

Trilinton. Decr. 9th 1827.

My dear Child.

I have taken this opportunity of writing to you. to enquire after your health and to wish you every enjoyment of happiness.

I shall be glad to know if your time is occupied in that which is agreeable to you. I beg my best respects to Mr. Riley.

I shall also be glad to know when you last had any Letters from your Brothers, or any account from them. or from your Uncle, or Aunt, in Cumberland. and whether you have any friends, or acquaintances, ^{that} come to see you, or visit any.

If it be in your way, and will call upon Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes, artist, they will I am sure be happy to see you, as will Mr. and Mrs. Scott, or upon.

Mrs. Riley
Boarding School
Almon House London



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or Mr. W.^m Cooke. with my compliments. as also.
upon Mr. Cooper. painter. R.A. or J. Stothard Esq.
Royal Academician. and if Mr. Davison painter. be yet
living. i. am sure it will be an happiness to him that
you paid him an visit. with greatest respects.

I shall be glad at all times to hear any London news
from you. Your Gran mother. and Aunt here. are pretty
well. and am happy. i. can say the same of myself.
the weather here. has perhaps for the season been changeful
and damp.

with every kind affection
i. remain your affectionate father.

Luke. Stennell.

you will remember me to your Wife and Aunt Shenton,

To Miss Eliza Stennell in Mr. Cobble's Boarding School
Aldison House London

MR. LUKE CLENNELL.

It is so many years since this once promising artist disappeared from before the public, that persons as old as ourselves, who remember and admired his talents, will be surprised to hear that he died at Newcastle only on the 9th ult., in the fifty-ninth year of his age. For two and twenty years has he been lost to art and to society, and the greater part of the time confined in a lunatic asylum. Without falling in with the prevailing humour of the day, and upbraiding society for what it can neither control nor influence, still we must express our belief and our regret that the fortunes and fate of Luke Clennell are but too true a representative of the fortunes and fate of genius generally. "Great wit to madness"—but the passage is known, and unpleasant truths need not be dwelt on. Born in the humbler classes, Clennell rose, by the unaided exertions of his own vigorous mind, to a somewhat prominent station among the artists of his day; but the frail tenement was overwrought, and his mind failed just when he seemed about to reap the laurels and the fame for which he had so long struggled.

Luke Clennell was the son of a farmer at Ulgham near Morpeth, in Northumberland, where he was born on the 30th of March, 1781. He is said to have displayed at a very early age a passion for sketching and caricaturing, and many anecdotes have been related by his schoolfellows of the troubles in which it involved him, for his slate was sure to be covered with rude figures of birds and beasts, instead of those of arithmetic. On his removal from school, he was apprenticed to his uncle, a tanner, but the ruling passion still swayed his destiny. He was on one occasion so absorbed in his favourite pursuit as to be unaware of the presence of a customer, who reproved him somewhat sharply for his inattention. Clennell submitted in silence—exhibited the skins—and the man of business proceeded to examine, compare, and select. Unfortunately, when about to depart, he caught sight of a caricature likeness of himself, which the boy had sketched in chalk behind the door. These manifest though ill-timed predilections for art induced his friends to place him with Bewick, of Newcastle, the celebrated wood-engraver, to whom he was now apprenticed. Soon after, his parents were involved in difficulties, and, to procure a little pocket money, Clennell was accustomed to dispose of the productions of his pencil by raffle among his companions; and some of these earlier specimens of his talent are, we are informed, yet to be seen in the neighbouring farm-houses. While with Bewick, he assiduously availed himself of all opportunities to prosecute those studies which had hitherto been to him only a source of trouble and anxiety. He was soon so far a proficient as to be employed by his master in copying drawings on the block, and in executing such subjects as required freedom of outline and breadth of effect. In 1804, shortly after he had served out his term of apprenticeship, he removed to London, and there married the daughter of Mr. Charles Warren, the engraver. The fame of his talent had preceded him, and in this great mart for genius he soon found abundant employment. Among his best works, are the illustrations to Falconer's 'Shipwreck,' Rogers's Poems, after drawings by Stothard, and the Diploma of the Highland Society, from a design by the President West. "Clennell's cuts," says Mr. Jackson,* "are distinguished by their free and artistlike execution, and by their excellent effect. An admirable specimen of his engraving is the vignette in Falconer's 'A Ship running before the Wind in a Gale.' The motion of the waves and the gloomy appearance of the sky are represented with admirable truth and feeling. Perhaps no engraving of the same kind, either on copper or wood, conveys the idea of a storm at sea with greater fidelity. The drawing was made by Thurston, but the spirit and effect, the lights and shadows, the apparent seething of the waves, were introduced by Clennell." In fact, as his whole life proves, Clennell was an artist: while yet at Newcastle, he had availed himself of his hours of leisure to make sketches of rustic and marine scenery, and portraits of his friends. He now, in London, met at the house of his father-in-law with men of congenial taste, literary men as well as artists; his mind enlarged, his ambition took a higher aim, and he

resolved to abandon engraving and become a painter. Being familiar with the use of water colours—having already made many drawings for the 'Border Antiquities'—he resolved to become a candidate for a prize offered by the British Institution, for the best sketch of 'The Decisive Charge of the Life Guards at Waterloo.' He succeeded, and received 150 guineas; an engraving from this picture was subsequently published by Bromley, for the benefit of the artist's family.

