

CLERCK'S ICONES.

BY W. J. HOLLAND, PH.D., D.D.

Under the title "*Icones Insectorum Rariorum cum Nominibus eorum trivialibus, locisque e C. Linnæi Arch: R: et Equ: Aur: Syst: Nat: allegatis,*" Charles Clerck, a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Upsala, commenced the publication at Stockholm, in the year 1759, of a series of plates intended to illustrate the species of exotic lepidoptera recently named by his distinguished fellow-countryman, the immortal Linnæus.

About a month ago I received from Mr. Felix Dames, the well-known bibliophile of Berlin, a letter informing me that he had succeeded in securing a remarkably fine copy of this exceedingly rare work, which he held at my disposal. I immediately cabled to him that I would become its purchaser. But six or seven copies of the book are known to be in existence, and not all of these in perfect state. The one I own, which has just come into my hands, and which is the only copy which has ever crossed the Atlantic, is in superb condition, and enjoys the distinction of being, with the exception of the copy in the library of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, the only example in which there are the plates, so far as published, of the Third Section of the work which Clerck did not live to complete. He died on July 22nd, 1765.

Hagen, in his *Bibliotheca Entomologica*, states that the work consists of two sections, the first of which, in addition to the title page and dedication, has eight pages of Swedish and Latin text, together with sixteen plates; and the second, in addition to the dedication, contains three pages of text, thirty-eight plates, and an index of three pages. The copy lying before me contains, in addition to the parts described by Hagen, seven plates, numbered from 4 to 10, of which the first two are coloured, and the next to the last (pl. 9) is partly coloured.

The extreme rarity of the book is well known to lepidopterists. Gottlob Wilhelm, in his "*Unterhaltungen,*" *Ins. II.*, page 16, published in 1779, is quoted by Strecker in his "*Butterflies and Moths of North America,*" p. 218, as having described the work in the following terms:—"Fifty-five pages large 4to, a simple register, together with a dedication and preface, compose the whole work, which, at auction, was sold for 600 Swedish dollars." Hagen tells us that the book was distributed by the Queen of Sweden in the form of presentation copies, and that it