

**CONTARINI FLEMING: A
PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTO-
BIOGRAPHY. IN FOUR
VOLUMES. VOLUME II**

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Contarini Fleming: a psychological auto-biography. In four volumes. Volume II by Benjamin Disraeli

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BENJAMIN DISRAELI

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A PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTO-BIOGRAPHY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

II.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDC CCXXXII.

PART THE SECOND.

I.

OUR school-boy days are looked back to by all with fondness. Oppressed with the cares of life, we contrast our worn and harassed existence with that sweet prime free from anxiety, and fragrant with innocence. I cannot share these feelings. I was a most miserable child, and school I detested more than I ever abhorred the world in the darkest moments of my experienced manhood. But the University—this new life yielded me different feelings, and still commands a grateful reminiscence.

My father, who studied to foster in me every worldly feeling, sought all means which might tend to make me enamoured of that world, to which he was devoted. An extravagant allowance, a lavish establishment, many servants, numerous horses, were forced upon, rather than solicited by me. According to his system, he acted dexterously. My youthful brain could not be insensible to the brilliant position in which I was placed. I was now, indeed, my own master, and everything around me announced, that I could command a career flattering to the rising passions of my youth. I well remember the extreme self-complacency with which I surveyed my new apartments, how instantaneously I was wrapped up in all the mysteries of furniture, and how I seemed to have no

other purpose in life, than to play the honoured and honourable part of an elegant and accomplished host.

My birth, my fortune, my convivial habits, rallied around me the noble and the gay, the flower of our society. Joyously flew our careless hours, while we mimicked the magnificence of men. I had no thought but for the present moment. I discoursed only of dogs and horses, of fanciful habiliments and curious repasts. I astonished them by a new fashion, and decided upon the exaggerated charms of some ordinary female. How long the novelty of my life would have been productive of interest I know not. An incident occurred which changed my habits.

A new Professor arrived at the University. He was by birth a German. I at-

tended, by an accident, his preliminary lecture on Grecian history. I had been hunting, and had suddenly returned home. Throwing my gown over my forest frock, I strolled, for the sake of change, into the theatre. I nodded with a smile to some of my acquaintance, I glanced with listlessness at their instructor. His abstracted look, the massiness of his skull, his large luminous eye, his long grey hair, his earnest and impassioned manner, struck me. He discoursed on that early portion of Grecian history which is entirely unknown. I was astonished at the fulness of his knowledge. That which to a common student appears but an inexplicable, or barren tradition, became, in his magical mould, a record teeming with deep knowledge and picturesque interest. Hordes,