

I considered two possible subjects which I might offer as “Crabtree Orations”. One was a visit to the Moon by Crabtree, particularly as I had found on a very rare old Moon map, by Cassini 1680, a picture of the ‘Moon Maiden’ whom Crabtree might have liked to visit. Between 1671 and 1679 the painters Sebastian Leclerc and Jean Patigny drew under the supervision of Cassini, the first director of the Paris Observatory, many sketches of the Moon, which Cassini used for the composition of his famous map, engraved by Claude Milan.

On this map, the Moon Maiden appears very clearly as a miniature drawing of a beautiful young woman, drawn as a natural extension of a lunar crater. It is generally assumed by selenologists to have been a fanciful embellishment by one of the two painters. This map was part of my collection of old Moon maps. As an Oration it would only have been possible if an enlargement of the map, showing the maiden, could have been projected after dinner. This was however impossible. Getting Crabtree to the Moon would have been easy, as during Crabtree’s lifetime, the beginning of the 19th century, sufficient imaginary Moon voyages had been published, and I could have chosen one of these. My second possible subject for a Crabtree Oration was “Collecting”, as I myself had been an ardent collector for many years [see Titles 70 to 76]. One must be born to be a collector, and one collects what one loves and considers beautiful and important, in my case the Scientific Temper in art.

Collecting can be an intelligent hobby if one has surplus money to indulge it. Some scientific disciplines, like geology, zoology and botany rely on their collections for their research and progress, others like chemistry and astronomy collect data in huge reference works, like *Beilstein*, to compare new results with existing knowledge. Collecting can become passionate addiction, sacrificing everything—to increase and perfect already existing possessions.

To collect needs special knowledge and only experience will teach what is genuine and what is false. An exact definition of the collectible subject is essential, especially when one attempts novel collections, as I did with ‘scientific medals’ and ‘scientific banknotes’. These are good examples of Scientific Temper as I tried to find beautiful scientific items, combining the arts and the sciences.

Collecting is the only human activity to beat entropy for a short time, as according to the second law of thermodynamics, all order will disappear at the death of the Universe, and only single atoms, or parts of atoms, will remain.

‘Crabtree as a collector’ was also an impossible Oration for me, as I lacked all knowledge of his contemporary literature or art, the only objects which a scholarly gentleman of his period would have condescended to collect.