



OR

CRICHTON ROYAL INSTITUTION LITERARY REGISTER.

The night was still, and o'er the hill
The moon shone on the castle wa';
The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
Around her on the castle wa'.
Robert Burns from *'The Night Was Still'* (1786)

There is a crack in everything.
That's how the light gets in.
Leonard Cohen from *'Anthem'* (1992)

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From *Fairy Tale*

There is a place I seek,
it's not on any map I've seen.
I'll set off into the unknown,
ask directions on the way.

By Leonie Ewing, Crichton Writers (CW)

CORRESPONDENCE

Tuesday, 24th December, 1844

Mr Editor, - You declare in your first Number, noticing a musical and dancing soiree, held here in honour of St. Andrew, "we are great advocates for enlarging the calendar, especially of *Feasts* and Festivals."

Now, Sir, having been a partaker in the dancing soiree, and feasts of last night, held in Mid South Gallery, permit me to say a few words.

I saw not an unhappy face in the assembly; all for the moment seemed, indeed, perfectly at home, forgetting where they were, and how situated!

You emphasise the word "*Feast*". Is it for this reason - as being the *feast* of reason - the partaking of innocent exercise and enjoyment? If it be so, then you should join with me in advocating dancing and singing, as often as possible within this Institution. I would say one hour every evening for five days in the week, and three hours on the sixth. It is not more than needful exercise.

New Moon, January 3, 1845

The Great asylums of Scotland, cloistered
like the proud abbeys we tore down brick
by brick. Yet harder to love. They docked
at the edge of our towns like relations
with whom we felt ill at ease. Ones who kept
themselves to themselves. Their farms. Their laundries.

from *'The Great Asylums of Scotland'* by Tom Pow

This verse begins the poem which closes my poetry collection, *Dear Alice - Narratives of Madness* (2008). The book was the result of researches into the Crichton archive and related re-imaginings when I was working for Glasgow University at the Crichton. I was teaching creative writing and storytelling at the time - helping students to make meaning, which is what most of my colleagues and I were doing at the time. One of the pleasures of my Crichton project lay in a growing awareness of the earlier community that was created here and speculation on its relationship with the world that lay beyond it.

In the nineteenth century, the steady growth of Enlightenment views, together with the rise of a bourgeoisie with disposable income, led to the building of grand asylums throughout Europe. 'Lunatics', often reported by the Royal Lunacy Commission of Scotland, as being chained in the kitchen, could now be placed in an institution dedicated to their care. On a local level, it was Elizabeth Crichton's desire to establish a legacy with her husband's wealth and the vision of Dr W. A. F. Browne, author of *What Asylums Were, Are, and Ought To Be*, that gave Dumfries a lunatic asylum which was the equal of any throughout Europe.

Unsurprisingly, care was class-based, but there was an underpinning belief - and an economic necessity - in purposeful activity. Men worked on the farm, women in the laundry; while the paying guests worked in the garden or their own chosen pursuits. But, from the start, Dr Browne implemented his belief that the Crichton asylum 'ought to be' a place of creative activity. Patients were encouraged to paint, to draw and to write. The *New Moon* became a significant publication as a place for expression, remembrance and report.

In one of the poems in *Dear Alice*, I imagine a visit from Freud to the Crichton. Freud believed that we are sustained by the twin pillars of love and work. In the context of the Crichton, it would be more fitting, I think, to say that it served as a refuge in which patients could find kindness and meaning in their lives. The last part of that sentence may have particular political and social resonance today, yet the common value placed on cultural activity, then and now, is what most unites the writers, artists and scholars within these pages.

Tom Pow

TO CORRESPONDENTS

We daily receive communications from distinguished personages who have signalled themselves in various ways, and who are desirous of being handed down to posterity in our pages. We cannot enumerate how many premiers, peers, prelates, heroes of the turf, the table, and the tribune, are among these suitors; but we would assure one and all of these exalted erratic personages that eccentricity and extravagance are not the passports to our columns and privileges, that it is our wish to appear wise and prudent, "to assume a virtue if we have it not," and to avoid standing upon the pinnacles of the earth, or living in glass houses.

New Moon, March 7, 1845

From Elizabeth Crichton - Letter, 3rd August 1823

Pince-nez secured on his nose, Mr Dobie began the solemn reading of the Will. As I already knew, James had left the bulk of his wealth to me, with a generous bequest for each of his siblings. There was no grumbling, but rather an appreciative murmuring of satisfaction on all sides. However, the large pile of folders remained untouched. Mr Dobie moved the Will to one side and gestured to his servant to move the files within reach of all. It transpired that these documents related to James' many and various investments.

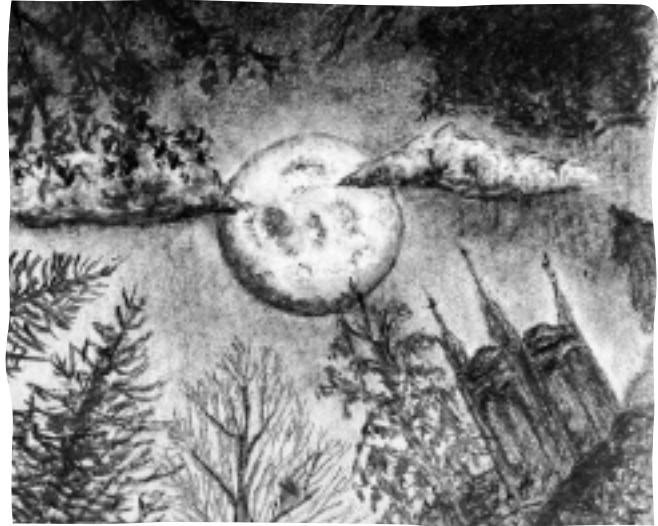
Mr Dobie began thus: "I do not intend at this point to read the full details of these documents before us. Suffice to say, that Dr James Crichton was a wise and prudent investor. He investigated every potential source of income and only acquired those which were properly audited by lawyers skilled in financial transactions. The total worth of his investments and other income, after allowing for the personal bequests which we have just heard, is £100,000, to be used by Mrs Elizabeth Crichton for charitable purposes. In this endeavour she will be aided by myself, Dr Henry Duncan, and James' eldest brother, Alistair, together with any Trustees that we see fit to appoint."

There was total silence for at least two minutes, during which I could scarcely breathe. I was daunted by the vast amount of money entrusted to me, but I knew that the men appointed would help me set about my task. I was also touched by James' faith in me. If he had believed in me, I felt I must be capable of undertaking this enterprise.

