

## **Brugmans, Sebald-Justinus**

Born: March 24, 1763 – Franeker (Friesland, NL)

Died: July 22, 1819 – Leiden (NL)

His father is professor of philosophy, mathematics and physics. He studies classical languages at the Gymnasium of Franeker and his father teaches him mathematics and physics. At the age of 15 he becomes a student at the University of Groningen. His parents would rather visualize his future as an engineer but he opts for botanic, medicine and the study of fossils.

He obtains his doctor's degree in 1781 and after graduating as bachelor (to switch over to the actual title) at Groningen, he studies medicine at Leiden University. He qualifies with a thesis on pus (1785). This entitles him to become professor of physics, astronomy, logics and metaphysics at Franeker, followed by his appointment to the chair of botanic in Leiden. He insists on a better knowledge of endemic botany. He becomes head of the Botanical Garden and lectures on natural history. He collects an anatomic showroom to exemplify his lectures.

At the Faculty of Medicine he teaches chemistry in 1795.

Around that time he is called up by the Staten van Holland to organize military hospitals. In cooperation with the French, after the *Bataafse Revolutie*, he coordinates and runs the sanitary service of the Dutch army. In Den Haag he establishes a central pharmacy and a chemical laboratory to save on the purchase of the necessary medication for the troops on the private market.

From then on his career simply flourishes. When Louis Napoleon is called to the throne in 1806, Brugmans becomes medical advisor to the king and inspector-general of the medical service. In 1810 the Netherlands are annexed by France, Brugmans is appointed inspector of the armed forces and dean of the Academy for Arts in Leiden; he personally defends his viewpoints at Napoleons court.

When the Netherlands become independent in 1813 he remains in charge of the military, naval and colonial medical services. After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 he makes arrangements for a hospital service for the troops and the prisoners of war. He is honored with important medals by Russia, Prussia and his own country. He is charged with the recuperation of Dutch property in French hands, allowing him to expand his anatomical collection in The Hague.

In 1816 he is elected member of the *Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres of Belgium*.

### **His Work**

“*Lithologia Groningana*” is a study of the geological structure of Groningen. In 1781 the Academy of Dijon grants him a price for his contribution to the flora which poisons the fields and renders them barren, followed in 1872 by the study of a sulphur containing meteorite in Groningen and its influence on the flora. The Academy of Berlin awards him a gold medal for his study of rye-grass.

He is also interested in chemistry and publishes a commemorative work about Boerhaave.