

Some Aphorisms of Oscar Wilde

- ‘Art never expresses anything but itself.’ (*The Decay of Lying*, 1891, p.43.)
- ‘Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?’ (*The Importance of Being Earnest*, 1895, Act I.)
- ‘It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn’t a dentist. It produces a false impression’ (Ibid.)
- ‘The truth is rarely pure, and never simple’ (Ibid.)
- ‘In married life three is company and two none.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. (Ibid.)
- ‘To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That’s his.’ (Ibid.)
- (Miss Prism on her novel:) ‘The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.’ (Ibid., Act II.)
- ‘The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one’s mind. It becomes a pleasure.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘Please do not shoot the pianist. He is doing his best.’ (Leadville, *Impressions of America* .)
- ‘Meredith is a prose Browning, and so is Browning. He used poetry as a medium for writing in prose.’ (‘Intentions’, *The Critic as Artist* [Part I].)
- ‘A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.’ (Ibid., p.2.)
- ‘Ah! don’t say that you agree with me. When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘There is no sin except stupidity.’ (Ibid.)
- ‘I couldn’t help it. I can resist everything except temptation.’ (*Lady Windermere’s Fan*, 1891, Act I.)
- ‘We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.’ (Ibid., Act III.)
- ‘There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist conscience.’ (Ibid.)
- Cecil Graham: ‘What is a cynic?’ Lord Darlington: ‘A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.’ (Ibid., Act III.)