and recompense the infrequency of their enjoyment by excess and riot, whenever fortune sets the banquet before them.

- Johnson, Samuel

A man who is good enough to go to heaven is not good enough to be a clergyman.

- Johnson, Samuel

Go into the street, and give one man a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most.

- Johnson, Samuel

Prejudice not being founded on reason cannot be removed by argument.

- Johnson, Samuel

Pride is seldom delicate; it will please itself with very mean advantages.

- Johnson, Samuel

He may justly be numbered among the benefactors of mankind, who contracts the great rules of life into short sentences, that may early be impressed on the memory, and taught by frequent recollection to occur habitually to the mind.

- Johnson, Samuel

Prudence operates on life in the same manner as rule of composition; it produces vigilance rather than elevation; rather prevents loss than procures advantage; and often miscarriages, but seldom reaches either power or honor.

- Johnson, Samuel

Prudence is an attitude that keeps life safe, but does not often make it happy.

- Johnson, Samuel

Ah! Sir, a boy's being flogged is not so severe as a man's having the hiss of the world against him.

- Johnson, Samuel

Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen.

- Johnson, Samuel

Classical quotation is the parole of literary men all over the world.

- Johnson, Samuel

He is a benefactor of mankind who contracts the great rules of life into short sentences, that may be easily impressed on the memory, and so recur habitually to the mind.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language.

- Johnson, Samuel

Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time, of that time which never can return.

- Johnson, Samuel

If I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman.

- Johnson, Samuel

Why, Sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things.

- Johnson, Samuel

The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket; a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed.

- Johnson, Samuel

Attention and respect give pleasure, however late, or however useless. But they are not useless, when they are late, it is reasonable to rejoice, as the day declines, to find that it has been spent with the approbation of mankind.

- Johnson, Samuel

Treating your adversary with respect is giving him an advantage to which he is not entitled.

- Johnson, Samuel

A mere literary man is a dull man; a man who is solely a man of business is a selfish man;

but when literature and commerce are united, they make a respectable man.

- Johnson, Samuel

Don't think of retiring from the world until the world will be sorry that you retire. I hate a fellow whom pride or cowardice or laziness drive into a corner, and who does nothing when he is there but sit and growl. Let him come out as I do, and bark.

- Johnson, Samuel

Revenge is the act of passion, vengeance is an act of justice.

- Johnson, Samuel

What ever the motive for the insult, it is always best to overlook it; for folly doesn't deserve resentment, and malice is punished by neglect.

- Johnson, Samuel

And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that if the abuse be enormous, nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.

- Johnson, Samuel

Some people wave their dogmatic thinking until their own reason is entangled.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is better to live rich, than to die rich.

- Johnson, Samuel

One cause, which is not always observed, of the insufficiency of riches, is that they very seldom make their owner rich.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly income, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear, they have not value for what they spend.

- Johnson, Samuel

There mark what ill the scholar's life assails, toil, envy, want, and patron.

- Johnson, Samuel

I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life: I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestic tenderness.

- Johnson, Samuel

When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land.

- Johnson, Samuel

Where secrecy or mystery begins, vice or roguery is not far off.

- Johnson, Samuel

To keep your secret is wisdom; but to expect others to keep it is folly.

- Johnson, Samuel

The vanity of being known to be trusted with a secret is generally one of the chief motives to disclose it.

- Johnson, Samuel

Security will produce danger.

- Johnson, Samuel

That kind of life is most happy which affords us most opportunities of gaining our own esteem.

- Johnson, Samuel

Self-love is often rather arrogant than blind; it does not hide our faults from ourselves, but persuades us that they escape the notice of others.

- Johnson, Samuel

The highest panegyric, therefore, that private virtue can receive, is the praise of servants.

- Johnson, Samuel

Life will not bear refinement. You must do as other people do.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nay, Madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate.

- Johnson, Samuel

Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull.

- Johnson, Samuel

If a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written.

- Johnson, Samuel

Solitude is dangerous to reason, without being favorable to virtue. Remember that the solitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably superstitious, and possibly mad.

- Johnson, Samuel

If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sorrow is a kind of rust of the soul, which every new idea contributes in its passage to scour away. It is the putrefaction of stagnant life, and is remedied by exercise and motion.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sorrow is the rust of the soul and activity will cleanse and brighten it.

- Johnson, Samuel

There is no wisdom in useless and hopeless sorrow, but there is something in it so like virtue, that he who is wholly without it cannot be loved.

- Johnson, Samuel

When speculation has done its worst, two and two still make four.

- Johnson, Samuel

Round numbers are always false.

- Johnson, Samuel

It was his peculiar happiness that he scarcely ever found a stranger whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long without obliging him to become a stranger.

- Johnson, Samuel

The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal

subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book, which he has too diligently studied.

- Johnson, Samuel

The happiest part of a man's life is what he passes lying awake in bed in the morning.

