

Beealeraght

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Ta mee er ve lhaih screeunyn Michel de Montaigne er y gherrit shoh. Ruggyr eshyn ayns Gascony ec jerrey yn Renaissance tra va lane smooïnaghtyn noa goll mygeayrt ayns Europe, agh va ny caggaghyn eddyr ny Rauee as ny Protestantee goaill toshiaght ec yn un traa, as va'n Rank baiht ayns fuill as laue-lajerys. Ren Montaigne hene tannaghtyn firrinagh da'n çhenn Agglish, agh v'eh rieu doaicagh, foshlit as ennaghtagh jeh aghtyn-smooïnaghtyn sleih elley.

Ny sloo na jeih as feed blein lurg da America Jiass v'er ny gheddyn magh ren eh peesh-screuee enmyssit 'Mychione Eederyn-deiney' ayn v'eh shassoo er nagh row yn sleih dooghyssagh ayns y Theihll Noa veg ergooyl rish y phobble echey hene va lostey deiney er y staik as brishey ad er y wheeyl, as nagh row mooinjer Europe jeeaghyn er joarreeyn dy ve barbarianee agh ynrycan er-y-fa nagh row ad oayllagh er ny cliaghtaghyn oc. Haink eh hene quail paart dy Indianee voish America va er thurrys ayns Paris. Marish shen, v'eh fo mee-ourys jeh firrinys pooar y chooid smoo dy 'vraane-obbee' ayns earish tra va eiyrtys tromme dy yannoo orroo.

Va smooïnaghtyn noa mychione troggal cloan goll ec y traa shen neesht. Ayns ynyd paitçhyn y woalley as y eginagh dy ynsagh reddyng er agh creoi as dree, va mooinjer y Renaissance credjal dy lhisagh y paitçhey hene ve ayns çhesh-vean cooishyn as pooar echey er yn ynsagh echey hene, dy lhisagh ad geddyn magh reddyng as sheeyney nyn aignaghyn er agh dooghyssagh. Vel shen jeeaghyn ainjyssagh ayns yn earish ain-hene?

Va smooïnaghtyn noa ec ayr Montaigne neesht mychione gynsagh çhengaghyn er agh dooghyssagh: v'eh gearree dy beagh e vac floaoil ayns Latin chammah as Frangish, myr shen ren eh failley fer-ynsee er-lheh echey nagh row Frangish erbee dy loayrt rish e vac ayns Latin, as begin da'n slane lught-thie gynsagh ee myrgeeddin, myr shen dy beagh y scollag ny loayreyder dooghyssagh dy Latin. Cha nee shin-hene ny lomarcan t'er vakin vondeish ayns daa-hengaghys as ayns thummey cloan ayns glare tra t'ad feer aeg. Foddee shinyn smooïnaghtyn shin hene dy ve ny s'creenee na ny shenn-ayraghyn ain agh va ny smooïnaghtyn cheddin ec sheelogheyng elley roin. S'feer t'eh nagh vel nhee erbee noa fo'n ghrian.

I have been reading the essays of Michel de Montaigne recently. He was born in Gascony at the end of the Renaissance when Europe was awash with new ideas, but the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants were beginning at the same time, and France was drowned in blood and violence. Montaigne himself remained faithful to the old Church, but he was always decent, open-minded and sensitive to other people's point of view.

Less than thirty years after the discovery of South America he wrote an essay entitled 'On Cannibals' in which he insisted that the native people in the New World were in no way inferior to his own people who burnt men at the stake and broke them on the wheel, and that Europeans looked at foreigners as barbarians only because their customs were unfamiliar. He himself met some American Indians who were on a trip to Paris. In addition, he doubted the reality of the power of most 'witches' in a period when they were harshly persecuted.

There were new ideas about raising children as well. Instead of beating children and forcing them to learn things in a strict and tedious manner, Renaissance thinkers believed that the child himself should be at the centre and in control of his

own learning, that they should find out things and stretch their minds in a natural way. Does that look familiar in our own time?

Montaigne's father had new ideas too about learning languages naturally: he wanted his son to be fluent in Latin as well as French, so he employed a special tutor who had no French to speak to his son in Latin, and the whole household had to learn it too, so that the boy would be a native speaker of Latin. We are not the only ones to see an advantage in bilingualism and immersing children in a language at a young age. We may consider ourselves to be more enlightened than our forebears but other generations had the same ideas before us. How true it is that there is nothing new under the sun.