

Alphonse de Lamartine
Woman's heavenly gifts



Woman's heavenly gifts¹

- There is a woman at the beginning of all great things.
- Nature has given women two painful but heavenly gifts, which distinguish them, and often raise them above human nature — compassion and enthusiasm. By compassion, they devote themselves; by enthusiasm they exalt themselves.
- Enthusiasm springs from the imagination, and self-sacrifice from the heart. Women are, therefore, more naturally heroic than men. All nations have in their annals some of these miracles of patriotism, of which woman is the instrument in the hands of God.
- It is in the heart that God has placed the genius of women, because the works of this genius are all works of love.
- To love for the sake of being loved is human, but to love for the sake of loving is angelic.
- Let us enjoy the fugitive hour. Man has no harbour, time has no shore; it rushes on, and carries us with it.
- Love alone was left, as a great image of a dream that was erased.



¹ Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine, Knight of Pratz (21st October 1790 – 28th February 1869), was a French writer, poet and politician, instrumental in the foundation of the Second Republic and the continuation of the *Tricolore* as the flag of France.

Raised by his mother to respect animal life, Lamartine considered the eating of meat repugnant, saying “One does not have one heart for man and one for animals. One has a heart or one does not.” He also said, “Brutality to an animal is cruelty to mankind — it is only the difference in the victim.” His writings in *La chute d'un Ange* (1838) and *Les confidences* (1849) would be taken up by supporters of vegetarianism in the twentieth century.

During his term as a politician in the Second Republic, Lamartine led efforts that culminated in the abolition of slavery and the death penalty, as well as the enshrinement of the right to work and the short-lived national workshop programs. A political idealist who supported democracy and pacifism, Lamartine's moderate stance on most issues caused many of his followers to desert him. He was an unsuccessful candidate in the presidential election of 10th December 1848. He subsequently retired from politics and dedicated himself to literature.