- Johnson, Samuel

I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually; but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my natural inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the inertia and give elasticity to the muscles. We can heat the body, we can cool it; we can give it tension or relaxation; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nobody can write the life of a man but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him.

- Johnson, Samuel

The return of my birthday, if I remember it, fills me with thoughts which it seems to be the general care of humanity to escape.

- Johnson, Samuel

What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.

- Johnson, Samuel

Books that you carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are most useful after all.

- Johnson, Samuel

A man ought to read just as his inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both.

- Johnson, Samuel

Surely a long life must be somewhat tedious, since we are forced to call in so many trifling things to help rid us of our time, which will never return.

- Johnson, Samuel

Every other enjoyment malice may destroy; every other panegyric envy may withhold; but no human power can deprive the boaster of his own encomiums.

- Johnson, Samuel

Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience. You will find it a calamity.

- Johnson, Samuel

I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life: it generates kindness, and consolidates society.

- Johnson, Samuel

No member of society has the right to teach any doctrine contrary to what society holds to be true.

- Johnson, Samuel

It seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief.

- Johnson, Samuel

Such is the state of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing; when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted; let me see something tomorrow which I never saw before.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who waits to do a great deal of good at once, will never do anything.

- Johnson, Samuel

You are much surer that you are doing good when you pay money to those who work, as the recompense of their labor, than when you give money merely in charity.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are charms made only for distance admiration.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that is already corrupt is naturally suspicious, and he that becomes suspicious will quickly become corrupt.

- Johnson, Samuel

Suspicion is most often useless pain.

- Johnson, Samuel

Its proper use is to amuse the idle, and relax the studious, and dilute the full meals of those who cannot use exercise, and will not use abstinence.

- Johnson, Samuel

We love to overlook the boundaries which we do not wish to pass.

- Johnson, Samuel

The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give, for we that live to please, must please to live.

- Johnson, Samuel

There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible.

- Johnson, Samuel

When any calamity has been suffered, the first thing to be remembered is how much has been escaped.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that travels in theory has no inconveniences; he has shade and sunshine at his disposal, and wherever he alights finds tables of plenty and looks of gaiety. These ideas are indulged till the day of departure arrives, the chaise is called, and the progress of happiness begins. A few miles teach him the fallacies of imagination. The road is dusty, the air is sultry, the horses are sluggish. He longs for the time of dinner that he may eat and rest. The inn is crowded, his orders are neglected, and nothing remains but that he devour in haste what the cook has spoiled, and drive on in quest of better entertainment. He finds at night a more commodious house, but the best is always worse than he expected.

- Johnson, Samuel

In traveling, a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge.

- Johnson, Samuel

The use of traveling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are.

- Johnson, Samuel

Worth seeing? Yes; but not worth going to see.

- Johnson, Samuel

As the Spanish proverb says, He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him. So it is in travelling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge.

- Johnson, Samuel

Except during the nine months before he draws his first breath, no man manages his affairs as well as a tree. We are inclined to believe those whom we do not know because they have never deceived us.

- Johnson, Samuel

No government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny, that will keep us safe under every form of government.

- Johnson, Samuel

Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding.

- Johnson, Samuel

To be idle and to be poor have always been reproaches, and therefore every man endeavors with his utmost care to hide his poverty from others, and his idleness from himself.

- Johnson, Samuel

The world will never be long without some good reason to hate the unhappy; their real faults are immediately detected, and if those are not sufficient to sink them into infamy, an additional weight of calumny will be super added.

- Johnson, Samuel

Praise, like gold and diamonds, owes its value only to its scarcity.

- Johnson, Samuel

The longer we live the more we think and the higher the value we put on friendship and tenderness towards parents and friends.

- Johnson, Samuel

There is nothing so much seduces reason from vigilance as the thought of passing life with an amiable woman in marriage.

- Johnson, Samuel

The wise man applauds he who he thinks most virtuous; the rest of the world applauds

the wealthy.

- Johnson, Samuel

Virtue is too often merely local.

- Johnson, Samuel

Wickedness is always easier than virtue, for it takes a short cut to everything.

- Johnson, Samuel

A vow is a snare for sin.

- Johnson, Samuel

A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes, and fears, and interest; from the only companion with whom he has shared much good and evil; and with whom he could set his mind at liberty, to retrace the past or anticipate the future. The continuity of being is lacerated; the settled course of sentiment and action is stopped; and life stands suspended and motionless.

- Johnson, Samuel

Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man,

and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what had been locked up in frost.

- Johnson, Samuel

Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more pleasing to others... This is one of the disadvantages of wine, it makes a man mistake words for thoughts.

- Johnson, Samuel

He is no wise man who will quit a certainty for an uncertainty.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who has provoked the shaft of wit, cannot complain that he smarts from it.

- Johnson, Samuel

A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, than when his wife talks Greek.

- Johnson, Samuel

Nature has given women so much power that the law has very wisely given them little.

