



BOUND BY ROGER DE COVERLY, LONDON.

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Our Portrait Gallery.

ROGER DE COVERLY, LONDON.

ROGER DE COVERLY is the descendant of a family which came from France and settled in London in the early part of the eighteenth century. He was born in London on the 12th of February, 1831, and at the age of fourteen years was apprenticed to Mr. Joseph Zaehnsdorf, sen., who then carried on business at 49 Great Queen-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he lived indoors. The usual hours for apprentices were then from 7 a.m. till 9 p.m., or leaving out two hours for meals, twelve hours of work per day—leaving little time for mental improvement. Young de Coverly had always been passionately fond of music, and when about eighteen years of age he determined to learn to play the violin, but difficulties presented themselves: he could only obtain lessons in the morning, and had to get Mr. Zaehnsdorf's permission to be absent from work one day in the week for that purpose, while his practice had to be taken in the evening after nine o'clock and before commencing work in the morning, Saturdays and Sundays excepted. Apart from these natural difficulties of apprentice life nothing important transpired, and in the early part of 1851 he became tired of the colourless and humdrum existence and resolved to end it. He approached his employer, and managed to persuade Mr. Zaehnsdorf to make him a present of the remainder of his time some nine months before its expiration. His desire was to get some insight into the bookselling business, as it was his own and his father's wish that he should commence business for himself as soon as possible as a bookseller and binder combined. Accordingly, having got possession of his indentures on May 1st, he set to work endeavouring to get an engagement at some bookseller's, and on this quest called upon the late

John Lilly, the then eminent bookseller of Pall Mall. After hearing his application, Mr. Lilly spoke very kindly to him; he was unable to employ him, but strongly, very strongly, advised him to stick to his handicraft, telling him there was a better prospect of success in the binding than in the bookselling trade. Finding a similar want of encouragement in other quarters, he thought over Mr. Lilly's advice, and, with his father's counsel, joined the London

Consolidated Society of Journeymen Bookbinders, with the intention of improving his practice at the trade as a journeyman, for a time. During the interim he was not idle, but spent about four hours per day in assisting a friend who kept a stationer's shop; he also set up a press in his father's house, and commenced binding such of his father's and his own books as required it. Before long, however, he obtained employment in the establishment of Messrs. J. & J. Leighton, of Brewer-street, Golden-square, whose work in the exhibition of 1851 had particularly taken his attention. Here he found most of his fellow workmen very agreeable companions, and many a good game of chess was played during the dinner hour, for about this time, 1852, the Bookbinders' Amateur Chess Club was originated by the employes in this establishment, the first meetings being held in



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the "White Horse" Tavern, Holborn. He remained with Messrs. Leighton, with occasional intervals for holidays, until October, 1863, parting from them with a deep sense of the great kindness and consideration that he had ever received from both Messrs. John and James Leighton. At the same time he took honourable leave of the Trade Society—and would pay a passing tribute of respect to the ever genial courtesy of the late T. J. Dunning, then secretary—and commenced business on his own account.

