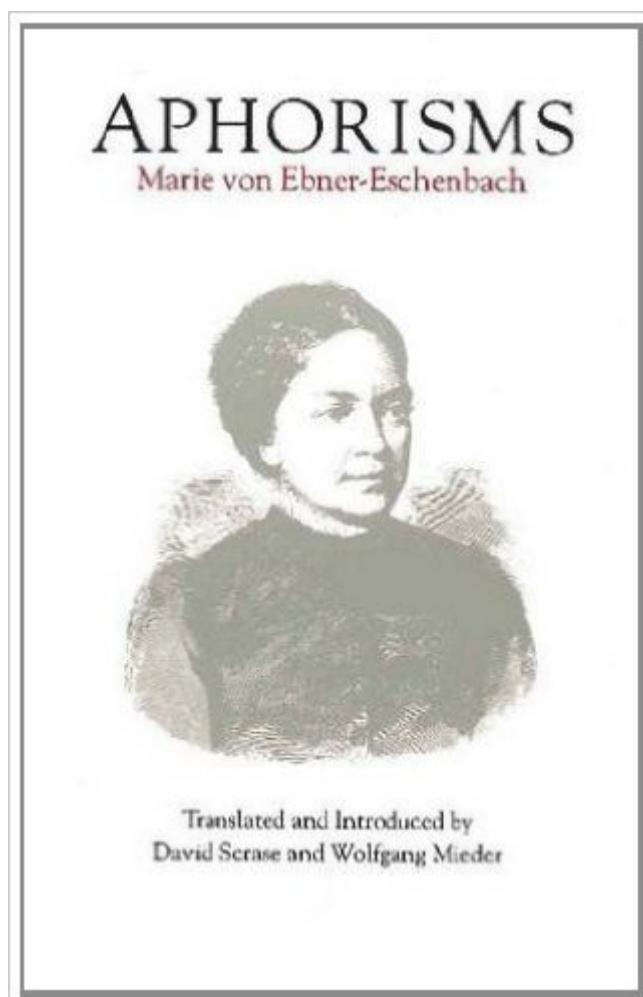


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Aphorisms (Studies In Austrian Literature, Culture, And Thought Translation Series)



Synopsis

This book contains the entire collection of 582 aphorisms which the nineteenth-century Austrian writer Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830-1916) published in a number of expanded editions beginning in 1880. While this author also wrote poems, plays, novels, and novellas, she is known today particularly for her insightful aphorisms. Stating that "An aphorism is the last link in a long chain of thought", she presents intellectually stimulating and socially engaged commentaries dealing with various aspects of human nature. Because of their universality, these thoughts by one of the best aphoristic writers in the German language have lost none of their relevance today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The aphorism, that pithy, sententious nugget of wit, wisdom and often malicious humor, is seen nowadays as a relic of the past. Born of Latin origins, the aphorism gained popularity during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Among French and German intellectuals, it was the preferred form to express trenchant observations. 19th century Austrian writer, Marie von Ebner Eschenbach, is perhaps the most unknown of these masters. No doubt ignored on account of her gender, Eschenbach's incisive aphorisms are now available in English thanks to the able translations of University of Vermont professors, David Scrase and Wolfgang Mieder. In their collection of 500 of Eschenbach's finest, titled simply, 'Aphorisms,' one can read Eschenbach's profound thoughts on human nature. She covers an amazing variety of topics, everything from spiritual concerns,

marriage, equality among the sexes and most of all, the human heart. Written with an opaque and direct style (at least in translation), her aphorisms are like fine poems in that they often contain multiple interpretations. Think of a forest pond with a sparkling, quiet surface and clear, bottomless depths. While some of these aphorisms are longish prose poems, they nonetheless shine with meaning. 'When your absolutely only choice is between an untruth and rudeness, then choose rudeness; if however, your choice is between an untruth and cruelty, then choose the untruth.' No misanthrope, Eschenbach loved humanity with all its foibles and crimes. Passionately concerned with the human condition, she often expressed a deep empathy for her fellow, suffering humans. Her advice is often hard, stoic and born of classical sympathies.

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