

THE AUTHOR OF «RORY O'MORE.»

RECOLLECTIONS OF SAMUEL LOVER, BY HIS DAUGHTER.

WITH PICTURES AND AUTOGRAPHS FROM MRS. LOVER'S ALBUM.

I AM asked to write some recollections of my father, his life and his work, in particular referring to an autograph album of my mother's, which I recently sent to America as a present to my eldest son, Victor Herbert.

Samuel Lover was born in Dublin, February, 24, 1797. His father was a man of business, and, as the eldest son, Samuel was able, at sixteen years of age, to fulfil the duties of head clerk (for he was as clever at correspondence and figures as he was at everything else), and so save much expense to the firm. It was natural to wish that he should remain in it. My father, however, possessed such strong artistic talents that business was distasteful to him, and he longed to follow another path in life. He had had the misfortune to lose his mother when he was a boy of twelve. She would probably have understood and forwarded his aspirations; for the tenderest affection had existed between them, and throughout life he revered the memory of his mother as the sweetest and best of women. His talents he probably inherited in part from her, as well as his amiable and lovable character.

At sixteen years of age he left his home, in spite of the opposition of his father, and resolved to go his own way, depending solely on his own mental exertions for earning his bread. This shows his character in its true light; for although distinguished by an enchanting amiability and cheerfulness, yet he

had an iron will, an untiring industry, and perfect self-dependence.

At first he managed to support himself by executing for physicians drawings, which were destined to appear in anatomical works, and had, of course, to be remarkably accurate. It is the more extraordinary that he was able to do this, as he had never been taught to draw, and had up to that time practised the art only for his amusement in leisure hours.

With patient industry, he daily improved himself in miniature-painting, and was soon able to establish himself as a portrait-painter in Dublin. This remained his principal profession through life, although he practised many branches of art besides.

Having painted everybody in Dublin who wished to be painted (as he himself used to express it), after the lapse of a considerable time he decided on shifting the scene of his efforts to London, where an endless field of action presented itself. The groundwork of all his future activity had in the meantime been laid in Dublin. He had been contributing to va-

rious magazines, and also making many charming drawings for them, which had appeared as wood-engravings.

The first and second series of the humorous and racy «Legends and Stories of Ireland» had appeared in London, and had been received with great favor by the public and the press in England as well as in Ireland.

The first song which he succeeded in selling



FROM PHOTOGRAPH OF MINIATURE BY HIMSELF. OWNED BY HIS GRANDSON, VICTOR HERBERT.

SAMUEL LOVER (ABOUT THE AGE OF 35).

to a publisher he would not take money for, but arranged to take a guitar in exchange, as he had long wished to possess such an instrument, but had as yet not been able to buy one. How little he dreamed at that time of the thousands of pounds that would be made by his songs in the future! Unfortunately, the publishers got the lion's share of the profits.

I may here remark that he played both the piano and the guitar exceedingly well, although he had never had a lesson on either of these instruments. He was most eager in acquiring every sort of information, and had, for instance, out of his own scanty earnings as a youth, after he had left his father's house, contrived to pay for lessons in French from the best French teacher in Dublin, and he spoke that language fluently. It was then a still more necessary accomplishment in society than now, and at school he had learned only Latin.

After his first song had sold well, several others followed, and it was easy to find publishers for further compositions in London.

His first dramatic work was brought out at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. It treated of the principal incidents in the life of a certain real or legendary queen of Ireland, who was an Amazon and a great heroine.

Before transferring his place of residence from Ireland to England, my father had exhibited a large and beautiful miniature portrait of Paganini at the Royal Academy, London. Most portraits of Paganini were hideous caricatures, making him look like a demon, while my father's portrait of him was a wonderful likeness, representing the master as he really was, and doing justice to the spiritual and benignant expression of his extremely interesting face. The picture at once procured for my father a most honorable rank as an artist in London, and actually grounded his reputation there.

On opening my mother's album, the first names to be seen are those of Nicolo Paganini and Thomas Moore. Paganini sat for his portrait to my father in Dublin, having passed some time in Ireland. He contributed an Italian verse to the album along with his signature. Thomas Moore gave a verse of Montgomery's, which was rather ill-placed modesty, as one of his own would have been more natural and acceptable. Moore was an old friend, for the families of my parents had been long allied in friendship with his family.

Not many of the autographs date from Ireland, but there are several which were evidently contributed there.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAY.

SAMUEL LOVER.

