'Johan van Beverwijck'
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Beveridge was born in Bengal, where his father was a district sessions judge in the Indian Civil Service, and his mother a pioneer of education for Hindu women. He was sent to a Unitarian boarding school in Worcestershire at the age of five, and saw little of his parents during his childhood. At the age of eleven he won a scholarship to Charterhouse school, where he excelled at mathematics and classics, although his real passion was for natural science and astronomy.

He went as an exhibitor in 1897 to Balliol College, Oxford. After a year working with a commercial barrister in London, he went to University College Oxford on a prize fellowship and took a bachelor of law degree in 1903. However, he switched careers to investigate social problems from a position as sub-warden at Toynbee Hall—a settlement in the East End of London, staffed by Oxford University personnel. This move had been inspired by Beveridge’s reading of T. H. Huxley (1825-1895), who claimed that social problems required the rigorous application of social science techniques, in much the same way as the natural sciences used their techniques.

At Toynbee Hall Beveridge formed close alliances with a number of key reformers, especially Sidney (1859-1947) and Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), the Fabian socialists. Beveridge took a particular interest in the campaigns for a national minimum wage and old age pensions. Between 1904 and 1909, he researched and subsequently published a pioneering study: Unemployment: A Problem of Industry. In 1905 he began to write for the Morning Post, producing nearly 1,000 leading articles on socio-economic issues.

In 1907 Beveridge was introduced by the Webbs to Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the new Liberal President of the Board of Trade, and the following year he became a civil servant, working on the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909 and the National Insurance Act of 1911. During World War I he was seconded to the Ministry of Munitions, but his poor relations with the unions meant that he was not transferred as he hoped to the new Ministry of Labour. Instead he went to the Ministry of Food, where he became one of the youngest Permanent Secretaries in 1919. He resigned from the civil service in 1919 to take up the directorship of the London School of Economics (LSE).

Beveridge attracted a number of social sciences experts to the LSE, including H. J. Laski. In 1937 he moved as Master to University College Oxford. With the threat of war, he was keen to return to a policymaking role, but it was not until December 1940 that he achieved this. He then exploited a broad brief to conduct a social services inquiry in June 1941 to accomplish one of the most significant surveys of the twentieth century. Published to unexpected widespread public acclaim in 1942, Beveridge’s report, Social Insurance and Allied Services, exposed Britain’s problems with the ‘five giants’ of idleness, ignorance, disease, squalor, and want. Beveridge reinforced the work of earlier social scientists such as Edwin Chadwick (1800-1890), Charles Booth (1840-1916), and Joseph Rowntree (1801-1859) in showing that there were clear links between low income, poor housing, and poor health. He interviewed hundreds of working class families, who along with leading economists, testified to the impact of the inter-war economic depression and fragmented health care system on the nation’s health. Furthermore, the wartime Emergency Medical Service had demonstrated that it was possible to provide an integrated, state-run service. The 1942 report provided a blueprint for universal social insurance, including a comprehensive national health service, free at the point of delivery, along with family, unemployment, and old age benefits. More than 70,000 copies were sold in the first few days after publication, putting considerable pressure on the government.

Beveridge actively promoted his plans and entered parliament as a Liberal MP for Berwick upon Tweed. He lost his seat after only a year, and went to the House of Lords in 1946. Aneurin Bevan, new Minister of Health and Housing in the 1945 Labour government, adopted his plan for a national health service. After a period of bitter negotiations with the medical profession, Bevan succeeded in passing the NHS Act in 1946, and the service came into operation on 5 July 1948.

Bibliography


Sally Sheard

BEVERWIJCK, JOHAN VAN  (b. Dordrecht, the Netherlands, 17 November 1594; d. Dordrecht, 19 January 1647), medicine, anatomy, surgery.

Born into a distinguished family in Dordrecht, van Beverwijk was a typical self-confident burgher of the Protestant Dutch Republic. His father was a cloth merchant, and his mother, Maria Boot van Wézel, was a distant relative of the sixteenth-century anatomist Andreas Vesalius. At the Dordrecht Latin school, the famous scholar Gerardus Vosius taught van Beverwijk the principles of classical rhetoric, which can be traced throughout his writings. He started his medical studies at Leiden (1611-15) and completed his training at several European universities, including Paris, Lyon, Montpellier, Bologna, Padua (graduation, probably 1617), Basel, Heidelberg, and Leuven.

In 1618 he started to practice as a family doctor and chemist in Dordrecht, where he joined the local elite and held many official medical and nonmedical positions. In 1625 he became the official town physician, and from 1634 until 1643 he lectured anatomy to surgeons and laymen. He also trained
Van Beverwijck was well-read in the history of medicine and he eagerly conducted experiments, especially in the field of anatomy. He was the first Dutch physician to acknowledge William Harvey’s ideas on the circulation of the blood; he expanded on them in a treatise on bladder and renal stones (*De calculo renum & vesicae liber singularis*, 1638; translated into Dutch as *Steen-stuck*).

He wrote widely on medical subjects, but also on topics such as history or the qualities of the female sex. Between 1636 and 1645 he published the famous trilogy *Schat der Gesondheyt*, *Schat der Ongesondheyt*, and *Heel-konste* [Treasury of Health, Treasury of Illness, and Surgery]. This first complete and often reprinted medical encyclopedia in Dutch offered doctors and laymen a systematic survey of conditions of health, as well as the causes and treatments of all known diseases. It was based on the classical Galenic doctrine of the four humors and supplemented with the ideas of Harvey.

Van Beverwijck’s trilogy was written in a clear, matter-of-fact style, with many humorous observations, and the explanations followed a steady pattern. First of all, he was confident that God has enabled mankind to guard its health. Next, he observed each disease critically, comparing historical and contemporary medical reports with his own experience. He also took into account whatever useful information he could get from other sources, including the Bible, books on mythology and world history, travel stories, novels, and poetry. With regard to the latter, he received help from a friend, the popular poet Jacob Cats, who enriched the text with verse summaries. Accordingly, this medical encyclopedia offered useful insights and practical advice, but was also a book of miscellaneous content, full of fascinating stories that perfectly demonstrated the well-known Renaissance combination of *utiles* [useful] and *dulcis* [attractive].

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Lia van Gemert