

determinate relations! I suppose you mean relations with each other. But how are they to know those relations? Here is your atom A, there is your atom B (I speak as you have taught me to speak), and a long interval between them, and no link of connexion. How is A to know where B is; or in what relation it stands to B? Poor dear atoms! I pity them.

*Hermogenes.*—You may spare your sympathy. They are absolutely blind and passive.

*Hermione.*—Blind and passive! The more the wonder how they come to perceive those same relations you talk about, and how they “comport themselves,” as you call it (*act*, as I should say), on that perception. I have a better theory of the universe.

*Hermogenes.*—Tell it me.

*Hermione.*—In the beginning was the nebulous matter, or *Akasch*. Its boundless and tumultuous waves heaved in chaotic wildness, and all was oxygen, and hydrogen, and electricity. Such a state of things could not possibly continue; and as it could not possibly be worse, alteration was here synonymous with improvement. There came——

*Hermogenes.*—Now it is my turn to say, Stop! stop! *Solvuntur risu tabulae*. Do let us be serious. Remember, it was you who began the conversation. *Je me suis seulement laissé entraîner*. The fact is, I have only so far been trying you, and I see you are apt. There lies the real difficulty about these atoms. These same “relations” in which they stand to one another are anything but