I have been much occupied in deciding what I should do with this bequest. I keep returning to an idea which James and I had often discussed in recent years, the provision of a local University here in Dumfries. This would enable young men in the area to select their study material from a wide choice of disciplines, and thus enhance their opportunities for a better life for them and their families. The town of Dumfries would greatly benefit from such a project. I still need to discuss this with Henry and Alistair, who will give me their opinions on my idea and discover how we may advance it.

Elizabeth

By Linda Powell (CW)



Crichton Church Sky, by Kay Cowan (FE)

From Elizabeth Crichton - Diary Extract, May 1834

For ten years James and I strove, with the assistance of our dear friend the Reverend Henry Duncan, Minister of Ruthwell Parish Church, who started the first Trustee Savings Bank the year James and I were married, to realise our great wish to found a seat of learning in Dumfries. Henry was such a good friend to James, and he has been a tower of strength to me, during the 10 years since James' death, in my efforts to establish a College of University status in Dumfries for the education of poor scholars.

Sadly, our efforts have been blocked by the four Scottish Universities, who guard their positions jealously, and a recent change of Government has resulted in an administration less sympathetic to our cause. It has been decided that the scheme cannot go ahead without government financial support in spite of the £85,000 set aside for the project. Also, my brother-in-law has made things more difficult by contesting James' Will through the courts of law, a fight in which I have, at last, been successful, but it has been costly!

I think it is now time to give up on our dream. The Trustees and I have decided to endow a lunatic asylum on the edge of Dumfries and so, we have procured a suitable piece of land with magnificent views over Criffel and the River. The land amounts to 40 acres of the Mountainhall Estate at Hillhead. I am determined that my hospital will be the best in Europe, not only in the treatment of patients, but also in its architecture and surroundings, which will be so important to the wellbeing of the inmates. To this end, I have employed the architect, William Burn, to design the hospital. I have seen his plans for Inverness Castle, which is nearly completed and which will be a really splendid building in the fashionable Scottish baronial style. It is just what I have in mind for the Crichton Hospital; a spacious building, built in local red sandstone, resembling the palace of a peer, airy, elevated and elegant and surrounded by extensive grounds and gardens, for the benefit and enjoyment of the patients.

By Beverley Vaux (CW)

From Dr Browne and Elizabeth Crichton

Dr Browne eyed her for a few seconds then said, "For the last one hundred years or so the insane have been treated as wild animals, not held responsible for their actions and kept locked up in appalling conditions, enduring treatments like bloodletting, irritant chemicals, being whipped, beaten, and starved. From what I've heard and read about you I understand your approach is one of moral management, based on humane psychosocial care of the patient."

He nodded. "My work here in Montrose Asylum has shown that social groupings are important, and shifting symptom patterns are often reflected in patients' dreams."

"And you use art mediums too, to provide insights into patients' conditions?"

"Yes. If we can enable patients to express themselves artistically the works not only provide us with insights into patients' conditions, they're also an important part of their treatment and recovery. Writing, painting, music – these forms encourage creative expression and operate by providing a person with a safe space to express their emotions, allowing them to feel more in control over their life. For example, Art therapy can help people improve cognitive and sensory motor function, self-esteem, self-awareness, and emotional resilience. It may also aid in resolving conflicts and reducing distress."

"Dr Browne, I'm prepared to offer you a position with a salary of £350 per annum and will build a separate house for you and your family within the grounds. My architect, William Burn, has designed the buildings and construction began three years ago. He assures me that the hospital will be completed and opened as the Crichton Institution for Lunatics next year. With you at the helm as Medical Superintendent I am sure that we shall be an outstanding medical facility for the treatment of the insane."

By Kriss Nichol (CW)

by Anonymous (OA)



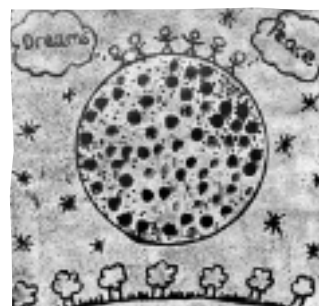
The Moon in language and culture 1

In **Mandarin** Chinese, the moon is called '亮' (yuèliàng), a term that conveys its luminous presence in the night sky. Chinese folklore is rich with tales of the moon goddess Chang'e and her jade rabbit, further emphasizing the cultural significance of the moon. As one of the most important holidays, the **Lunar New Year**, also known as the Chinese New Year, marks the beginning of a calendar year that bases its months on moon cycles, and begins on the new moon that appears between 21 January and 20 February. Similarly, the **Mid-Autumn Moon Festival**, which is observed widely throughout China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, is held around the autumn equinox in the Chinese calendar, typically in mid-September or early October, when the moon is believed to be the brightest of the year. Celebrated with many customs including ceremonial foods and colourful lanterns, the full moon symbolises a family reunion, which is why that day is also known as the Festival of Reunion.

(1 of 4) by Barbel Bräsh, Open University



by Anonymous (OA)



by Anonymous (OA)

TRANSLATION PRIZE

It is very possible that the busy, flesh-devouring, money-seeking world never heard of our great Translation Prize. But if our friends at large, our "chartered libertines", could pause for a moment between their meals or their dividends we might tell them of a contest as keenly, and honourably, and amicably sustained and settled as ever were those of the Troubadours of old, or of Tattersalls now. We, by our sovereign will and pleasure, offered a prize, not a golden violet, nor a gold cup, but enrolment among the contributors to the "New Moon", for the best translation of a portion of the best poets in all the languages under the sun, from the lingua Toscana to Cherokee. We dare not reveal how many aspirants, without and within our own sphere, have contended for and claimed the beatification: but from time to time we shall present specimens of the productions of the various competitors, and shall in most cases leave to the discerning critic the detection of the "local habitation and name" of the author, and of the distance from "fever heat" in the mental thermometer which he or she may be entitled to hold.

New Moon, May 3, 1845

ED. N. M.

The (new) mune and Scottish Song

Out and spak a pretty little boy:
“I fear a deadlie storm;
For I saw the new mune late yestreen,
And the old ane in her arm.”
(‘Sir Patrick Spens’, from William Motherwell’s
manuscript)

For Scots in 1841, when *The New Moon* first appeared – the moon has immediate resonance. Many of the Crichton publication’s first readers would have associated it with the telling of truths – often rather ominously – in song.

