

PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF,¹

BY ALFIERI.*

SUBLIME specchio di veraci detti,
 Mostrami in corpo e in anima qual sono.
 Capelli, or radi in fronte, e rossi pretti;
 Lunga statura, e capo in terra prono;
 Sottil persona in su due stinchi schietti;
 Bianca pelle, occhi azzurri, aspetto buono;
 Giusto naso, bel labro, e denti eletti;
 Pallido in volto, più che un re sul trono.

Or duro, acerbo; ora piaghevol, mite;
 Irato sempre, e non maligno mai;
 La mente e il cor meco in perpetua lite;
 Per lo più mesto, e talor lieto assai
 Or stimandomi Achille, ed or Tersite.
 Uom, se' tu grande, o vil?—Muori, e il saprai.

THOU lofty mirror, Truth, let me be shewn
 Such as I am, in body and in mind.
 Hair, plainly red, retreating now behind;
 A stature tall, a stooping head and prone;
 A meagre body on two stilts of bone;
 Fair skin, blue eyes, good look, nose well design'd;
 A handsome mouth, teeth that are rare to find,
 And pale in face, more than a king on throne.

Now harsh and crabbed, mild and pleasant soon;
 Always irascible, no malignant foe;
 My head and heart and I never in tune;
 Sad for the most part, then in such a flow
 Of spirits, I feel now hero, now buffoon;—
 Man, art thou great or vile?—Die, and thou'lt know.

* Author: Vittorio Alfieri, Translator: Leigh Hunt / Transcribed and annotated by Gilberta Golinelli.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

¹ Sonnet CLXVII, by Vittorio Alfieri, first published in *Rime*. The English translation is by Leigh Hunt.

CONTENTS

OF VOLUME THE FIRST.

	Page
Preface - - - -	5
The Vision of Judgment, by QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS -	15
A Letter to the Editor of "My Grandmother's Review" -	41
The Florentine Lovers - - -	51
Rhyme and Reason, or a New Proposal to the Public respecting Poetry in Ordinary - -	81
A German Apologue - - -	91
Letters from Abroad. Letter I.—Pisa -	97
May-day Night; a Poetical Translation from Goëthe's Faust - - -	121
Ariosto's Episode of Cloridan, Medoro, and Angelica -	139
The Country Maiden - - -	161
Epigram of Alfieri - - -	163
Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh - -	164
Heaven and Earth, a Mystery - -	165
The Giuli Tre - - -	207
On the Spirit of Monarchy - - -	227
The Dogs - - -	245
Letters from Abroad. Letter II.—Genoa -	269
A Tale of the Passions - - -	289
Les Charmettes and Rousseau - - -	327
Longus - - -	347
On the Scotch Character - - -	367
Virgil's Hostess - - -	377
The Suliotes - - -	385
Minor Pieces	
Alfieri's Benediction - - -	395
An Ultra License - - -	396
From the French - - -	396
Song, written for an Indian Air -	397
Martial—Lib. I. Ep. I. - -	398
New Duet - - -	398
Portrait of Alfieri ¹ - - -	399

ERRATA.

Page 6, line 6, instead of “a *worse* king never left a realm undone,” read “a *weaker* king ne’er left a realm undone.”²

Page 7, line 16, instead of “a bad ugly woman,” read “an unhandsome woman.”

Page 20, line 5, for “dwell,” read “well.”

Page 23, line 6, instead of “amidst the *war*,” read “amidst the *roar*.”

Page 38, in the note, for “body,” read “bottom.”

Page 62, lines 29 and 30—and page 68, line 15, for “*Signora* Veronica,” read “*Gossip* Veronica.”

Page 109, line 10, for “about the size of Stratford Place,” read “about *half* the size.”

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EDITORIAL NOTES

- ¹ “Portrait of Himself” used as title on p. 399.
- ² Misprint for *realm undone*.