

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
**ESSAYS**

**Front Matter**



Translation by John Florio (1603) · Last updated on October 03,  
2020

HYPERESSAYS is a project to bring a complete hypertext  
edition of Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* to the web.  
More information at [www.hyperessays.net](http://www.hyperessays.net)

FLORIO-FM-1-20201003-195738

---

## The Author to the Reader

READER, loe here a well-meaning Booke. It doth at the first entrance forewarne thee, that in contriving the same I have proposed unto my selfe no other than a familiar and private end: I have no respect or consideration at all, either to thy service, or to my glory: my forces are not capable of any such desseigne. I have vowed the same to the particular commodity of my kinsfolk and friends: to the end, that losing me (which they are likely to do ere long), they may therein find some lineaments of my conditions and humours, and by that meanes reserve more whole, and more lively foster the knowledge and acquaintance they have had of me. Had my intention beene to forestal and purchase the world's opinion and favour, I would surely have adorned my selfe more quaintly, or kept a more grave and solemne march. I desire thereun to be delineated in mine own genuine, simple and ordinarie fashion, without contention, art or study; for it is my selfe I pourtray. My imperfections shall thus be read to the life, and my naturall forme discerned, so farre-forth as publike reverence hath permitted me. For if my fortune had beene to have lived among those nations which yet are said to live under the sweet liberty of Nature's first and uncorrupted lawes, I assure thee, I would most willingly have pourtrayed my selfe fully and naked. Thus, gentle Reader, my selfe am the groundworke of my booke: it is then no reason thou shouldst employ thy time about so frivolous and vaine a subject. Therefore farewell, From *Montaigne*, the First of March, 1580.