In the ballad of ‘Sir Patrick Spens’ (Child 58, Roud 41) the crescent of the waxing “new mune” predicts real danger. In that haunting song the eponymous “skeely skipper” is destined to perish in a violent storm at sea, along with the royal bride he carries from Norway to Scotland, and the rest of his ill-fated crew; “half-ower to Aberdour” when he sinks.

This international ballad – probably based on a Scandinavian precedent – was very well known by the mid nineteenth century. It first appeared in 1765, in Thomas Percy’s hugely popular *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, in David Herd’s *Scottish Songs* (1769) and, again, in Walter Scott’s best selling *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1803). The collector William Motherwell acquired several versions – including one from Dumfriesshire antiquarian Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe (1781 – 1851) – although in Sharpe’s song the “new moon” verse is absent.

Equally, the moon (although not specifically “new”) features in several other Scottish songs – but with arguably less perilous associations. ‘Thomas the Rhymer’ (Child 37), tells the story of a man abducted by the Fairy Queen; returning to this world, he is compelled to speak the truth. Specifically, the moon’s cycle here represents the passing of time – a natural truth if you will. Mrs Brown of Falkland recalled, for Scott:

For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.

Finally, in ‘Ower the watter tae Charlie’, the timelessness of the moon makes it an object to swear by: a representation of truth of sorts:

“I swear by moon and stars sae bricht,
And the sun that glances early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I’d gie them a for Charlie.”

I believe *The New Moon*’s title choice might, therefore, have made a nod to ballad idioms. And I wish the European Lunar Symposium clear vision – and safety – in the pursuit of truth.

**Dr Valentina Bold, Heritage & Policy Officer,
The Crichton Trust**



Sketch of a Young Girl, by Unknown (c.1880)

DEAR ALICE

Dear Alice, Thank you for your last letter with all its glittering tales of wonder. You made *my* Neverland sound almost dull. True, I’m in a rut with Hook. We spool out all that old patriarchal nonsense, an endless workshop to locate a lens – a looking glass! – to show us what we are, why we fight on and on, yet show no scars. And you? You’ll need lifetimes to unravel the myriad meanings of your marvels. Wasn’t it Freud who said dreams of falling concerned the act of love? The image rings such bells with Tinkerbell. (Hope you don’t mind – she seizes all my letters. Zealous, but kind in her own way, she’s at least a regular.) She took her red pen and fairy ruler across all that nibbling and tasting too – she claims both you and the White Rabbit knew what he’d lead you to. Me, I’m captain of my own ship, absolved from time’s stain, though I’ll never step ashore. The sun sinks now over these soft green hills. Muffled, I hear geese’s meaningless calls. Somewhere, I’ve missed out on love, dear Alice. Wendy tells me I don’t know how to kiss.

Tom Pow

from TO MY SISTER

My merry muse! my merry muse!
Oh! how I wish thou could'st infuse,
Some of that joyous glee of thine,
Within this aching breast of mine -
For I am all alone!

I am not selfish, nor unkind;
Then why harsh usage do I find,
In every spot where I may dwell?
My merry muse, I prithee tell -
Why am I all alone?

New Moon, May 3, 1845

Strawberry Moon, by Karen Auld (FE)



The Moon in language and culture 2

In **Arabic**, the moon is known as “القمر” (al-qamar), a word that carries with it a sense of majesty and splendour. In Islamic cultures, the moon represents the guidance of God on the path through life, and the phases of the moon hold great significance, marking the beginning and end of lunar months. Chaand Rat marks a joyous occasion when loved ones gather in outdoor spaces on the final day of Ramadan to catch sight of the new moon, heralding the advent of the Islamic month of Shawwal and the festive day of Eid.

(2 of 4) by Barbel Bräsh, Open University

From The Ghost Child

As Kara laboured up the tight spiralling stone staircase, breath curling away above, her footfalls echoed loudly, seeming to come from all around. She consciously planted each foot firmly on the smooth-worn surfaces, lest she slip. These stairs seemed cold in more ways than one. A slip could mean broken bones, if not a broken neck. No one but her ever seemed to come up here risking their life. Cheap labour was done by cheap lives, it was always the way. She cleaned surfaces of dust that nobody would ever see. She shone the railings, the wood and marble surfaces that nobody but her remembered actually existed.

Kara was only dimly aware of the history of the grand old building that she cleaned but it was impossible to be unaware of the beauty: turrets with hidden garrets, bridges, balconies, acres of carved wooden furniture. She had heard that it had once been a lunatic asylum. Today it was a relic, the type of folly no-one built anymore, and no-one knew what to do with. This room at the top of the stairs was a good example: part of a high tower on the edge of a building containing hundreds of rooms, most of them hardly used these days. The current occupier was a university. A few students sat in small groups in some of the rooms, providing little animation to dispel the atmosphere of church like gloom that pervaded the building.

Placing her bucket down on a table and pulling her long black puffa jacket tighter around her Klara shivered as she picked up her cloth and ran it along the railings in the centre of the room where a huge hole in the floor looked down into the room below. That room had once been an operating theatre. She shuddered to imagine what kind of operations had been done in a Victorian mental asylum, trying not to think what was ingrained in these ancient surfaces. Currently the lower room was a library filled with bookshelves stacked with dusty books. In the middle of the room stood a massive round table. Kara enjoyed romantic daydreams, imagining herself as Queen Guinevere in an emerald green gown, sitting at the table with handsome King Arthur in silver armour by her side. It was a nice daydream in the summer. Just now she felt like Jadis, the white witch queen of Narnia.

The balcony saw little use these days. There were no performances taking place on the round table for spectators from above. Currently it was a storage space for around twenty large paintings propped against the walls. Above were round windows, like portholes into the pitch black void outside. The sky was cloudy and pregnant with the threat of snow. Not even a sliver of moon showed through the dense cloud to illuminate the scene.

By Scott Thow (CW)

Take it off the wall and hide it in the cupboard

There, on the Museum wall
hang the works of lunatics and sots.
Private innermost thoughts and screams,
and everything else in between.
Manifested on paper, card and board,
some on canvas rendered in oils.
Slashes of bright colour faded by time,
pastels floating dreams on to paper.
Landscapes, portraits and abstracts,
subtracted from the depths of psyche,
troubled and misunderstood.
Images from the wealthy and famous,
And from the poor and invisible.
All suffering from afflictions,
that no one really understood.

