

BRUYLANTS, Gustave

Born: Leuven, 1850

Died: Leuven, 1925

Bruylants graduates as a pharmacist at the University of Leuven. He studies for one year in Bonn, where he meets August Kekulé, Carl Mohr, Walter Spring (1848-1911) and Jacobus-Henricus Van 't Hoff. Back in Leuven he receives his doctorate with a thesis on the synthesis of alkenes. This is the start of a successful academic career spanning from 1878 till 1921, as professor of pharmacy, physiology, food chemistry, toxicology and urology (He writes a handbook on the subject). He is with his son-in-law Fernand Ranwez (1866-1925) the founder of the School of Pharmacy and its research labs. At the outbreak of the war, Bruylants takes up residence in Oxford, makes a study of the synthetic derivatives of fatty acids and returns the next year via Rotterdam to Leuven, where he is appalled at the destruction of the city and the university buildings. After the war he contributes to the reconstruction.

He is extremely knowledgeable in physiology, food chemistry (he proves the lack of nutritional value of saccharin, for which the sugar refinery of Tienen rewards the university with a new lab) and forensic chemistry. His expertise in this field is useful in a number of important lawsuits. As a teacher he is known for his clear, lively approach to the subject, denuded of all possible confusing lumber.

In 1892 he becomes a member of the High Council for Health and insists on the necessary procedures to guarantee the quality of foodstuffs.

From 1907 till 1919 he is municipal counselor for the catholic part.