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ADDRESS AT THE EDWARD HART CELEBRATION¹

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THIS is a grand occasion, yes, that and much more! And those gathered here are happy. Especially is this true of the chemists in the audience, because it is one of their guild whose completion of the fiftieth milestone in his career as teacher, investigator, printer and manufacturer is at hand, and they proudly rejoice for

Judge him by no more than what you know
Ingenuously, and by the right laid line
Of truth, he will indeed all styles deserve
Of wise, just, good and true!

But they who've so affectionately arranged this assemblage advised the speakers of the hour to tell something of chemistry in America. Heeding this injunction—free to descant on any phase of the huge, all-embracing subject—this particular speaker, craving your sympathetic indulgence, will hie him back—pretty far back—into the past, for there are some things which “if gathered from the ashes of obscurity” prove interesting, illuminating and worth while.

The wily Subtle, in Ben Jonson's “Alchemist,” shrewdly said:

All arts have still had, Sir, their adversaries;
But ours the most ignorant,—

True! For there were innumerable, unconscionable charlatans among the professors and practitioners of the alchemic art, whose shameful practices brought the craft into general disrepute. They were the *adversaries* of the simple, sincere devotees who had learned to scorn delights and live laborious days in search of the all-powerful transmuting agent, yet not blind to other new and marvelous changes occurring in their crude, primitive furnaces. Nor did these enthusiasts live in European lands alone. They existed here in America. We who've taught chemistry probably never knew this. We imagined that our science, freed from its early shackles of ignorance, and superstition, proudly stalked through the land untouched, untainted by those “close deeds of darkness, that shun the light!”

No, it is recorded that John Winthrop, the younger, erstwhile governor of Connecticut, living in New London, somewhere in the late sixteen hundreds, used to resort with his servant to Governor's Ring—a

¹ Address delivered on the occasion of the Edward Hart celebration at Lafayette College, October 16, 1924.

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