Maturin, who wrote the humorous novel of «The Heroine,» an inimitable travesty of the exaggerated romantic novels formerly so popular (of which Mrs. Radcliffe's were about the best), is here represented. Maturin was one of those unusually clever men who never *did* much, and so his name is well-nigh forgotten.

Among my father's friends I may mention Bulwer, Dickens, Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, Charles Lever, and Mark Lemon; and the artists Sir Edwin Landseer, Maclise, Henry Martin, Stanfield, Chantry, Sir Richard Westmacott, John Foley, Cruikshank, and John Leech.

In mentioning Charles Lever, I am reminded of a certain club that existed in Dublin, for it was founded by Lever, and called «The Burschenschaft,» in imitation of the students' clubs in Germany, where Lever had studied. He was a physician by profession. There belonged to this club a surprisingly large number of talented young Irishmen who afterward made themselves names in the world as authors, painters, composers, or in some other way. The club evenings were celebrated for their brilliancy. Lover was their appointed «minstrel,» and on his leaving Dublin the mem-



however, there was a «happy event» expected in his own family, and he could not make up his mind to leave his home at such a moment. He therefore wrote, expressing his gratification at the honor conferred by the order, and stating that in a very short time he would be enabled to arrive in London to execute it. Unfortunately, courts are easily offended, and the order was never renewed.

On taking up his residence in London in the following year, a very agreeable time began for him, so that he had no cause to regret the pleasant social circle he had left in Dublin.

Though he did so many things well, he often regretted that not one of his talents had been thoroughly perfected by study and instruction. Had he been educated either as a painter or as a musician, there is no doubt that he would have attained a much

greater celebrity; yet it is probable that it was more conducive to his personal happiness to practise all the arts he loved so well, than to be confined to the exercise of only one.

Overwhelmed with orders for portraits on his arrival in London, he painted numbers of beautiful miniatures in course of time. Celebrated men and famous beauties were among his sitters.

Two very slight sketches of his fine miniatures are in his wife's album, evidently intended as pleasant remembrances of the pictures for her. One of these is the portrait of an Indian prince who came to the British court as ambassador extraordinary from the King of Oude. The sketch stands

*Samuel Connell M. L. for
the City of Dublin*

DRAWN IN PENCIL BY SAMUEL LOVER.

bers presented him with a gold snuff-box bearing the emblem of the club and the inscription, «The Burschenschaft to their Minstrel.»

I cannot resist relating here a circumstance which, although it was a case where Lover missed instead of achieved something, yet shows his character in a very amiable light.

After the portrait of Paganini had been exhibited in London, where it was very much appreciated and talked about, as I have already remarked, a letter reached him from the chamberlain of the Duchess of Kent, summoning him at once to London to paint the portrait of the Princess Victoria, now the Queen of England. Just at that time,

opposite the poetical contribution of the prince. This is in Hindustani, with a line added in the Persian language. The picture itself was splendid, showing a man of fine presence in gorgeous Indian dress, and was about the largest miniature ever painted. The second sketch is of a portrait which Lover painted of Henry, Lord Brougham, in his robes of office. To my father one of the most interesting persons that he ever painted was the venerable Mrs. Gwynn, the «Jessamy bride» of Oliver Goldsmith. Mrs. Gwynn was a very old woman at the time, though the traces of her former enchanting beauty were still plainly to be distinguished. I need scarcely say that she still preserved as a sacred relic a lock of Goldsmith's hair, to cut off which for her his coffin had been opened just before he was interred.

«Sam Lover,» or «little Lover,» as his friends sometimes irreverently called him, was a great favorite in London society. Possessing an inexhaustible fund of high spirits, good humor, and sparkling wit, no one could be better company. Nor was he one of those who, as the Irish neatly express it, «hang up their fiddles behind the door» when they come home. On the contrary, he was never more happy, delightful, and entertaining than when he was at home, with only his wife and daughters about him. His truly lovable character was not only shown in gaiety: he was also deeply humane and kind, with the keenest sense of honor and the warmest heart in the world. His song of «The Four-leaved Shamrock» truly expresses his own aspirations.

Oh! thus I'd play th' enchanter's
part,
Thus scatter bliss around,
And not a tear nor aching heart
Should in the world be found!

He would have liked to see the whole world happy. Nevertheless, he was «a good hater» (such as Dr. Johnson would have loved) when he knew any one to be a contemptible character.

