

## **BAND ONE**

### **Section 2 : Advances in Medicine**

Music: Bach T.12

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#### **TONY LENTIN**

Whether on the grand scale of the Encyclopaedia or short volumes like Candide the writings of the French Philosoph's challenged the established values of eighteenth century France and formed the basis of enlightenment thought.

Music: Bach T12

One of the greatest achievements of the enlightenment was the advance in medicine the most successful was inoculation against smallpox. Inoculation was banned by the church but the Philosoph's took up the cause

#### **PROF CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE**

The promoters of inoculation in France were the Philosophs Voltaire's English Letters appear in 1734 and are a very early example of the great valuation that the Philosophs put upon his technique.

The article in the Encyclopaedia is enormously long in comparison to the apparently insignificant nature of the procedure.

One of the things about inoculation that must have appealed to the Philosophs was it's simplicity, this wasn't an arcane and complex procedure. It could be done by the local surgeon the local physician

without any great preparation.

What they would have used would have been a lancet. All the surgeon or physician needed to do was take some dried material from an old smallpox wound, the case would be a few days old perhaps. Take it maybe on the end of your scalpel, you could then apply it immediately to another patient or dry it and apply it at a later time.

### **TONY LENTIN**

Inoculation worked the prestige of the Philosophs increased, science was gaining ground. The next advance championed by the Philosophs was in surgery.

### **PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE**

Perhaps the most famous of all eighteenth century operation was lithotomy cutting for the stone.

For reasons that are not entirely clear bladder stones, bladder calculi seemed to have been incredibly common in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Benjamin Franklin had one Samuel Pepys had one. Operations for bladder stone were very common. This figures very large in the plates in Encyclopaedia no wonder because French surgeons regarded themselves as having perfected what was known as the lateral operation for the stone.

In this operation a surgeon would cut into the bladder. The patient would be seated on a chair, his or her legs strapped up and incision is made from below.

A long knife might then be pushed into the bladder or, in this case a hidden knife, this would be inserted into the bladder through the initial opening and then a knife appears and a track can be cut.

A dilator of some sort would need to be passed and then one would hope after about twenty seconds you could get your lithotomy forceps into

the bladder, find the stone, take hold of it and pull it out.

An expert surgeon would hope to perform this operation in thirty-seconds. If you were unlucky it might last a minute and a half or worse.

Obviously it was an operation erm that was dangerous but some Paris surgeons claimed success rates as high as ninety-two per cent.

### **TONY LENTIN**

Medicine had immediate and obvious benefits and it's success demonstrated the victory of scientific method and rational thought.