In 1814, the Earl of Bridgewater gave Mr. Clennell a commission to paint a large picture, commemorative of the dinner given by the city of London to the Allied Sovereigns, in which he was to introduce portraits of the principal guests. The artist had, of course, great difficulty in procuring the required portraits. It is believed, indeed, that his health suffered from unceasing anxieties on this point. At length, when he had collected all his materials, finished his sketch, and was proceeding vigorously with the great work itself, his mind suddenly became a blank—to the astonishment of his friends, for they had no previous warning, he was found to be insane—and he never recovered. It is gratifying to know, that, during his long years of confinement, he found innocent amusement in attempts at musical and poetical composition, and in drawing and wood-engraving. Many of these we have seen. Mr. Jackson has given some specimens of both, and we are enabled to add other poems. "His wood-engravings (says Mr. Jackson) resembled the first attempts of a boy; but he prized them highly, and ranked them among the most successful productions in the art." His poetry was wild, strange, and generally incoherent, yet not without music in its flow, and vague shadowy visions of the beautiful. We shall give a few specimens, which, under circumstances, cannot fail, we think, to interest our readers:

Soleman.

Zady, doth the dawning light
Thy early step invite?
Or, on the dawning of the day,
Where the creaming spray,
Saluting the golden sand,
Thy fondness command.
Perhaps in the ocean's tide
Thy brown camel's side
Thou dost lave
With the spouting wave—
Say with thy fan,
The early hour to scan—
Or in the shade,
Where softest lights pervade—
Or say,
In this rosy day,
In curiosity to inquire,
Or to admire,
With thy symbol soft,
Charming, merry, oit,
Saluting the sense
With melodious agreeableness,
Or dost contemplate the round sun,
As he hath begun
To gain
Upon the watery main,
And, in thy musing, reach
The gilded beach,
Where the curling waters flow
In calm bestow,
And, in soft reveal,
Kiss the sandal upon thy heel.
Or, dost thou guard thy beastie, say
Sporting in the dashing spray!

A Floweret.

Where lengthened ray
Gildeth the bark upon her way;
Where vision is lost in space,
To trace,
As resting on a stile,
In ascent of half a mile—
It is when the birds do sing,
In the evening of the spring,
The broad shadow from the tree,
Falling upon the slope,
You may see,
O'er flowery mead,
Where doth a pathway lead
To the topmost ope—
The yellow butter-cup
And purple crow-foot,
The waving grass up,
Rounding upon the but—
The spreading daisy
In the clover maze,
The wild rose upon the hedge-row,
And the honey-suckle blow
For village girl
To dress her chaplet—
Or some youth, mayhap, let—
Or bind the linky trinket
For some earl—
Or trim up in plaits her hair
With much seeming care,

As fancy may think it—
Or with spittle moisten,
Or half wink it,
Or to music inclined,
Or to sleep in the soft wind.

St. Peter's, August, 1823.

L. C.

These indeed sound "like sweet bells jangled;" but at times his poetry was more coherent. The best specimen we have seen is the following:—

The lady upon her palfrey grey
Pranced in the summer's day,
In pleasure through the greenwood shade,
Where woodbine sweet and roses braid:
What a pleasure in the sunny light to see
A lady of such elegant simplicity.
Or by the hall or arbour bower,
Or lowly cot or lofty tower,
Or by the limpid flowing stream,
Or distant falling waters' cream,
What sounds of softness through the wooded dale,
And echo far along the winding vale.

Her pad was covered with a silken net,
With silken tie, and ribband rosette,
And a green ashen bough did bear,
Pendant, to shade the brow and ear;
A bridle bit of silver and gold,
And fair was the lady to behold.

And often she would guide
In gentleness to the fountain's side,
Or flowing well,

Her pony foal
Did drink from a bowl
Carved in the rocky dell.

But now the noontide's brightest ray
Shineth on the lady with palfrey grey,
And myrtles now sweet odours lend,
And arching branches o'er her shoulders bend.

What pleasure in the sunny day to see
A lady of such elegant simplicity!

L. C.

One better informed than ourselves, and himself an artist, thus writes to us respecting Clennell:—

"The principal characteristics of Luke Clennell's genius, as an artist, are readiness of composition, spirit of touch, and power of execution. Two of his early pictures are sufficient to prove this—his 'Arrival of Mackerel Boats at Brighton,' exhibited in the British Gallery, and his picture of 'The Day after the Fair,' in the possession of Mr. Mark Lambert, of Newcastle. This latter picture, perhaps more than any other, possesses all the charming qualities for which he stood almost unrivalled. His picture of 'The Decisive Charge of the Life Guards at Waterloo,' also bears ample testimony to his powers in the command of his pencil: it is full of dash and fire; every touch evinces the confidence of conscious strength. There is nothing of timidity or hesitation—all is decision; and the strength and perfection of the painter's thought seems transferred, as it were, at once, magically, to the canvas. His high talent as a landscape painter is sufficiently established by his works in the 'Border Antiquities.' The points from which he selected his views, show what an eye he had for picturesque composition: the powerful effects of light and shadow thrown into these views, prove his deep knowledge of chiaroscuro, the tasteful manner in which he introduced his figures lent an additional interest to the scenes. His delineation of rustic groups is rarely surpassed—instance, as a specimen, the 'Cow Hill Fair,' in the possession of Lord Durham: the figures are full of character and nature."

Mr. Clennell has been described to us, by those who knew him well, as a man of a kind and gentle disposition—of pleasing manners—open-hearted, sincere, and beloved by his family and friends; and we cannot close this notice better than with the hope expressed by Mr. Jackson, that though his condition appeared miserable to us, he was not himself miserable; that though deprived of the light of reason, he yet enjoyed some pleasures of which we can form no conception; and that his confinement occasioned to him—

Small feeling of privation, none of pain.

* Treatise on Wood Engraving.