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THE VAGARIES OF BERYLLIUM¹

As it has become a custom in the American Chemical Society that the chairmen of the various sections, into which the sessions of the general meetings are divided, shall present an address upon some branch of their work in which they are especially interested, I have decided to speak this morning upon beryllium and especially upon those peculiarities of the element which stand out prominently as characteristic of itself. I realize fully the narrowness of the subject and fear that what I have to say will scarcely be of interest to all of you, but must plead as my excuse that, realizing fully the limitations of my own knowledge, I can select no other subject with which I am more familiar.

Even at its christening beryllium started on a vagarious career and its early sponsors as well as those who followed have recognized it under different names and have ascribed to it and to its compounds properties as widely variant as the conditions under which they worked. Referred to first by Vauquelin, its discoverer, as "la terre du Béryl" the German translators naturally adopted Berylerde as the name of its oxide and although Vauquelin later accepted, under virtual protest, the suggestion made that glucine be used on account of the sweetish taste of the salts of the element, the name never secured adoption

¹Address of the chairman of the Section on Inorganic Chemistry, Toronto Meeting, American Chemical Society.

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