

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY. A COLLECTION OF THE  
MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING LIVES  
EVER PUBLISHED, VOL. XXV. MEMOIRS OF  
VIDOCQ, PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE FRENCH  
POLICE UNTIL 1827: AND NOW PROPRIETOR  
OF THE PAPER MANUFACTORY AT ST. MANDE,  
IN FOUR VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Autobiography. A Collection of the most instructive and amusing lives ever published, Vol. XXV. Memoirs of Vidocq, principal agent of the French police until 1827: and now proprietor of the paper manufactory at St. Mandé, in four volumes, Vol. I by Various

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# VARIOUS

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**AUTOBIOGRAPHY.**

**A Collection**

OF THE

MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING

**LIVES**

EVER PUBLISHED,

WRITTEN BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS  
SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE  
DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME XXV.—VIDOCQ.

**LONDON :**

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YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

LONDON :  
T. AND W. BURNELL, PRINCES, BROAD STREET, GOLDEN SQ.



# MEMOIRS

OF

## VIDOCQ,

PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE FRENCH POLICE

UNTIL 1827:

AND NOW PROPRIETOR OF

THE PAPER MANUFACTORY AT ST MANDÉ.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

\* Le plus grand fléau est l'homme qui provoque. Quand il n'y a point de provocateurs ce sont les forts qui commettent les crimes, parceque ce ne sont que les forts qui les conçoivent. En police, il vaut mieux ne pas faire d'affaire que d'en créer."

MEMOIRS, VOL. I.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON, 1828 ;

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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To attempt an analysis of the Memoirs now laid before the public would be utterly impossible, so romantic are the narratives, so thrilling the horrors, so powerful the descriptions, so continuous the thread of its history. As a piece of Autobiography, it has many and singular characteristics, which stamp it at once as one of the most interesting and peculiar narratives ever penned, replete with astonishing incident and instructive moral. In these days, when the hand of improvement, so called, (God save the mark!) macadamizes the hoary relics of antiquity to smoothen the path along which civilization progresses; when the age of chivalry is gone; and daring deeds and adventurous

exploits are superseded by mere common-places and matter-of-fact details; it is a thing of marvel to read the incidents of a life so full of romance, so teeming with the wild and wonderful. To the light reader, who but skims over the surface of a book, and enjoys the tale merely as one of passing amusement, forgotten soon as read, these Memoirs offer all that the most fastidious can desire of the piquant and attractive: to the reflective reader, who, not content with the mere detail of events, inquires into causes, searches out motives, and philosophizes, *en passant*, on the wit or weakness, power or puerility, of the human mind, herein will be found ample scope and verge enough for his most meditative musings.

As a work of fiction, it would be said, and with apparent justice, that the Author had drawn too largely on his inventive powers, that he had exceeded the bounds of possibility, and set no limits to the excursions of his fancy; but "*le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*;" and independently of the assertions of Vidocq himself as to the veracity of his Memoirs, we have other

powerful inducements to credit his statements. Many of the persons whom he has handled with severity, and spoken of in no very measured terms, are still living, and would doubtless be too happy to refute the charges alleged, did not truth forbid denial. Of his wonderful and multiplied escapes from "durance vile," we are equally assured, as no man in his senses would give fictitious descriptions of what could be readily disproved if false; and a similar argument may be applied to other seemingly overwrought narrations; but so many of them tell *against* our hero, that their truth cannot be impugned. Perhaps no man in his time ever assumed so many parts in life's drama, and so frequently on the very shortest possible notice, as EUGÈNE FRANÇOIS VINOCQ. But too early initiated in deception, he soon became an adept in dissimulation, and expert in disguising his person or his intentions. Endued with a mind powerful but perverted, a temper careless but impetuous, and feelings kindly but irritable, he, by the early association with depraved companions, rendered himself, by one false step,