By Christine Cameron (CW)

* * * * *

From The Crichton Crypt

Abandoned archaic trolley, stands alone.
Chipped, cream-painted, metal frame
stark against the sandstone wall.

By Christine Cameron (CW)

ART AT THE CRICHTON

In 1839, William Browne initiated one of the first ever collections of art by mental patients. In a paper, published in 1880, he referred to these as 'Mad Artists', even though the artists themselves often showed remarkable penmanship and skill with watercolours. In time, the work of such artists found a home in a new genre – Art Brut, Art Extraordinaire and, most recently, Outsider Art. Art as a therapy and as a creative pursuit is still a vital concern on the 'campus', as can be seen in the work of Outpost Arts. But it now also has the dignity of recognition as a branch of art, one of many. It is within this enriching continuum that we present the visual element within the current New Moon.

ED

by Anonymous (OA)



by Anonymous (OA)



by Anonymous (OA)

Continuing the tradition of Arts and wellbeing

In an increasingly remote world, where our prime communication tool is a mobile phone - the simple act of gathering with others around a shared creative exercise can make a real difference. Arts and culture can make visible and sustainable changes to the lives of people who need it most. This is something we've seen clearly in our work with Midpark Hospital, which supports people who require acute mental health care and treatment.

Developed as part of the Art in Healthcare strand of OutPost Arts, 'DG Creative Wellbeing' project, Coordinator Frank Hayes worked with hospital management to pilot and develop regular, artist-led creative sessions for both staff and patients. Gathering feedback and reflections from all involved after each block, has allowed the team to craft an embedded visual arts programme. Repeated weekly sessions provide a space for participants to express themselves in a positive way whilst learning new skills. Each block of workshops focuses on a different theme (most recently 'Empowering Portraits'). Talented regional artists are commissioned to lead sessions focused on practices such as printmaking, painting, creative writing and mixed-media/collage.

"The groups were a fantastic outlet and made the difficult experience of being in hospital more bearable." (Patient)

Crucially, by taking part together, patients and staff participate as equals, allowing them to develop meaningful connections – a significant advance that contrasts with historic approaches to treatment that resulted in stigma and 'otherness'.

By Lucy Bell, Director, OutPost Arts

Idée Fixe

On a wheel, semblance of spinning,
threads twist endlessly around,
seem to have no sense like
chance caught dream thoughts
held unwanted in a mind
that long ago was frozen
into one repeated moment
flickering through time.

* * * * *

From Struggle

Grey days passed in uniformity.
They took her into the garden,
showed her sunlit beauty.
She could not reach it.

By Anne Mickelthwaite (CW)

ON SEEING A DROP OF DEW ON AN UNBLOWN ROSE

A rose-bud in the garden grew,
Upon it sat a drop of dew;
Like tear upon the infant's cheek,
Ere yet its lips its woes can speak.
The sun arose, and with his ray
He kissed the pearly drop away:
So, look benign from mother's eye,
The tear from an infant cheek can dry.

New Moon, May 3, 1845

The Rock Garden, Crichton Royal Institution

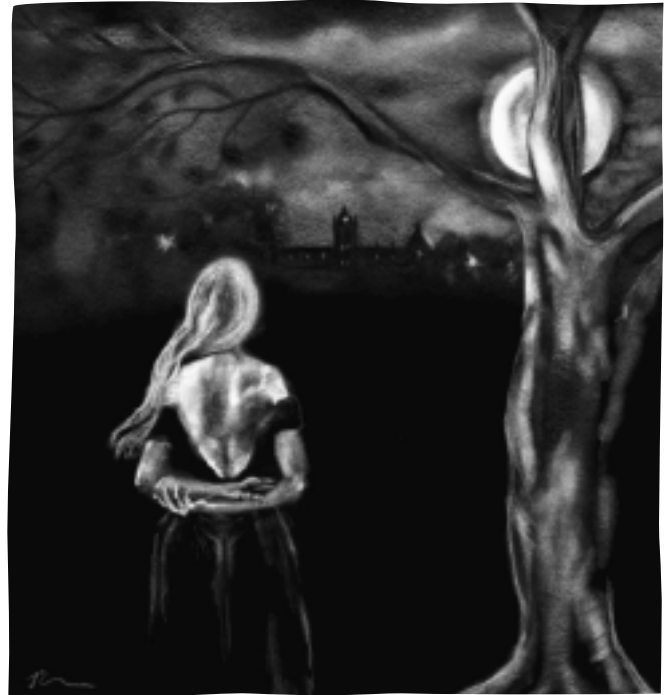
Those endless afternoons
huddled trembling by the pool
or perched half-way upon the sandstone steps.

Vegetation crowded round
all eyes and ears.
Who else would listen?

Sometimes an audience
to mock or sigh and turn away
sometimes to quiver with you.

The trees held quietly apart.
No sympathy — only that glimpse
of possibility: you also might endure.

By Robin Leiper (CW)



Lady in the Moonlight, by Trudy Craig (FE)

from TO HOPE

Deluding cheat, away – away!
Thou dost but mock my sorrow;
I've trusted thee for many a day,
And yet thou criest – to-morrow.

The morrows come, the morrows go,
And leave me wretched still;
Oh! better far the worst to know –
Be certain – e'en of ill!

New Moon, March 7, 1845

From I was born of storms

The wind howled through the cracked windowpane.
Drunken roars from my father, then shattering
crash of dishes against the wall.
Rumble of thunder before the flash of lightning
tore the sky apart.
It will pass, my mother said.
I did not believe her.

The angels started whispering to me at night.
'You are evil, a blot upon the world, a reject of society'.
Sleep became a living nightmare.
It will pass, my mother said.
I did not believe her.

By Carol Price (CW)

The Significance of The New Moon's Titles

At first glance, 'The New Moon' might appear an odd choice for a periodical, but it is, in fact, a reference to the people who created it and the community that it represented: 'lunatics' and the 'lunatic asylum'. 'Lunatic', though now considered an obsolete, derogatory term, derives from the Latin *lunaticus*, meaning 'of the moon' or 'moonstruck', and was originally used to refer to madness and epilepsy, illnesses believed to be caused by the moon. For thousands of years, there has existed as longstanding belief in the association between the Full Moon in particular and extreme behaviour, including symptoms of madness. In contrast, the New Moon (the first lunar phase) has often been associated with renewal and new beginnings, viewed as a time to reflect and contemplate, to rein in the emotions. It was a period not of madness and unreason, but reason, sanity. *The New Moon* is therefore an apt title for a periodical intended to contribute to the treatment of 'minds diseased': it is filled with thoughts and reflections, most of which it was remarked by contemporaries, are 'remarkably sane'. As one reviewer observed, the contents of *The New Moon* show that 'as all the great poets were moon gazers, the influence of the moonlight cannot be so detrimental as it is popularly supposed to be'.

