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**Book Information**

File Size: 4848 KB  
Print Length: 1364 pages  
Publisher: Penguin (March 25, 2004)  
Publication Date: March 25, 2004  
Sold by: Digital Services LLC  
Language: English  
ASIN: B002RI92VQ  
Text-to-Speech: Enabled  
X-Ray: Not Enabled  
Word Wise: Not Enabled  
Lending: Not Enabled  
Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled  
Best Sellers Rank: #99,282 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store)  
#7 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Renaissance  
#13 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Modern Renaissance  
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MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE - THE COMPLETE ESSAYS. Translated and Edited with an Introduction and Notes by M. A. Screech. Iviv + 1284 pp. (Penguin Classics). London : Penguin Books, 1993 and Reissued. ISBN 0-14-044604-4 (pbk.) Those who discover Montaigne should count themselves very lucky. There are so many authors competing for our attention today, so many brilliant and less than brilliant men and women both contemporary and of the past, so many poets, novelists, philosophers, thinkers of every stripe, that Montaigne’s voice can easily get lost in the general racket, like the voice of a single cricket on a noisy summer’s night. But Montaigne’s voice is well worth singling out for special attention, like that one cricket whose song is especially musical, because there has never been anyone quite like him, nor anyone who has produced such a wealth of sensible observations on life and everything that goes to make it up. We love Montaigne for his humanity, his wisdom, his clear insight into human nature, his tolerance of our weaknesses and failings, his love and compassion for all creatures whether man, animal, or plant, his calm, gentle and amiable voice, his stately and dignified progress as he conducts us through the vast repository of his mind. But above all we love him for his plain good sense. Despite his distance in time, we can open these essays almost anywhere and immediately become engrossed. Some of what he says,
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