The songs of Lover became very popular, and he wrote a great number of them, and nearly all were set to music of his own; but sometimes he also set words to old Irish

melodies. I cannot remember the names of half of these songs, and a list of them would be much too long here. I will mention the titles of only a few of the most popular: «The Angel's Whisper,» «My Mother Dear!» «The Land of the West,» «The Four-leaved Shamrock,» «What Will You Do, Love?» «The Fisherman's Daughter,» and the humorous songs «Rory O'More,» «Molly Bawn,» «The Low-backed Car,» and «The Bowld Sojorner-boy.» I may say, with a truly just pride, that his songs are sung wherever the English language is spoken, and there is no danger of their being soon forgotten.

In my mother's album one song of his, («Oh, Lovely Eyes!» in his own handwriting, appears as a musical contribution. There is only one other musical addition to it, and that is a few bars of music from the hand of that gifted Irishman, Michael William Balfe. Balfe and his charming wife, a Hungarian, were frequent guests in my father's house. They had both been educated as opera-singers in Italy, and sang delightfully. Balfe was also a very good actor. He was the manager of a London theater at one time, and brought



PAINTED IN WATER-COLOR BY SAMUEL LOVER.

LORD BROUGHAM.

out several new operas and comedies, among others a little comedy of Lover's entitled, «Il Paddy Whack in Italia,» treating of artist life in Italy. In this piece Balfe played an Irish part capitably, and sang the then new song of «Molly Bawn» so charmingly that it was repeatedly encored every night.

Long before this Lover had written several comedies for the Olympic Theatre, then under the management of the celebrated Madame Vestris (afterward Mrs. Charles Mathews), who was very fond of singing his songs, which she also introduced into other pieces. Some delicately humorous songs, such as «Beauty and Time,» were written expressly for her, and she sang them perfectly.

Only one actor's name appears in the album—that of poor Tyrone Power. There are several pleasant notes of his preserved, and also a photograph of him taken at a period when photography was in its infancy.

Power was the cleverest actor of Irish parts that ever trod the stage, though, strange to say, he was not an Irishman, but a Welshman. Several dramatic works of my father's were written for Tyrone Power, among

Do you know him?



"Devil a bit," says S. L.

them the pieces «Rory O'More,» dramatized from the novel of that name; «The White Horse of the Peppers,» dramatized from one of the tales of «The Legends and Stories of Ireland»; and a little farce, «The Happy Man.» All these pieces had long runs. My father naturally delighted in Power as the man who could play his Irish parts best, and Power delighted in my father as the man who wrote him the best parts.

One of the most interesting autographs is that of Daniel O'Connell. An excellent little pencil likeness of him faces his autograph. My father drew this on the back of a letter one morning when he was breakfasting with O'Connell, which he often did when Parliament was sitting; and he also visited O'Connell on his estate of Derrynane in Ireland on one of his rare autumn holidays. Some very pretty poems by Mrs. Fitzsimon, O'Connell's amiable and talented daughter, are to be found in the album.

The following letter from Shirley Brooks, of «Punch,» also appears in the album:

1st April, 1868.
S. HUGUES.

6 KENT TERRACE,
REGENT'S PARK, N. W.

TOUCHING THE «ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.»

And is it an old friend that can't read my handwriting merely because it happens to be disguised in print? I'd know *his* in any verses he might put forth. But it is all the pleasanter to be thanked in a mask, when one knows the words will not be recalled when the mask comes off. «But who the devil is it yet?» says he. Now never be in a hurry. How did B. Disraeli, Esq., become Premier of Ireland and the adjacent islets, except by waiting? I am glad you are in that beautiful Jersey, which I did not know that you had (ye had) made yer Pat-mos (ha! ha!); and maybe I'll look ye up this autumn, and will burn the incense of a cigar to St. Prelude.

And now thou seest my soul's angelic hue,
'Tis time these features were uncurtained too.

(W. T. MOORE.)

Do you know *him*?

«Devil a bit,» says S. L. «Looks half asleep over his «Punch,» and no wonder, if he's been reading his own contributions.» After a pause: «I think I remember some such objectionable face at the Garrick Club; but there's a bad lot there, and I'm not proud to remember that boiling.» Well then, look inside the envelope, and you'll see the names? my dear Lover, of a man who is heartily glad that he has unexpectedly returned you a fraction of the pleasure you have so long given him.

Ever yours,

SAM'L LOVER, ESQ.

S. B.

The album contains also a signature of Lord Byron, which is, unfortunately, only pasted in. My mother got it, in all probability, either from Thomas Moore or from Samuel Rogers.

