

**FRAGMENTS FROM  
FÉNELON CONCERNING  
EDUCATION**

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Fragments from FéNelon Concerning Education by B. C. R. & E. S. J. & Charles Dudley Warner

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**B. C. R. & E. S. J. & CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER**

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FÉNELON

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EDUCATION

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Pres. C. W. Eliot

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## PREFACE.

The writings of Fénelon have been a quarry for many generations. Many volumes of ethical instruction, spiritual guidance, and Christian counsel, have been selected from the works of the author, who has also a world-wide fame as the narrator of *Les Aventures de Télémaque, Fils d'Ulysse*.

Francois de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon was born August 6, 1651, at the Chateau de Fénelon, near Sarlat, in Perigord. In his education at home he laid the foundation of solid classical acquirements, which was enlarged at the College of Cahors and at the College of Plessis. So precocious was his genius and his gift of eloquence that at the age of fifteen he was put forward to preach to an admiring audience. He became an abbé and an archbishop, attained an exalted position, and commanded universal love, but he never was moved from his early simplicity and sincerity. He has been sometimes criticized for his "desire to please" in this world, but no one could ever say that he swerved from his duty or compromised his spirituality or his integrity. Fénelon's

life was without stain, and his nature was singularly pure, kindly, and elevated. His theory seems to have been that good is more potent than evil, and that men are to be won to the right way rather by setting before them goodness as an attraction than by holding up the bad as a terror. The only controversy of his life was with his friend, Bossuet, in defending Madame Guyon in her doctrine of disinterested love, or that God is to be loved for his own perfections, without any view to future rewards or punishments.

The present volume of selections, made and translated by E. C. R., is taken from Fénelon's first work, *Traité de l'Education des Filles*, and one of his most famous. The time is opportune for such clear and wholesome counsel on the education of young girls. The problems that we have now in education are more intensified than they were in Fénelon's time, but the reader will be struck with the modern tone of this volume, and its applicability to our own situation.

The translation has been made with fidelity, and the selections joined into an essay in excellent taste. C. D. W.



## FRAGMENTS FROM FÉNELON.

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**T**HE world is not a phantom, it is a collection of families.

Who is able to give such especial care in civilizing and refining it as women, who, beside their natural authority in the house, have the advantage of being born careful, mindful of detail, industrious, insinuating and persuasive?

Can men hope to find any happiness in life if their most intimate relation, that of marriage, is turned into bitterness? What will become of the children if their mothers spoil them from their earliest years?

The occupations of women are not less important to the public than those of men, when they have a house to regulate, a husband to make happy and children to bring up in the right way. Right living is no less for women than for men,—to say nothing of the good or evil they can do in the world, they are one-half

of the human race, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and destined to a life eternal.

Besides the benefit which well educated women are to the world, it is also necessary to consider the harm they do when deprived of an education inspiring them with the high standards: as the faults of men may often be traced to the mistaken education received from their mothers.

In history what intrigues do we find, what overturning of laws and manners, what bloody wars, what innovations in religion, what revolutions in the State, caused by the intemperance of women! How this proves the importance of thoroughly educating the girls.

#### LET US FIND OUT THE WAY.

The ignorance of a girl is a cause of weariness to her. She does not know how to occupy herself pleasantly. When she reaches a certain age without having applied herself to serious things she has neither the taste for, nor the appreciation of them! Everything that is serious seems sad to her, every-

thing that demands attention makes her tired, the desire for pleasure—which is strong in youth—the example of others absorbed in amusement, all combine to make her afraid of a well-regulated and busy life. If she is well-born, she is exempt from working with her hands, so what is she to do? Indolence will become an incurable habit; if the vacuum is not filled with substantial things, frivolities will take the place and laziness,—an inexhaustible source of evil. She takes a third more sleep than is necessary for health, for this enervates her body and renders it more sensitive to disease. Sufficient sleep, with regular exercise, makes one cheerful and strong, gives the true perfection of bodily vigor, to say nothing of the advantage the mind draws from such a condition.

Weakness, joined to ignorance, produces a morbid craving for excitement and a curiosity both insatiable and indiscreet.

Educated women, occupied with serious affairs, have ordinarily moderate curiosity: that which they already know gives them a