Richard Adolf Zsigmondy Encyclopedia Article

Richard Adolf Zsigmondy

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Richard Adolf Zsigmondy

1865-1929

Austrian chemist who received the 1925 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his work with colloids. Zsigmondy studied quantitative analysis at the Medical Faculty in Vienna, and organic chemistry at the University of Munich. He later took a position in a glassworks, where he was introduced to colloids, a suspension of tiny particles in another substance. He discovered the presence of tiny particles of gold in ruby glass, and believed he could learn more about colloids by studying the way in which particles scatter light. To this end, he and Heinrich Siedentopf invented the ultramicroscope in 1903, which was subsequently used in the fields of biochemistry and bacteriology.