

**LACONICS; OR,
GOOD WORDS OF
THE BEST AUTHORS**

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Laconics; Or, Good Words of the Best Authors by William Tegg

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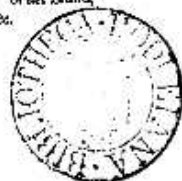


"Full of wise saws."—*Shakespeare.*

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED
BY WILLIAM TEGG,

*Editor of "The Mixture for Low Spirits," "Orbit Stand,"
"Epigrams," "Proverbs," &c., &c.*

THIRD EDITION,
REVISED.



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PREFACE.

THE title which I have selected for this little book may best be described in the words of Swift:—

"Abstracts, abridgements, summaries, &c., have the same use with burning glasses—to collect the diffused rays of wit and learning in authors, and make them point with warmth and quickness upon the reader's imagination."

I felt somewhat of a difficulty in arranging the selection, on account of the number of authors I have had to consult; the labour consisted not in—what to insert, but—what to reject. I could have presented my readers with a large nosegay made of many flowers, gay and bright, tied together without any regard to form or colour; but my aim would not have been attained. I have, therefore, presented them with a small bouquet of sweet flowers, gathered from many a parterre, that may be carried, laid down, or taken up at leisure. One

thing I may modestly say, that I have made my extracts as accurately and as judiciously as I could; and whatever may be the fate of my little venture, I have been already repaid for my labours by the pleasure they have afforded me.

WILLIAM TEGG.

1875.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

My little venture having proved so successful as to call forth a Third Edition,—which is most flattering to me,—I have carefully gone through the work, and added the dates of the births and deaths respectively of the various Authors quoted, as far as I have been able to trace them.

WILLIAM TEGG.

1875.

LACONICS, &c.

ABILITIES.

The abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a blanket when you are a-bed; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered.—*Sir W. Temple*.*

ABSENCE OF MIND.

Absence of mind may be defined to be a slowness of mind in speaking or action: the absent man is one who, when he is casting up accounts, and hath collected the items, will ask a bystander what the amount is: when he is engaged in a lawsuit, and the day of trial is come, he forgets it and goes into the country: he visits the theatre to see the play, and is left behind asleep on the benches. He takes any article and puts it away himself, then begins to look for it, and is never able to find it. If any one tell him of the death of a dear friend, and ask him to the funeral, with a sorrowful countenance and tears in his eyes, he exclaims, Good luck, good luck! It is his custom, when he receives, not when he pays, a debt, to call for witnesses. In winter, he quarrels with his servant for not purchasing cucumbers: he compels his children to wrestle and run till they faint with fatigue. In the country, when he is dressing his dinner of herbs, he throws in salt to season them till they are unfit to eat. If any one inquire of him, how many dead have been carried out through the sacred gate to burial? Would to God, he replies, you and I had so many!—*Theophrastus*.

* Born 1628, died 1709.

ABUSES.

There is a time when men will not suffer bad things, because their ancestors have suffered worse. There is a time when the hoary head of inveterate abuse will neither draw reverence nor obtain protection.—*Burke.* *

ACTIONS.

Things may be seen differently, and differently shown; but actions are visible, though motives are secret.—*Johnson.* †

ACQUAINTANCE.

Constancy in friendships, attachments, and familiarities, is commendable, and is requisite to support trust and good correspondence in society. But in places of general, though casual concourse, where the pursuit of health and pleasure brings people promiscuously together, public conveniency has dispensed with this maxim; and custom there promotes an unreserved conversation for the time, by indulging the privilege of dropping afterwards every indifferent acquaintance without breach of civility or good manners.—*Hume.* ‡

ACTIVITY.

The sphere of beneficent activity was never so large. To infuse the leaven of purity into the disordered masses—to thaw the death-frost from the heart of the misanthrope—to make the treacherous one faithful to duty—to open the world's dim eye to the majesty of conscience—to gather and instruct the orphans bereft of a father's blessing and of a mother's prayer—to care for the outcast and abandoned, who have drunk in iniquity with their mother's milk, whom the priest and the Levite have alike passed by, and who have been forced in the hot-bed of poverty into premature luxuriance of evil,—here is labour which may employ a man's whole lifetime, and his whole soul.—*Dr. Pausan.*

* Born 1730, died 1797. † Born 1709, died 1794. ‡ Born 1711, died 1776.

ADMIRATION.

There is a wide difference between admiration and love. The sublime, which is the cause of the former, always dwells on great objects, and terrible; the latter on small ones, and pleasing; we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us: in one case we are forced, in the other we are flattered, into compliance.—*Burke.*

ADVANCEMENT.

Without mounting by degrees, a man cannot attain to high things; and the breaking of the ladder still casteth a man back, and maketh the thing wearisome, which was easy.—*Sir P. Sidney.**

ADVERSITY.

He that has never known adversity is but half acquainted with others, or with himself. Constant success shows us but one side of the world. For, as it surrounds us with friends, who will tell us only our merits, so it silences those enemies from whom alone we can learn our defects.—*Colton.†*

ADVICE.

When we feel a strong desire to thrust our advice upon others, it is usually because we suspect their weakness; but we ought rather to suspect our own.—*Colton.*

AFFECTATION.

A coquet is one that is never to be persuaded out of the passion she has to please, nor out of a good opinion of her own beauty; time and years she regards as things that only wrinkle and decay other women; forgets that age is written in the face, and that the same dress which became her when she was young, now only makes her look the older. Affectation cleaves to her even in sickness and pain; she dies in a high-head and coloured ribbons.—*Brayere.‡*

* Born 1564, died 1686. † Born 1780, died 1832. ‡ Born 1664, died 1696.