- Johnson, Samuel

All wonder is the effect of novelty on ignorance.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession.

- Johnson, Samuel

That observation which is called knowledge of the world will be found much more frequently to make men cunning than good.

- Johnson, Samuel

Composition is, for the most part, an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance, to which the mind is dragged by necessity or resolution, and from which the attention is every moment starting to more delightful amusements.

- Johnson, Samuel

I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much.

- Johnson, Samuel

In all pointed sentences, some degree of accuracy must be sacrificed to conciseness.

- Johnson, Samuel

The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn

over half a library to make one book.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is better to suffer wrong than to do it, and happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust.

- Johnson, Samuel

So different are the colors of life, as we look forward to the future, or backward to the past; and so different the opinions and sentiments which this contrariety of appearance naturally produces, that the conversation of the old and young ends generally with contempt or pity on either side.

- Johnson, Samuel

Youth enters the world with very happy prejudices in her own favor. She imagines herself not only certain of accomplishing every adventure, but of obtaining those rewards which the accomplishment may deserve. She is not easily persuaded to believe that the force of merit can be resisted by obstinacy and avarice, or its luster darkened by envy and malignity.

- Johnson, Samuel

Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity.

- Johnson, Samuel

This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive.

- Johnson, Samuel

Prepare for death, if here at night you roam, and sign your will before you sup from home.

- Johnson, Samuel

The wretched have no compassion, they can do good only from strong principles of duty.

- Johnson, Samuel

The usual fortune of complaint is to excite contempt more than pity.

- Johnson, Samuel

Depend upon it that if a man talks of his misfortunes there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him.

- Johnson, Samuel

Hunger is never delicate; they who are seldom gorged to the full with praise may be safely fed with gross compliments, for the appetite must be satisfied before it is disgusted.

- Johnson, Samuel

Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions.

- Johnson, Samuel

Those who attain to any excellence commonly spend life in some single pursuit, for

excellence is not often gained upon easier terms.

- Johnson, Samuel

Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings.

- Johnson, Samuel

There can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity.

- Johnson, Samuel

It generally happens that assurance keeps an even pace with ability.

- Johnson, Samuel

The luster of diamonds is invigorated by the interposition of darker bodies; the lights of a picture are created by the shades; the highest pleasure which nature has indulged to sensitive perception is that of rest after fatigue.

- Johnson, Samuel

The happiest conversation is that of which nothing is distinctly remembered but a general effect of pleasing impression.

- Johnson, Samuel

I never desire to converse with a man who has written more than he has read.

- Johnson, Samuel

No two men can be half an hour together but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other.

- Johnson, Samuel

Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing.

- Johnson, Samuel

He that would be superior to external influences must first become superior to his own passions.

- Johnson, Samuel

Courage is a quality so necessary for maintaining virtue, that it is always respected, even when it is associated with vice.

- Johnson, Samuel

I hate a fellow whom pride, or cowardice, or laziness drives into a corner, and who does nothing when he is there but sit and growl; let him come out as I do, and bark.

- Johnson, Samuel

There are innumerable questions to which the inquisitive mind can in this state receive no answer: Why do you and I exist? Why was this world created? Since it was to be created, why was it not created sooner?

- Johnson, Samuel

Criticism is a study by which men grow important and formidable at very small expense. He whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of a critic.

- Johnson, Samuel

Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant as a standard of judging well.

- Johnson, Samuel

I would rather be attacked than unnoticed. For the worst thing you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works. An assault upon a town is a bad thing; but starving it is still worse.

- Johnson, Samuel

Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind.

- Johnson, Samuel

Curiosity is, in great and generous minds, the first passion and the last.

- Johnson, Samuel

You teach your daughters the diameters of the planets and wonder when you are done that they do not delight in your company.

- Johnson, Samuel

It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance, it lasts so short a time.

- Johnson, Samuel

I will be conquered; I will not capitulate.

- Johnson, Samuel

Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is very natural for young men to be vehement, acrimonious and severe. For as they seldom comprehend at once all the consequences of a position, or perceive the difficulties by which cooler and more experienced reasoners are restrained from confidence, they form their conclusions with great precipitance. Seeing nothing that can darken or embarrass the question, they expect to find their own opinion universally prevalent, and are inclined to impute uncertainty and hesitation to want of honesty, rather than of knowledge.

- Johnson, Samuel

Among the calamities of war, may be justly numbered the diminution of the love of truth, by the falsehoods which interest dictates, and credulity encourages.

- Johnson, Samuel

He who praises every body, praises nobody.

- Johnson, Samuel

The mind is never satisfied with the objects immediately before it, but is always breaking away from the present moment, and losing itself in schemes of future felicity. The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure, but from hope to hope.

- Johnson, Samuel

A gentleman who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died: Johnson said, it was the triumph of hope over experience.

- Johnson, Samuel



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