By Jessica Campbell, University of Edinburgh

Samson Slaying the Lion,
by John Fenn Russell
(c.1860)



BLAME IT ON THE MOONLIGHT?

'It is the very error of the moon.
She comes more close to the earth than she was wont
And makes men mad'.

William Shakespeare, *Othello*

* * * * *

In 1833 Hallam, a psychiatrist and director of the Bethlem Hospital, noted 'the master of the workhouse has been so much under the dominion of the moon... that without waiting for any display of increased turbulence on the part of the patient, he bound, chained, flogged, and deprived these miserable people... as he discovered the moon's age by almanac'.

This conviction that the moon can influence human behaviour remains widespread- a 1995 study of the views of mental health professionals found that over 80% held this view. The term 'lunacy' of course is derived from the Roman Goddess of the moon, Luna, and this belief goes all the way back to Ancient Rome and Greece. But is there any scientific evidence of such a link?

In fact studies over the last 50 years have shown no clear link between phases of the moon and psychiatric admissions, crisis calls, rates of suicide, or indeed rates of homicide (though most murders are, of course, unrelated to mental disorder). One interesting exception is the 2018 study by Wehr of 17 individuals with rapidly cycling mood disorders which demonstrated a clear connection between exacerbations in the condition of many of them and lunar tidal cycles. The human body is between 55 and 78% water, and the effect of the moon on bodies of water is well known, so perhaps less surprising?

Others have argued that any connection between a full moon specifically, and exacerbations in mental illnesses, especially the precipitation of mania, relates to sleep deprivation caused by the brightness of the moonlit sky. This would of course be more apparent in a less light polluted, pre-industrial world.

Evidence that environmental factors can cause or exacerbate mental disorders is very strong. The main factors are social isolation, poverty, marginalisation and essentially how other people, and society in general, treat you. For the majority of people the moon is not a malign influence and 'a braw, bricht, moonlit nicht' is something to be enjoyed.

The moon's reputation as a cause of mental illness is not warranted, and that assertion along with the term 'lunacy' belongs to, and should be consigned to, a by-gone age. Please - 'don't blame it on the moonlight'.

By David Hall, Former Consultant Psychiatrist at the Crichton Royal Hospital, and Chair of The Crichton Trust



by Anonymous (OA)

INTELLIGENCE

We observe that an obscure old historical work, called the Almanack, records that a partial eclipse of the Moon was to take place in the month of May. Whatever this insinuation may mean, it does not refer to us.

*

The cattle show is to take place in October. We will back our pigs against all the porkers, alive or dead, that may make their appearance; and would solicit the Committee on roots, fruits, and flowers, if such things be in current language, cattle, and if there be such a Committee, to inspect our potatoes, plums and fuschias. We doubt not that a hearty and hospitable welcome will be given to the visitors, whether illustrious by size and weight, or by rank and riches: and we propose to set an example by paying the tribute of our wonder to the former, and by throwing open our grounds, picture gallery, museum, &c., and by getting up a new play for the amusement of the latter. A wholesale cleaning, white-washing, and rehearsing, has been ordered forthwith.

*

Dr Pliny Erle has written a most interesting article in the American Journal, on the Poetry of Insanity, in which the contributions to the *New Moon* are not mentioned. The conclusion is obvious, either Dr Erle is so utterly ignorant of the details of his subject as to be unacquainted with this periodical, or what is more probable and justifiable, he does not regard its poetical contents as coming within the scope of his inquiry. There may be a twist in Byron, a shadow over Cowper, a downright crack in Lee: but we belong to another category.

New Moon, August 4, 1846

From Crichton Campus 2011

On impulse, my steps took me further through the beautifully kept Crichton estate. I walked past Elizabeth Crichton, resplendent in bronze, serenely overlooking the astounding legacy she had created. Crichton Church was firmly closed and the original Crichton Hall obscured by trees. I soon found myself in the rock garden musing on a bench beside a pool thronged with aquatic plants and water lilies. A blackbird rootled in the undergrowth. My husband had been a patient at the Crichton a few years before due to a nervous breakdown. I saw the first tentative signs of his recovery one day when he noticed, in wonder, the abundant foliage of lofty trees in the grounds. I recalled too a harrowing visit forty years before to a long-term patient in Crichton Royal Hospital as we called it then. Now, the modern mental health facility, Midpark, would open nearby. The last mental health patients were due to be transferred soon and Crichton Royal would be finally closed. Crichton Campus was to be the next chapter.

I resolved to join Crichton Writers, a group which meets here on the campus and welcomes anyone with a resolve to develop their writing. A new chapter for me too.

By Christine Ashworth (CW)

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, by John Fenn Russell (c.1860)



EPIDEMIC. - We regret to learn that a frightful epidemic affects our friends at large. It is not murrain, but monomania. In this country it rages chiefly in the stock exchanges and share markets. It affects millionaires, money-seekers, and money-spenders. In France it is called variously *chemin de fer*, *chemin d'enfer*. The most distressing delusions are that this, which is obviously the Iron, is the Golden Age; that two rails, a locomotive, and shares at 105, cannot be the road to ruin; that Steam, Gas, and Galvanism, will discover the philosopher's stone and the elixir vitae; and that the only ways to happiness and prosperity are the Grand Junction or Caledonian Railways. We are glad to say that not a single case of the disease has occurred in our community.

New Moon, April 3, 1845

Women making the most of the moon

Living in a rural community has many benefits, but the most surprising one is quite unexpected if, like me, you're a townie who moved to the country. The sky at night – and how bright the moon is!

It's difficult to over-estimate the effect a full moon can have on countryside living. Nighttime can seem like noon when the moon's glow bathes lanes and paths, so it's little wonder that members of Scottish Women's Institutes tapped into its illuminating properties and programmed their monthly meeting around it.

"I remember older members telling me that fifty years ago they walked to the meetings by the light of the moon, picking up fellow members along the way," says Annette Torbet of Sandhead SWI in Wigtownshire. "It was widely done around the whole country because the women may not have had access to transport and there were often no streetlights, but they could still find their way to and from the meeting easily. They would walk half a mile there and half a mile back, chatting and laughing as they went."

