

advisers and allies were the local physicians and their libraries were his stock of books. His thoughts turned, therefore, to medicine and surgery, as the most available if not the most congenial of scientific pursuits, and a skeleton was hidden away among the boxes and barrels of the grocery store, with his home-made chemical apparatus. But his natural bias finally asserted itself, and circumstances combined with his tastes to enable him to follow the pursuits for which he was best fitted.

The sixth annual meeting of the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists, the progenitor of the present American Association for the Advancement of Science, was held in New Haven in 1845. The young chemist attended it as correspondent for a New York newspaper. There was read at it more than one paper which must have stimulated his thoughts and imagination—above all, a most suggestive rather than conclusive discussion of the atomic theory by that brilliant but eccentric genius, J. D. Whelpley, a paper glittering with such aphorisms as “gravity is affinity at a distance,” “affinity is gravity near at hand,” and “the extended atmosphere of an atom (Sanskrit *atma*, breath, omnipresent power, first principle) is therefore its proper ether, through which it radiates pulses of heat and light, and is electrically, magnetically and attractively present in the whole space.”

Thomas Sterry Hunt's name appears among those of the gentlemen unanimously elected members of the Association. He therefore took more than the ordinary newspaper reporter's perfunctory interest in its proceedings. That of his future chief, William Logan, also stands on the same list, with the strange title, “Geol. Surveyor of Canada.”

The elder Silliman had lectured at Norwich, and had there previously seen the precocious boy. When Hunt met him now again, his wonderful acquirements and natural grace of manner gained for him the friendship of that famous chemist, as noted for his generous appreciation of genius in others as for his own scientific position. He secured his admission to