Notes to my father from the poets Samuel Rogers and Thomas Campbell, and from the novelists Miss Edgeworth, Harrison Ainsworth, and the gifted and beautiful Mrs. Caroline Norton, enhance the value of the book more than mere signatures would have done.

Original poetical contributions are not numerous in the album; among the well-known authors who have contributed is Sheridan Knowles. It is interesting to remember that both Sheridan Knowles and Mrs. Norton were descendants of the family of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—examples of the occasional inheritance of brilliant mental gifts.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Miss Austen, Mrs. Barbara Hofland, and several writers of lesser note have contributed original poems. There are also poems from the pen of the gifted but ill-fated Letitia Elizabeth Landon—«L. E. L.»

Another very talented writer, Francis Mahony, a Catholic priest who wrote under the name of Father Prout, has translated a humorous song of my father's, «Who Are You?» into French and Italian in a surprisingly dexterous manner. He was an accomplished linguist. One little unfinished water-color sketch of my father's is also there—a bard taking leave of his lady-love. Another bard, designed by Alfred Crowquill, follows soon after.

A contribution in hieroglyphics by the Oriental traveler Wilkinson ingeniously sets forth my mother's name and social status.

A little original pencil-sketch, drawn in five minutes for me by «Johnny» Millais (the late Sir John Millais) when he was a boy of ten, is a pretty remembrance of his precocious talent. «Johnny» was always restless and uneasy in any company until some compassionate person provided him with a pencil and an unlimited supply of paper; then he was quite happy, and covered whole quires of paper in an hour or two with often really charming sketches from the almost inexhaustible store of his happy fancy.

My father's first novel was «Rory O'More,» and he appears to have had a great partiality for the song of that name, very likely because it was the first of his songs that attained a great popularity. I do not think that he otherwise had any particular favorites among the works of his pen or brush; but «Rory O'More» he made the hero of his first novel,

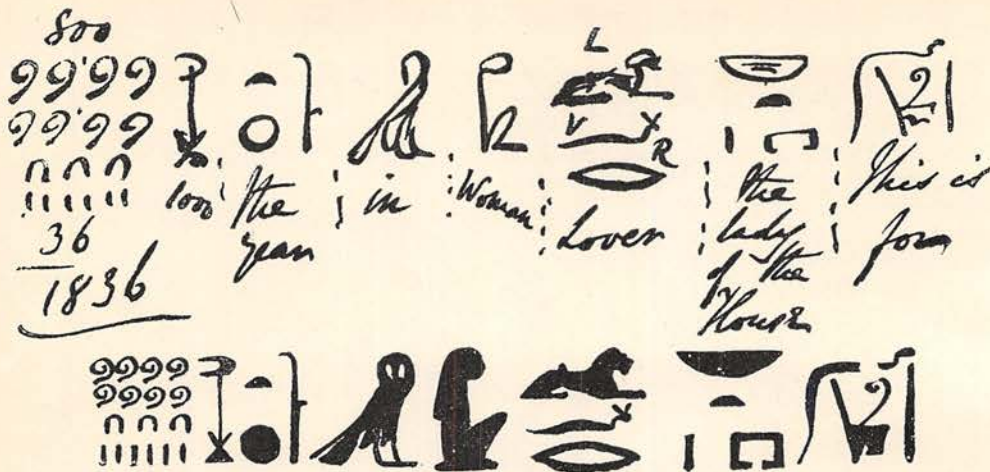


A PENCIL-SKETCH BY MILLAIS WHEN A BOY OF TEN.

and afterward he dramatized the book, thus making a threefold use of the name.

His second novel was «Handy Andy,» and this was followed by «He Would be a Gentleman.» These two were first published as serials, and illustrated with etchings «by the author.» Only people who have written works in this manner know what a severe strain it is on the mental faculties to be obliged to produce a certain amount of «copy» within a short given time; in this case two etchings had to be added, though my father had several other occupations at the same time. These two works consequently taxed his powers to the utmost. His eyes having begun to suffer, especially from miniature-painting and etching, it became evident that he ought no longer to continue working in the same manner if he hoped to retain his eyesight unimpaired. This danger was happily averted, and he retained his keen sight to the last day of his life.

In consequence of various considerations, he determined to undertake an entirely new kind of activity, and began to give evening entertainments, which he called «Lover's



WILKINSON'S HIEROGLYPHICS.