With a full moon each month it was an ideal way to plan the get-togethers and it harks back to much earlier times in human history. The Harvest moon got its name as it enabled farmers to work late into the night, helping them to bring in the crops from the fields in September. Meanwhile, many of the Moon's wonderfully evocative names – Wolf, Buck, Strawberry, Sturgeon – have come to us from Native American culture and reflect what was abundant at the time.

Perhaps we could rename the moons based on something closer to home and honour those early SWI members. Shall we call them Friendship, Laughter, and Cake?

By Pauline Burnett (SWI)

The Moon in Language and Culture 3

The moon holds a significant place in the hearts and minds of those who speak **Romance languages**, including Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian. Across these cultures, the moon is revered as a symbol of beauty, mystery, and romance, influencing literature, music, art, and traditions. In **French** literature, music and arts abound with references to 'la lune', as a muse for poets and a backdrop for a lovers' rendezvous, such as in the well-known 18th century French folk song 'Au clair de la lune' (By the light of the moon). **Portuguese speakers** also hold the moon in high regard, referring to it as 'a lua'. In Portuguese culture, the moon is celebrated in folklore and fado music, where its melancholic glow serves as a backdrop for tales of unrequited love and longing, whereas in **Romanian**, the moon is known as 'lună', a word imbued with a sense of mystery and wonder. Romanian folklore is rich with stories of lunar deities and magical creatures, reflecting the deep reverence for 'lună' in Romanian culture.

(3 of 4) by Barbel Brăsh, Open University



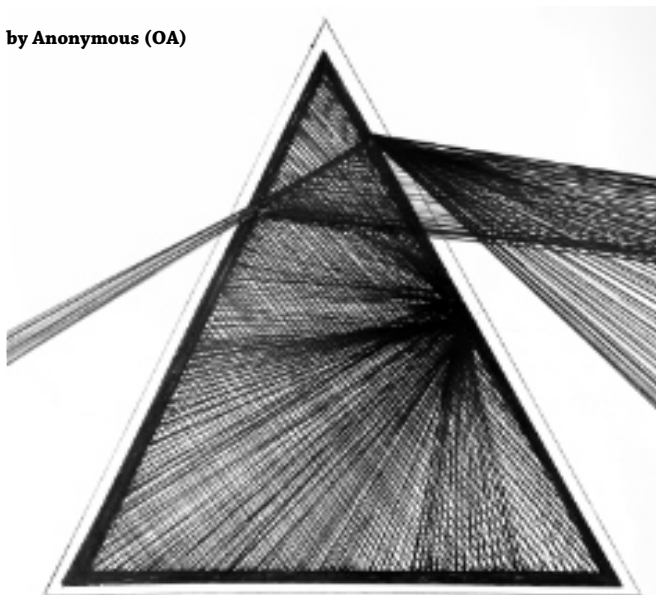
Crow Moon, by Roslyn Hilsley (FE)

LITERARY NOTICE

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of Twenty-six Copies of the "CHINA MAIL" from Hong-Kong, which have been sent to us by some unknown hand. We are glad to receive all such contributions, and trust our British Friends will imitate such a laudable example. It also at the same time proves what we have long inculcated on the public mind, that we occupy a high place in the Literary World, and that our fame now reaches from Pole to Pole, and from Sea to Sea.

New Moon, November 2, 1846

by Anonymous (OA)



Always the Turning Earth

Up early, she'd often let things slip.
Distracted, in a half-forgotten dream

she'd give herself away like yesterday
biting her lip as the cup hit the floor;

a rhyming scheme she used before
admission, written on the window

whispered its Latin name. But at
other times, like today, birds came

and filled the trees with song; spring
again and always the turning earth

the push and pull of leaf and tide; moons
that wax and wane; suns that rise

and rise and rise again.

By Clare Phillips (CW)

NATURAL HISTORY

On all hands we see notices appearing of the earliness of the season, and facts brought forward to prove it: and we wish not to be behind our neighbours in giving our quota of proof. There are at this moment a couple of mavis nests in our grounds, one of them containing young birds, which have been in the land of hope for some days. But more extraordinary still, we had a nest containing young birds nearly three weeks since, and the little creatures were commencing to get fledged when some lean uncivilized cat, which had evidently made its escape from a *private asylum*, had the horrid barbarity to devour them.

New Moon, May 4, 1846

The Handkerchief Tree

Chengtu, Szechwan,

7th September 1869

My dear family,

I have recently been working, like Our Lord himself, as a carpenter! I have built three strong chests to protect my plants and insects, bird skins and mammal skins, on their long journey from here to Shanghai and on to Paris. I am sending this letter with them, praying that all will arrive safely. I will soon make the five-day trek back to the College at Muping, my base since the beginning of March. I hope you will receive the letter I sent in April, reporting my first exciting discovery, of a white bear. I had heard rumours of it, but suspected that it might, like the dragon, be a mythical creature. Since my hunters brought me that first, young one, I have seen a live adult, also with small black ears, black eye patches, black limbs and a black band across the back. The bear feeds on bamboo and is the prettiest mammal I have ever seen.

Since then, I have spent all my time searching for new species, ascending to at least 4,500 metres, where the air is very thin and I can see, gleaming far away, the Large Snowy Mountains, perhaps the highest in the world. The slopes here are covered in mixed forest, dominated by tall firs and pines, and deciduous species of many kinds which I have never seen before.

The most remarkable tree, which I found at 2,000 metres, looks as though it is covered in white lace handkerchiefs which flutter in the breeze, so that I found myself thinking of Momia, waving to me as I left home on numerous occasions, and felt quite melancholy as I remembered you all. You are daily in my thoughts and prayers. But I digress. The 'handkerchiefs' are not flowers, but bracts, white leaf-like structures which act like petals, attracting pollinators. I hope that the seeds, which I am sending to M. Baillon at the Jardin des Plantes, will germinate. All my specimens here are hard-won, as it was so icy and bitterly cold at first, and so hot and humid in summer. Often there are no paths and I have to force my way through tangles of vine and bramble. There are gorgeously coloured hydrangeas and rhododendrons, and wild fruit trees, in fact the 'handkerchief tree' was beside a large cherry tree and some figs with very sweet fruit. But enough of botany!

Thomé, my trustworthy helper, is well. I have recently been ill with fever again, but am recovering. I am not sure how long I shall stay in the mountains.

