

## Foreword

Considering the sequence of my published works, these pages should have appeared before, rather than after *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. Eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Leipzig, 1875). Though they were written ten years ago, partly during my sojourn in the East, I did not hasten with the collection and publication of these notes as my meagre literary talents felt no special desire for such activity. To embark just now on such an occupation is due to the following circumstances. In the first place, to the request of a famous publishing house abroad which I could not refuse. In the second, as my main preoccupation for some time has been my work *A török-tatár nyelvek etimológiai szótára* [Etymological dictionary of Turkish-Tatar languages] (Budapest, 1877), I felt the need to step out of the realm of the theoretical into the domain of practical life. Although the anatomical dissection of the Turkish and Tatar languages is an extraordinarily interesting occupation, here too, change has a refreshing effect on both the humour and spirit. In the third place, it is no great difficulty for one who, in younger days, lived in Asia and felt at home there, to sketch the mores and customs in which he felt such a great interest, and whose impression does not fade

from the memory even after the passage of years. There is no denying that I cling to Asia with all the ardour of my youth and aspects of her life still exercise an indescribably magical effect on me.

Thus I present the brief history of these pages and thus I beg the reader to view these "scenes" accordingly. I have been at pains to avoid ponderous writing, my main aim being to reflect my original impressions of the time and only two or three times altogether have I turned to foreign but more recent sources to complement my own. As with my other works of this type, my motto was *Utile dulci*: in the treatment of a subject drawn from practical experience, the main prerequisite is to present it in a simple and popular manner in order to attract the wisest possible circle of readers. Asia, it appears, seems set to become the continent upon which Europe, thirsting for action, will soon unleash her political, cultural and social problems; it seems all the more necessary then that the veil should be lifted and the life and customs of the Orient become more familiar.

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Á. V.