Irish Evenings.» In these entertainments he told Irish stories, intermixed with witty and interesting anecdotes and relations of various kinds, declaimed, and sang his own songs. His new enterprise was rewarded with great success, first in London, then in the provinces, and in Ireland and Scotland. He was as zealous in this new work as he had been in all others, and in 1846 went to America, where he met with the same flattering reception as elsewhere, and had the greatest kindness and friendship shown him on all sides.

An incident of the American tour was the letter which follows:

MY DEAR SIR: I fear that, after all, I shall not be able to attend Mr. Lover's dinner. I will be entirely frank with you: I am frightened at the idea of having to speak, which at all public dinners hangs over me like the sword of Damocles. It is this skeleton at the feast that warns me away.

My warmest thanks, however, for your invitation; and believe me,

Very truly yours,
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

October 2d, 1846.

Within two years he traveled through the whole of the United States, and visited the principal cities of Canada. He then returned

to England, and soon gave up his «Irish Evenings» altogether, from that time forward resting upon his laurels.

Although always more or less occupied with the pencil and the pen, he did not again undertake any important literary works, and painted only for his own amusement.

The royalties on his musical, literary, and dramatic works brought him in a comfortable income, and in 1855 he was informed that Queen Victoria had granted him one of the few pensions for literary merit which are at the disposal of the British government.

To describe how he worked is no difficult task. He delighted in mental work of all sorts for its own sake, and he was of so active a mind, and by nature so industrious, that idleness was impossible to him. He was passionately fond of drawing and painting, and equally fond of music. This made the vast amount of work which he got through in his life comparatively easy to him. I may safely affirm that he did the work of several men—industrious men—during his active career. There is no doubt that his occupations were of so varied a nature as to make his work easier for him, and his elastic and happy temperament helped him over all difficulties.

When I remember how little time he ever allowed himself for exercise, I am astonished

Nicola Paganini
Dublin 7. Sept: 1831

AUTOGRAPH OF PAGANINI.

that his health was always so excellent. Of recreation he always had enough in society, but his holidays were rare. Only for a few weeks in the autumn, when all London is «out of town,» did he allow himself any relaxation from work. His industry was such that in the busiest years of his life he did not even grant himself time to look at the daily papers, or to read any new book that was much talked of. His wife always read the papers and the new books for him, giving him in conversation a résumé of the news of the day and the contents of the books, so that he was always well informed of everything that was going on. If anything exceedingly important was on hand in the political world, or if any part of a book was particularly interesting or well written, these she would read to him while he was painting.

Many artists are as dumb as fishes at their easels; but he could converse charmingly while he was painting, which was a particularly pleasant quality for his sitters. In painting or in writing he worked indefatigably, and seemed to be independent of the «moods» to which many artists appear to be victims. As to his songs, he used to say himself that he never wrote a song in his life except when he could n't help it. The songs used to «come to him,» generally words and melody simultaneously, so that he had only to write them down. Frequently the idea of a song would come when he was occupied with something quite different, as, for instance, while painting. He would then leave his easel, write down the idea, and return to his work. Afterward he would return to the idea, and work it out.

He painted in water-colors and in oils, as well as in miniature, and also etched very well. He was exceedingly fond of sketching from nature, and had hundreds of beautiful sketches that he had made for his own amusement in Ireland, England, and America. In his old age he began to work in wood (in former years he sometimes carved models of ships, which he used to paint and have rigged), carving chimneypieces and

*My Niece is dying to see Rory Omore—
Yours very truly
Thos Campbell—*

Byron

bookcases adorned with Cupids, flowers, and fruits, as if he had been doing nothing else all his life!

It was not until he was nearly seventy years of age that his health began to fail. It was by no means a general break-up of the constitution, but symptoms of heart-disease showed themselves. In appearance he looked like a well-preserved man of about fifty. He was still extremely active, his curly hair was thick, though getting gray, and his teeth were as perfect and handsome as when he was twenty. Heart-disease made gradual progress, and the last year of his life he spent in Jersey, where he went to seek a milder air. He was never confined to his room, or even to the house, and he made many sketches while in Jersey.



*Done in a moment
by W. Allan. R.A.
May 2nd 1842.*

SKETCH
OF
MRS. SIDONS.

On the last morning of his life he arose as usual. He had long known that his end was approaching, and had awaited the hour with fortitude and resignation. He was over seventy-one years of age when his unusually active life came to a close in 1868.

Fanny Schmid.