

**A VOICE FROM  
THE FIRESIDE**

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A Voice from the fireside by Mary Elizabeth Miller

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**MARY ELIZABETH MILLER**

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A Voice from the Fireside.

# A Voice from the Fireside;

OR, A

FEW REMARKS ON PRECOCIOUSNESS, AND THE  
PRESENT DEFECTIVE SYSTEM OF  
GIRLS' EDUCATION.

BY

MARY ELIZABETH MILLER.  
(Née NASMYTH.)

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

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TO MY FATHER,

R. N., Esq.,

THIS VOLUME

Is dedicated,

AS A MARK OF AFFECTION AND RESPECT.



## PREFACE.

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ALTHOUGH our volume is small and unpretending, we have a few words to say by way of Preface.

The object of our little book is not to propound any Utopian theory, or any imaginary grand and infallible rule, which is supposed to counteract and render null all the small trials and troubles of life, or to ensure the young turning out paragons of perfection. We know too well that, as long as human nature exists, all rules must be more or less fallible, and the most plausible schemes more or less disappointing.

All we purpose is to bring prominently forward defects and evils in the training of the young, which most people are aware of, but

which few realize ; and to suggest the adoption of some old and simple rules, the virtues of which are already admitted.

We have been led to the consideration of the subject from observing the great amount of irritation, annoyance, and even unhappiness, which constantly arises in families from the want of attention to small things, from the defects in the present system of education, the neglect of imparting to young girls a knowledge of household duties, and of useful womanly occupations, while a large portion of their time is devoted to the acquirement of what is often but a superficial acquaintance with accomplishments, overlooking the fact that these will never of themselves fit a woman for properly fulfilling the duties of mistress of a household or mother of a family.

These defects in education are, we believe, more common in the present day than they have ever been at any previous period.

There seems to be among the middle and lower classes a great degree of ambition to rise above the sphere of their birth, and parents sharing this ambition too often allow their daughters to spend their time in playing on the pianoforte, reading novels, and acquiring a smattering of foreign languages. The knowledge of every-day home duties being considered beneath the notice of a well-educated young lady.

We are disposed to believe that the remarkable feature among the rising generation, which is termed precociousness, may be traced in some measure to this superficial system of education; and to the same system may partly be attributed the overweening extravagance in dress, which is so striking in the present day—an evil which we are all ready enough to deplore in our servants, but which we are perfectly blind to in ourselves.