MEMORIAL OF FRIEDRICH RINNE*

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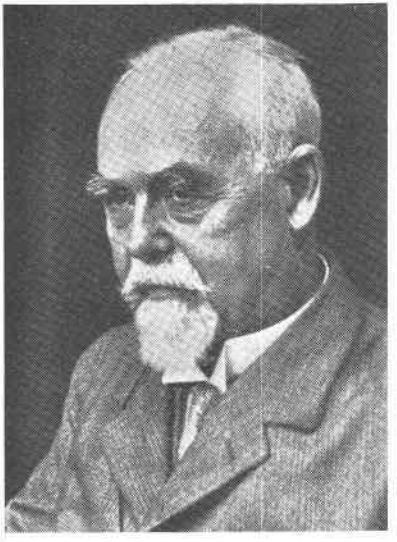
Friedrich Wilhelm Berthold Rinne, an honorary life member of our society, was born at Osterode in the Harz Mountains on March 16, 1863. It is probable that in the choice of his career he was influenced by his early observations and contacts with minerals and mining in the Harz. He studied under C. Klein at Göttingen and published his first paper on the crystallography of some organic crystals in 1884. When Klein accepted the chair of mineralogy at Berlin in 1887, Rinne accompanied him as his assistant. A part of



FRIEDRICH RINNE
1863–1933

his time was devoted to the assistant curatorship in the Mineralogical Museum of the University. At the age of 31 he was called to Hanover to occupy the chair of mineralogy at the Technische Hochschule. This appointment started his brilliant career. In 1903 he succeeded O. Mügge at Königsberg. From there he was called to Kiel in 1908, and only a year later to Leipzig where he succeeded

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F. Zirkel as director of the Mineralogical Institute. This important post he occupied until the spring of 1928 when he retired to the beautiful little village of Günterstal near Freiburg in the Schwarzwald. The University of Freiburg made him Honorary Professor and a portion of his time was spent at its mineralogical institute. A "Festband" with contributions by his numerous former students had been planned in celebration of his seventieth birthday, but he succumbed to pneumonia on March 12, 1933, four days before.

As a scientist Rinne did not only possess great power of concentration and vision, but had the gift of seeing and inspiring these qualities in those who worked with him. It is not accidental that many of the best known European mineralogists started in his laboratory. His institute, largely due to his administrative genius, was one of the best equipped and most thoroughly supervised in the world. He was the pioneer in x-ray work applied to mineralogy and his book, "Das feinbauliche Wesen der Materie nach dem Vorbilde der Kristalle," passed through several editions.

One of his earlier works, "Gesteinkunde für Techniker," 1901, saw its tenth edition in 1928. It is a classic of its kind. Many of its illustrations were gathered by Rinne on his world tour, especially in Asia from 1899 to 1901.

He published many other notable works especially on zeolites, minerals of Stassfurt, Germany, liquid crystals, and symmetry of the crystal classes. He was one of the foremost leaders who was instrumental in the change from the old style determinative mineralogy to the new science of mineralogy which is really applied physics.

Rinne was a man of meticulous neatness and majesty of manner, yet easily approachable and kind to his subordinates. His genial personality and linguistic ability made him a charming host to the cosmopolitan and international groups which met at his Institute. He could match folksong verses with an Italian, or discuss New York hotels with an Englishman with equal alacrity. His home reflected his travels in the beautiful collections of furniture and works of art. In short, his spirit will live on in those who had the privilege of associating with him.