

SCIENCE

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THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY IN AMERICA WITH REFERENCE TO YALE¹

I AM indeed grateful for the opportunity of speaking to you on the "History of chemistry in America with reference to Yale." This is an epoch occasion, and while we rejoice in the possession of this magnificent, palatial edifice, designed for the service of chemistry, it is well in this moment of exultation to take a backward look and note the

rock from whence we were hewed and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged.

So that, with your permission, I shall briefly touch upon facts

pick'd from the worm holes of long vanish'd days and from the dust of old oblivion rak'd.

Chemists—American chemists—in tracing the history of their science, are apt to turn to other countries. For chemistry was born in the dawn of civilization and to older lands one looks for its gradual evolution. As the oldest of the experimental sciences, it is coexistent with man's own rise and development. One need not search far to find evidences of its presence. Yet, Americans have frankly admitted their ignorance of the earliest days of chemistry in this western world. In fact, it has only been within the last quarter of a century that any effort has been put forth to ascertain when chemistry had its beginnings among us and what contributions it has made to the upbuilding of society.

It is to Jamestown, Virginia, founded in 1607, that the student of the history of chemistry must go, for there in the year 1608, before the ring of the axe was heard in the forests of America, bold spirits erected a glass house "in the woods" producing a product which was sent home in crude form, but still proof of the possibilities of an industry which might con-

¹ Address at the dedication exercises of the Sterling Chemistry Laboratory at Yale University, April 4, 1923.

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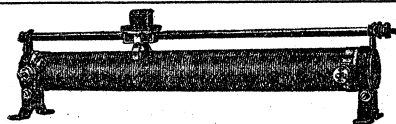
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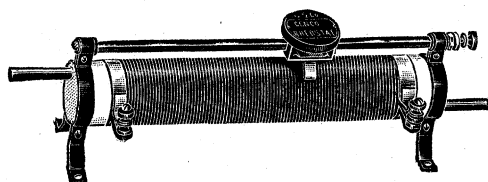
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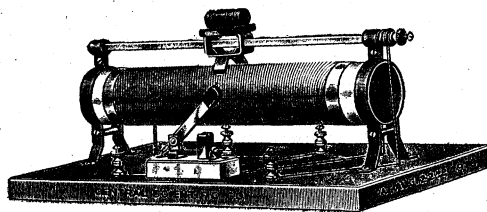
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