The Lord bless you and keep you,
Armand

By Barbara Mearns (CW)



The Death of the Stag, by John Harvie Oliver (c.1852)

The Moon in Language and Culture 4

In **Slavic languages** such as Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Czech, Slovak etc., names for the moon often have joined roots but differences in spelling and pronunciation show the different paths these languages have taken over the centuries. In Ukrainian, for example, the word for moon is 'місяць' (misiats). In a lot of Slavic folklore, the moon is personified and reflects old cultural beliefs and values. Expressions of love often incorporate references to the moon, emphasizing its romantic significance. Phrases like 'Я люблю тебе до місяця і назад' (I love you to the moon and back) in Ukrainian illustrate the deep affection and longing associated with the moon in these cultures and underlines the power of language as a vessel for stories, mythology, and collective identity.

Across languages and cultures, the moon remains a timeless symbol of beauty, mystery, and inspiration as it underlines the power of language as a way of carrying forward history, mythology, and collective identity. This is why it is even more important than ever to preserve linguistic diversity, in particular the unique terminology of the moon in indigenous languages.

(4 of 4) by Barbel Bräsh, Open University

DEILEPHILA GALII (Scarce Spotted Hawk-Moth), a fine specimen of this scarce moth, was caught in the grounds of the Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries, on the 7th of August; thus adding another valuable specimen to the already magnificent collection collected and arranged by Mr William Lennon, of this institution.

New Moon, October 12, 1870

From Spirits Abound

The only way to capture the atmosphere of the campus is to spend time quietly wandering within it and breathing in the air around you. Even today, this place holds an unexplained magic, which will always be there, along with the spirits who guard it.

By Eleanor Chesters (CW)

From our Foreign Correspondent

The town of Fontenay (La Vendée) was thrown into consternation the other day, by thirty patients from the Asylum passing through the streets, armed with pitchforks, on their way to make hay in a meadow belonging to the establishment. This first attempt at work beyond the walls of the institution was completely successful.

New Moon, January 3, 1845

INTELLIGENCE

It has come to our notice that a certain gentleman, Mr Neil Armstrong, a creature of Mother Earth, whose roots lie in Langholm, has set foot upon the moon. The world it would seem has been momentarily dislodged from its common pursuits and is agog that one of ours should be on the moon and looking down upon us. *Miraculous!*, we understand, is the cry of the land. Mr Armstrong referred to his action as “a small step for man, but a giant leap for mankind”. Time will judge, but at the *New Moon* we would caution such claims and assert instead that it would be “a giant leap for mankind” if it would only see and place value on the miraculous that lies but a few steps away; in the flight of a dandelion seed, in a bird’s egg hatching, in a handkerchief tree in flower.

New Moon, Undated, ED. T. C. P

Portrait Profile, by Inez Johnstone (FE)



The Handkerchief Tree photo by Richard Mearns

Crichton

inspiration
a scene of great beauty
to paint to write to learn to play
to comprehend those labelled lunatic
ease minds in trouble and confusion
a model example
of how to heal
Crichton

By Jane Richardson (CW)

Hare, by Julie Hare (FE)



APPENDIX

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE NEW MOON AND ON CONTRIBUTORS TO AND ENABLERS OF THE CURRENT NEW MOON.

This edition of The new New Moon has been produced to coincide with the Lunar Symposium, held on Crichton Campus in June 2024. It is composed, like previous New Moons, as an entertainment that we hope will also be informative. It contains four elements. Short extracts from The New Moons themselves to give some idea of the scope and the tone of the magazines. (The New Moons contain substantial articles on philosophy, history and literature beyond our limits). Our thanks here are due to the Heritage Service at the Ewart Library for making archive copies of The New Moon available to us. The second element is creative writing by the Crichton Writers. These pieces are extracts from *The Crichton, An Anniversary Re-Imagining: An Anthology of New Writing by Crichton Writers, In Commemoration of the Bi-centenary of the Founding Bequest of the Crichton Royal Institution and in Celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Crichton Writers Group*. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Crichton Writers. The selection of work or extracts of work was based on the practical limits of space and on the aim of this present publication. This was to allow different perspectives and styles to spark off each other in interesting ways. The same gratitude and reasoning offered to the Crichton Writers is extended to those who contributed to our third element – short pieces that expand on or illuminate the cultural and social life of the world of The New Moon. ‘The Significance of The New Moon’s Titles’ and ‘Darkness and Light’ (see below) are taken from an extensive essay by Jessica Campbell, ‘A Most Extraordinary Publication: A Brief History of *The New Moon*, or *The Crichton Institution Literary Register*.’ The four pieces placed throughout the magazine, ‘The Moon and Language and Culture’, are drawn from the essay, ‘The Moon in Languages and Cultures’ by Barbel Bräsh of the Open University. You may note that the majority of the writers who contributed to The New Moon remained anonymous or, at most, were identified only by initials. No doubt, within the community of The Crichton, they were known to each other. Nevertheless, for their intelligence, perception, humour and the sharing of their sadness, we extend our thanks across time. Lastly, for the visual element, we are grateful to the artists of the old Crichton and those of the new for their generosity. The new visual art was created by members of the local community as well as art by those who are currently being treated in Midpark Hospital (our modern local psychiatric hospital adjacent to the estate where OutPost Arts runs regular arts in health care sessions).

We thank all involved for their creativity and kindness in sharing their talents.

This edition of the ‘New Moon’ was edited by Tom Pow with editorial support from Jennifer Challinor and Valentina Bold, both of the Crichton Trust. It was typeset by Ian Findlay, with sympathy for the old and the new, and printed by Alba Printers, Dumfries.

The New Moon: A star in The Crichton Royal Institution Archive.

The Crichton Royal Institution (CRI) Archive was generated by patients, staff, and administrators between 1829 and 2008. The collection captures all aspects of the asylum and - in addition to official bound records - includes artworks, photographs, objects, magazines, event invitations, theatre programmes, maps and plans.

These significant records reflect attitudes, language and treatments of their time whilst also demonstrating CRI’s innovative regime of creative therapy. This included staging the first play performed and produced by asylum patients, in 1843: *Raising the Wind*. The records show that art teaching for patients as a therapy was introduced in 1844 and the collection includes 134 early patients’ artworks. Patients also contributed to dances and soirees, from 1840. In addition, they wrote and printed poetry, attended and delivered lectures and produced the first Asylum Library Catalogue c.1851.

