

**THE TRAGEDIES. IN FOUR
VOLUMES. VOL. I; MEMOIRS
OF ALFIERI. MEMOIRS OF
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649723157

The Tragedies. In Four Volumes. Vol. I; Memoirs of Alfieri. Memoirs of the Life and Writings
by Vittorio Alfieri

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Cover @ 2017

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VITTORIO ALFIERI

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MEMOIRS OF ALFIERI.

THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
VITTORIO ALFIERI;
Translated from the Italian,
BY
CHARLES LLOYD.

SECOND EDITION.

To which is prefixed,

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Alfieri.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

MEMOIRS OF ALFIERI.

LONDON:

CHARLES AND HENRY BALDWIN, NEWGATE-STREET.

1821.

S. m. D.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
VITTORIO ALFIERI.

"ALFIERI IS THE GREAT NAME OF THIS AGE."

Lord Byron

LONDON:

CHARLES AND HENRY BALDWIN, NEWGATE-STREET.

1821.

S. m. D.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It was at first the intention of the writer of this SKETCH to have presented the public with a translation of Alfieri's own MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, and to have supplied additional facts and explanatory observations in the notes. A careful re-perusal of the original narrative convinced him, that a much smaller work might be made to embrace every topic of interest or information in the Life of Alfieri. There is a strong and a natural prejudice in favour of auto-biography; but the narrative in question possesses none of the graces and interest peculiar to that species of composition. It has none of the passionate earnestness of Rousseau, or of the vivacious garrulity of Marmontel and Goldoni:

it is a dry, unimpressive detail of facts and opinions, neither enlivened by anecdote or ennobled by feeling. The Author never descends from his tragic elevation, to converse on equal terms with the reader : he registers the follies of his youth and the passions of his manhood with stoical coldness and patrician dignity. The strict veracity of Alfieri has never been called in question, but his personal and political feelings give a colouring to his narration, at once fallacious and repulsive. It is presumed, that the present publication will be found to possess all the information, without the diffuseness of the original work, and to comprise, in a readable form, every incident and trait in the life and character of Alfieri, which can assist the English Reader in forming a correct estimate of the talents and eccentricities of the greatest of Italian Dramatists.

MEMOIRS OF ALFIERI.

CHAPTER THE FIRST. 1749-1758.

Infancy.

VITTORIO ALFIERI was born on the 17th of January, 1749, at Asti, in Piedmont, of noble and wealthy parents. His father, Antonio Alfieri, was a man of strict morals and great simplicity of manners. After remaining unmarried until upwards of fifty, he became enamoured of the young widow of the Marquis of Cacherano, a nobleman of Asti. The fruit of this union was a daughter; and, two years after, a son, whose birth was a source of infinite joy to his father, who was anxious to have his name perpetuated. The young Vittorio was sent to nurse in the village of Rovigliasco, two miles from Asti,

where his father, who was still hearty and robust, came to see him almost every day, in defiance of the weather. In one of these excursions he over-heated himself, and was attacked by an inflammation in his lungs, which in a few days carried him off. His widow was left pregnant with another boy, who died in his infancy; and, besides her children by Alfieri, had two daughters and a son, by her first husband, living. She was still young and handsome, and espoused for her third husband the Chevalier Hyacinth de Magliano, the representative of a different branch of the Alfieri family, who had succeeded to an immense property by the death of his elder brother. Vittorio and his sister Julia experienced the utmost kindness from their new parent.

The signora's eldest son and daughter were successively sent to Turin; the one to the College of Jesuits, the other to a convent. Shortly after, Julia was placed in a convent at Asti, to the great grief of Vittorio, between whom and his sister the strongest affection existed. A