THE BERTHELOT CENTENARY AND THE RESULTING INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADVANCE CHEMISTRY

In January last I had the pleasure of describing before the Chemical Society of Washington the celebration of the centenary of Marcelin Berthelot held in Paris from October 24 to 26 of last year. These remarks have been published in Science (Feb. 17, 1928) and possibly have been read by some of you.

Through the kindness of the French ambassador and M. Maurice Léon I am able to show you to-night a photographic record of the event, which will certainly give you a more vivid impression of it than I was able to convey by words alone to the chemists of Washington. Thanks to this pictorial presentation it will not be necessary for me to review again the details of the various ceremonies and more attention can be given to other aspects of the event.

Considering the celebration in its entirety there is no question but that it was the most magnificent tribute to chemistry but has ever been organized. More than fifty nations of the world sent distinguished chemists or governmental representatives. The president and entire government of France as well as the ministers and ambassadors of many other nations participated. Chemistry was extolled more highly than ever before. Judging by the space devoted to it by the newspapers the celebration attracted the attention of the general public to an extraordinary degree.

The gathering was noteworthy in being the first since the great war at which the chemists of the enemy nations have met together under such amicable circumstances. An especial effort was made to reestablish cordial relations between all, and the evidence of success in this direction was unmistakable.

The assemblage was unusual in that no other attraction than friendly regard drew the participants together. It is true that in the preceding week a program of chemical interest was provided by the Société de Chimie Industrielle, but at the Berthelot celebration nothing was presented other than discourses on Berthelot and the plan to perpetuate his ideals in regard to cooperation among scientists.

1 Address delivered before the joint meeting of chemical societies at the Chemists’ Club, New York, April 6, 1928.