A star of the collection is The New Moon - the earliest long-lasting magazine written and printed by patients, first published by CRI in 1844. It shows one of the ways patient creativity was used as a route to recovery. It was the first asylum magazine published, over a substantial period of time, from December 1844 to 1937, making it the earliest continuously-produced asylum magazine in the UK. Its aim was to give patients: ‘a vehicle for the free and undisguised feelings and views [...] whether erroneous or not’. Crucially, it gave them a voice: from reviews to translations to new poetry and song, alongside reflections on current philosophical debates – all of which served a therapeutic purpose.

Anne Rinaldi and Valentina Bold

Darkness and Light

Capturing the essence of what was one of the most progressive, pioneering and creative asylums in Britain, the pages of *The New Moon* tell not a dark story of straitjackets, physical restraint and neglect, nor are they suggestive of the gothic and haunting images of

abandoned asylums that have come to capture the popular imagination. Rather, they tell a more complex story, one of darkness and light, of community and compassion, of personal suffering and hope, of belonging and alienation, of creativity and resilience. They tell the story of a world where music was played, listened and danced to, dramatic entertainments watched and performed, where patients and staff formed their own cricket and football teams, where lectures were given, and books read. A world that was not all that dissimilar from the one beyond its gates. *The New Moon* portrays an often moving and very human story from the perspectives of the people who lived and worked there. The true history of the Crichton Institution simply could not be written without it.

Jessica Campbell, University of Edinburgh

The Crichton Trust is the charity and social enterprise that looks after the historic Crichton estate. We are the custodians of the former Crichton Royal Asylum's estate, including 85-acre parkland and 27 heritage buildings. The grounds and landscaped gardens are free and accessible to the public all year round. The Crichton is now a vibrant business and academic community with over 160 SME businesses and 5 academic partners.

The Crichton has always been at the cutting edge of innovation since its inception in 1839, and the site continues to deliver in this area through being a unique multi-institution campus, working with business, community and academic partners. Our goals look to address the big challenges of our time, by using our unique rural location as the test bed for ideas and solutions, we are working towards achieving Net Zero and addressing the underpinning issues of an aging population and technological advancement

www.crichton.co.uk

The Crichton Foundation is a charity that provides student funding in Dumfries. It was founded in 2000 to support the creation and development of a diverse Campus and innovative centre for learning and enterprise in Dumfries and Galloway.

www.crichtonfoundation.org

Crichton Writers started life in 2003 and will mark their Twentieth Anniversary on 27th June. Our writing for this anniversary is also in commemoration of the Crichton's Bicentenary in 2023 and is focused on the Crichton itself, past and present. We look forward to sharing what we have researched and learned about the history, anecdotes and current plans of the Crichton.

The Crichton Writers was formed by students who attended creative writing courses with Tom Pow on the Crichton campus. Twenty years later, with one or two founder members still involved, Crichton Writers continues to flourish. The original ethos to welcome all comers, experienced or novice, remains today.

crichtonwriters.wordpress.com

OutPost Arts & DG Creative Wellbeing is a regional arts charity that has established itself at local, regional, and national levels as an innovative and progressive rural arts organisation. OutPost Arts made a long-term commitment to develop a specialism in creative health and wellbeing – delivering meaningful and impactful work that positively affects people's lives and the spaces they use – harnessing creativity as an agent for development, wellbeing and transformation. OutPost Arts delivers 'DG Creative Wellbeing' – a ground-breaking programme of impactful arts activities, events, and interventions across D&G, working in both community and healthcare settings, with support from an alliance of funders – National Lottery Community Fund, Holywood Trust, Robertson Trust, Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund and Dumfries & Galloway Health Board Endowment Fund.

dgcreativewellbeing.co.uk | outpostarts.co.uk

For Enjoyment provides open accessible creative workshops throughout Dumfries and Galloway and beyond. Any age or ability can attend and all equipment and materials are supplied. Our main regular workshops focus on Drawing, Printing, Painting and Photography. We have a focus on nurturing people's creative strengths and promoting well being and combating social isolation through our large creative network. These pieces were created by the FE participants exploring the theme of the Moon and what thoughts and feelings it provokes.

facebook.com/groups/107094710015986/

Scottish Women's Institutes (SWI) is a charity created by women, for women to promote education, friendship and fun. It connects more than 8,000 women across 400+ communities in Scotland to improve their quality of life through lifelong learning and sharing skills and experiences. All women are welcome.

www.theswi.org.uk

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Heritage Service, promotes, preserves, and provides access to historical collections and resources including official archives and records of The Crichton Royal Institution. This collection is owned by NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the Heritage Service at the Ewart Library, Dumfries stores and provides free access to it.

dumgal.gov.uk/article/24609/Heritage-Service



"Cake Month - ain't it ridik'lus?" By William Bartholomew (c.1861)

W. Bartholomew
Dec. 1861 -

CRICHTON THEATRICALS

Eighteen hundred and forty-seven is a flash season at the Crichton. The Concerts, this season, are positively brilliant. It is of no use attempting to speak of them otherwise than in terms of laudation. What some would regard as blemishes, we regard as beauty marks. Away with your professional performances! One night at the Crichton is worth a hundred centuries of bumper nights anywhere else. So intense is the emotion generated by the artless lays of the Crichton warblers, that some have actually declared that flesh and blood would be unable to stand it were it not for the now very general diffusion of the agreeables of life.

What would you think if a little seraph were to descend from heaven and, with a benevolent smile that defied suspicion, addressed you in some such language as the following:-

"Dinna ask me gin I loe ye,
Ask it o' yersel'."

Or supposing you to be of the opposite sex, what would you

think if some noble angelic countenance were to address to you such an invitation -

"Will ye gang to Kelvin grove, bonnie lassie O."

But you have scarcely had time to recover from the excitement of the first address when the same little seraph is heard warbling -

"My heart is sair, I darna tell,
My heart is sair for somebody."

And their performer, number two, having persuaded his lady-love to go to Kelvin Grove, begs she will be pleased to move a little north still -

"Bonnie lassie, will ye go, will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go to the Birks of Aberfeldy."

Thus the mind is kept moving in a play of constant exhilaration; and if intervals do occur, it is only to enable you to respire the while, to fortify you for what is coming next.

New Moon, September 3, 1847



The Crichton Trust is the social enterprise that looks after the building and ground of the former Crichton Royal Institution. We explore new ways to share the stories of this unique and special place through time. You can support to the work of The Crichton Trust here www.crichton.co.uk/give/