Joshua's Quotations From The Lucretius Today Podcast

QUOTATIONS ?

PASSAGES FROM A WORLD WHERE

NOTHING COMES FROM NOTHING

A TOPICAL REFERENCE SOURCE

? COMPILED BY JOSHUA ELBERT

_jcObojCwgrFr4V6dpvZholMbN__TlFkypOcJcsejtx6wXxQ0NEG4jm_Ys-Gjr8g3yj47aCa-sJId_6YTeWBKywipiL4H5xRV-Lml

THE COMMONPLACE BOOK ?

“Kindly look her up in my index, Doctor.”

-Sherlock Holmes, *A Scandal in Bohemia*

During the course of many conversations on the subject of philosophy, I have often found myself feeling about for a half -remembered sentiment or scrap of writing, an “*old odd end*” of this or that, with a view to illustrating a finer point. In the literary cultures of preceding ages, there was thought to be a great merit in keeping a “commonplace book” to hand, and in that book to capture for one’s own contemplation and refinement the insights of others. In our own time we can rifle through the databases of the world in seconds–a very useful thing–and the commonplace book has fallen out of favor, a curiosity from a forgotten time. Satisfied that what we need to find can be found easily if we are willing to look, the charm of the commonplace book survives in the minds of readers while its real utility is lost to us.

But I have come to believe that we think too highly of our own abilities to find information quickly, and that the speed at which we think we search for it is largely illusory. To the reader with a well organized commonplace book, it is only required to record it at first sight. To find it again is merely to find the right page. The only other work ever required is to compile and cross-reference a series of commonplace books into a thorough index, and to the right kind of person this will not feel like work. But when I find myself trying to remember an exact quotation, and often the same quotation for the fourth or fifth time over a course of years, I begin to realize that it always takes longer than expected.

The worst thing of all is the disruption that this clumsiness brings to the flow of conversation, and so I am wasting not just my own time but that of my friends as well. It is also the case that we live in an age in which quotations are treated too cavalierly–so that when I want to find one, I very often have to go to some length to evaluate its provenance. But if you can find a passage just once, and verify it to satisfaction, and index it accurately, you will never again have to chase it down the warren.

The good news is that maintaining an index is made considerably easier for us in this century, so that we may almost make up for our fault in discipline when it comes to recording the information in the first place. Our word processors can handle any input of new information in its proper place without a strain–there will be no need to sit on the floor in the drawing room at 221B Baker Street, with sheaves of loose paper littered around us.

In this document, I have decided to organize the index alphabetically by topic, without much else in the way of structure. Pagination I leave out on purpose. The Table of Contents is made up of hyperlinks, which will take you to each topic. The citations under each topic will again be organized alphabetically by author’s last name. Another option is to search by keyword–if you remember a word or phrase in the quotation, search for

that and you'll find it right away. ?

The alphabetical main index page can be found **here.**