

**THE STORY OF MY
STRUGGLES: THE
MEMOIRS. VOLUME I**

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The story of my struggles: the memoirs. Volume I by Árminius Vambéry

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ÁRMINIUS VAMBÉRY

**THE STORY OF MY
STRUGGLES: THE
MEMOIRS. VOLUME I**



THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES

THE MEMOIRS OF
^{Armin}
ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

VOLUME I

SECOND IMPRESSION



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Preface

AUTHORS of Autobiographies are much exposed to fall into self-glorification. If I nevertheless have undertaken to write the following pages, I have done so because of the unexpectedly favourable criticism which the first two chapters of my book—*Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry, Written by Himself*—met with in England and in America. In this book I tried to lay before the public an account of such travels and wanderings of mine as were not comprised in my first book on Central Asia, and in addition I thought it advisable to give a few outlines of my juvenile adventures and struggles. Strange to say it was the narrative of the latter which elicited the particular interest of my readers, as I noticed from the many letters I received from the most distant parts of Europe and America.

Well, I said to myself, if such short sketches of my curious career have evoked this interest on the part of my readers, what will be the impression if I draw the picture of my whole life and of all the

vicissitudes I went through from my childhood to my present old age? This is the main reason of the issue of the present volumes. Keeping in mind the Oriental proverb, "To speak of his own self is the business of the Shaitan," I have reluctantly touched upon many topics connected with my personality, but events are mostly inseparable from actors, and besides I have found encouragement in recalling the appreciation Britons and Americans are habitually ready to accord to the career of self-made men.

There are besides other motives which have served as incentives to these pages. The various stages of my life have been passed in various countries and societies, and a personal record of men and events dating from half a century back may not be without interest to the present generation. Unchecked by conventional modesty and false shame, I have related all I went through in plain and unadorned words, and if I have not concealed facts relating to my very humble origin and to the mistakes I committed, neither have I thought it necessary to leave unmentioned the result of my labours and the honours entailed by them. It is now forty years ago since I had first the honour of coming before the British public, and my desire to be thoroughly known by it may be pardoned.

A. VAMBÉRY.

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My Antecedents and Infancy

VOL. I.

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CHAPTER I

MY ANTECEDENTS AND INFANCY

"*COGITO ergo sum!*" Yes, I am here, but the date of my birth I cannot positively state, as I have no means of ascertaining it. I had the problematic good fortune to be born of Jewish parents, and as at that time the Jews in Hungary were not compelled by law to be regularly registered, and the authorities were satisfied with such scanty information as the parish documents afforded, I have not been able to get any official certificate as to the date of my birth. My mother told me that I was born shortly before my father's death on St. Joseph's Day, and as my father was one of the last victims of the cholera which began to scourge the land in 1830, I cannot be far wrong in giving the year of my birth as 1831 or 1832.

Genealogy not being one of my favourite subjects, I will not trouble the reader with a detailed account of my pedigree. As far as I know, my great-great-grandfather came from the worthy little town of Bamberg, and when the Emperor Joseph II. com-