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Michel de Montaigne

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Blending intellectual speculation with anecdote and personal reflection, the Renaissance thinker and writer Michel de Montaigne pioneered the modern essay form. This edition contains all of his idiosyncratic and timeless writings on subjects as varied as the virtues of solitude, the power of the imagination, the pleasures of reading, the importance of sleep and why we sometimes laugh and cry at the same things. Montaigne's complete Essays, translated by M. A. Screech, are presented here as a beautifully produced, desirable collector's edition. This oversize volume is printed in two-colour, bound in high-quality rich blue cloth and embellished with gold foil stamped into the design. Michel Eyquem, Seigneur de Montaigne, was born in 1533. He was brought up to speak Latin as his mother tongue and always retained a Latin turn of mind; though he knew Greek, he preferred to use translations. In 1569 he published his French version of the Natural Theology of Raymond Sebond; his Apology is only partly a defence of Sebond and sets sceptical limits to human reasoning about God, man and nature. He retired in 1571 to his lands at Montaigne, devoting himself to reading and reflection and composing his Essays (first version 1580). He loathed the fanaticism and cruelties of the religious wars of the period, but sided with Catholic orthodoxy and legitimate monarchy. He died at Montaigne in 1592 while preparing the final, and richest, edition of his Essays. M. A. Screech is an Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. He is recognised as a world authority on the Renaissance, especially for his studies on Rabelais, Erasmus and Montaigne. His translation of Montaigne was immediately welcomed for its discrete learning and elegance. In recognition of his achievements the French Republic made him a Chevalier dans l'Ordre national du Mérite and then a Chevalier dans la Légion d'Honneur.

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