

**APHORISMS,
MAXIMS,
&C., FOR LEARNERS**

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Aphorisms, maxims, &c., for learners by Robert Potts

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ROBERT POTTS

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ΦΩΝΑΝΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙΣΛ

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

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THE following selection of Maxims, &c., was originally prefixed to the first edition of *Liber Cantabrigiensis*. Shortly after that publication appeared, the Editor was requested to reprint the Maxims, &c., in a separate form, as likely to become useful to other students, not intended to finish their course of studies at the University.

A few additions have been made to the collection, and the Editor ventures to express the hope, that they may become as useful and suggestive to other students in the formation of their mental habits, as he has found them in his own experience.

R. P.

CAMBRIDGE,
20 Oct., 1875.

"Some high or humble enterprise of good
Contemplate, till it shall possess thy mind,
Become thy study, treasure, rest, and food,
And kindle in thy breast a flame refined ;
Pray heaven for firmness thy whole soul to bind
To this thy purpose, to begin, pursue,
With thoughts all fixed, and feelings purely kind,
Strength to complete, and with delight review,
And grace to give the praise where all the praise is due."

Mrs. SIGOURNEY.

APHORISMS, MAXIMS, &c.

1.

APHORISMS representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to enquire farther; whereas methods carrying the show of a total, do secure men as if they were at farthest.—*Bacon*.

2.

Exclusively of the Abstract Sciences, the largest and worthiest portion of our knowledge consists of Aphorisms; and the greatest and best of men is but an Aphorism.

Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors.

There is one way of giving freshness and importance to the most common-place maxims—that of reflecting on them in direct reference to our own state and conduct, to our own past and future being.—*S. T. Coleridge*.

3.

Mature and sedate wisdom has been fond of summing up the results of its experience in weighty sentences. Solomon did so: the wise men of India and Greece did so: Bacon did so: Goethe in his old age took delight in doing so... They who cannot weave an uniform web, may at least produce a piece of patchwork, which may be useful, and not without a charm of its own. The very sharpness and abruptness with which truths must be asserted,

when they are to stand singly, is not ill-fitted to startle and rouse sluggish and drowsy minds. Nor is the present shattered and disjointed state of the intellectual world unaptly represented by a collection of fragments.—*Guesses at Truth.*

4.

A collection of good sentences resembles a string of pearls.—*Chinese saying.*

5.

Nor do Apophthegms only serve for ornament and delight, but also for action and civil use: as being the edge-tools of speech, which cut and penetrate the knots of business and affairs.—*Bacon.*

6.

I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war. . . . But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them [the learners] with lectures and explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with a study of learning and the admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages.—*John Milton.*

7.

I hesitate not to assert, as a Christian, that religion is the first rational object of Education. Whatever may be the fate of my children in this transitory world, about which I hope I am as solicitous as I ought to be, I would, if possible, secure a happy meeting with them in a future and everlasting life. I can well enough bear their reproaches for not enabling them to attain to worldly honours and distinctions; but to have been in any measure accessory, by my neglect, to their final perdition, would be the occasion of such reproach

and blame, as would be absolutely insupportable.
—*Dr. Priestley.*

8.

St. Jerome's advice was, let a child begin to be instructed as soon as he begins to blush. As soon as they are capable of shame they are capable of discipline. From the time that they shew the marks of their conscience upon their countenance, it ought to be believed that remorse has taken the place of innocence, since they already know how to put a difference between good and evil.—*Dr. T. Fuller.*

9.

Education, in the most extensive sense of the word, may comprehend every preparation that is made in our youth for the sequel of our lives; and in this sense I use it. Some such preparation is necessary for all conditions, because without it they must be miserable, and probably will be vicious, when they grow up, either from the want of the means of subsistence, or from want of rational and inoffensive occupation. In civilized life, every thing is effected by art and skill. Whence, a person who is provided with neither (and neither can be acquired without exercise and instruction) will be useless; and he that is useless will generally be at the same time mischievous to the community. So that to send an uneducated child into the world, is injurious to the rest of mankind; it is little better than to turn out a mad dog or a wild beast into the streets.—*Paley.*

10.

The object of a liberal education is to develop the whole mental system of man;—to make his speculative inferences coincide with his practical convictions;—to enable him to render a reason for the belief that is in him, and not to leave him in the condition of Solomon's sluggard, who is wise