

shown and where you can enjoy them. It seems to me, therefore, that I have a larger connection with your Society than I supposed before I came here. I assure you that the knowledge thus gained has quite compensated me for my coming out.

I do not know what in the world I can say to a practical, critical audience such as that which I have before me—you who are never satisfied with theories; who are always digging into the reasons and causes of things; pulling things apart and then trying to put them together again, nature having put them together in the first instance—in the process gleaned as much knowledge as you can as to how the wheels go round and of what the cogs are made. I cannot give you any advice. I cannot lead you along any lines of theories. I cannot analyze any of these things that you call atoms or electrons—if you can analyze an electron; I am not quite sure about that. I cannot do anything of that kind; I appear before you, therefore, in a sort of helpless condition as far as any practical knowledge or advice is concerned. And yet I have always had something to do with chemistry—that is, since my early youth. The first symbolization of chemical action that I came in contact with was when, as a very small boy, I nearly blew my fingers off with a thundering, great big fire-cracker that had come into my possession. I suppose the chemists of that time had something to do with the concoction of that infernal stuff which came pretty nearly landing me out into life with a maimed thumb and forefinger.

Developing an Appreciation of Chemistry.

Then, I had a good deal to do with the early chemists of my boyhood days through the reading of ancient history, by means of which I got well acquainted with the old diviners and sorcerers and necromancers of dim and distant days. In my extreme youthfulness I enjoyed the tales of their wonderful divinations and performances. But there was always a mysterious and somewhat fearful side to that; I was never sure that in following them I was not in danger of going to the devil; it seemed to me that the father of all their secret machinations was the deity at whose shrine they worshipped and from whom they probably derived their arts and their powers of deceiving, frightening or killing people, as the case might be.