

# Royal British Nurses' Association.

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## THE PRESIDENT PRESIDES.

Her Royal Highness Princess Arthur of Connaught R.R.C., S.R.N., President of the Association, was graciously pleased to take the Chair when Mr. Carver, Medical Superintendent of St. Mary Abbots Hospital, gave his lecture on "Urological Surgery, its History and Modern Development." There was a large attendance of the Members, and on her arrival the Princess was presented with a bouquet of pink roses and mauve sweetpeas by Miss Ingman.

### LECTURE.

#### "UROLOGICAL SURGERY, ITS HISTORY AND MODERN DEVELOPMENT."

BY JAMES CARVER, Esq., F.R.C.S.

The following is a synopsis of the lecture:—

Kidney and bladder surgery, as we know it to-day, dates from the introduction of the cystoscope in 1885. Before that time there was no scientific approach to urinary disorders and the only disease that was widely written about was urinary calculus. Celsus, who lived about the time of our Lord, wrote a treatise on stone which, for 1,400 years, was the *vade mecum* of the medical profession. He gives a most elaborate description as to how the patient should be secured by strong muscular men to prevent him from running away from the surgeon. He advocated a perineal approach to the bladder; a semi-circular incision was made between the ischial tuberosities and the bladder was opened. Needless to say the operation was crude and sepsis was the rule. The patient was rendered senseless with alcohol or else he was given inhalations through what was called a soporific sponge. The sponge had previously been soaked in a mixture of opium, hyosyamus, mulberry juice, ivy, mandrake, hemlock and lettuce. The sponge was allowed to dry and before it was given to the patient it was moistened. To ensure the more powerful action of the sponge the patient was kept without sleep for several days beforehand.

The next step in the removal of stone was made by a man called Marianus Sanctus, who in 1531 introduced a grooved staff into the bladder. The membranous portion of the urethra was opened on the staff, the bladder neck stretched and the stone forced through. There were a great many modifications of this instrument so that the operation became known as the "method of the great apparatus." The operation was fairly successful in the hands of the experienced. The surgeons who operated for stone were known as lithotomists, but they were to a great extent despised by the physicians. Many of the lithotomists handed the secret of their craft down to their sons and it was customary for them to visit towns with fairs and circuses and to open sideshows for the treatment of patients suffering from stone. In Germany, the operation cost 51 marks, but if the lithotomist was unsuccessful he received only half that amount. Many

doctors in those days were content to examine the urine only, a method which was called uroscopy and a fee of 3 cents was paid for the examination. One of the greatest of all lithotomists was Frere Jacques, of Beaulieu, who at one time was a private in a cavalry regiment. He joined a travelling stone cutter, named Palloni, and putting on a monk's habit he travelled over Europe and was most successful. The people of Holland were so grateful to him that they presented him with a set of gold sounds. The best known of the English lithotomists was John Greenfield whose real name was Jan Groeneveldt, a Dutchman. About the same time that Greenfield was practising in England there was a very celebrated case in Paris. An archer in a French regiment was caught thieving and was sentenced to be hung. It was known that he suffered from stone and the members of the College of Physicians in Paris beseeched the King to allow them to operate upon the archer. The King agreed and the archer was only too pleased to escape a hanging. The operation was performed and was successful, and the patient lived for many years afterwards in perfect health. You will see what a haphazard attitude there was to stone in those days, and the quacks flourished and did a very lively trade. In England there seemed to be almost a national dread of stone and its consequences, and many celebrated people were sufferers from calculus.

There appeared in a newspaper called *The Gentlewoman* in April 1738, an advertisement stating that one Johanna Stevens was prepared to sell a cure for stone to the Nation for the sum of £5,000. £1,500 was subscribed by the Bishop of Oxford and the Bishop of Gloucester and other notabilities, but Johanna Stevens would not sell the cure for such a small sum. Parliament became interested and eventually appointed a special committee to enquire into the authenticity of the cure. They reported favourably upon it and eventually Parliament voted a sum of £5,000 for the secret remedy. The remedy was published in the *London Gazette* on June 19th, 1739, and it was as follows:—

A mixture of herbs, egg-shells, snails and soap was to be taken three times a day followed by a half-pint of limewater. The great Sir Robert Walpole took this remedy for many years and it was stated that in his lifetime he swallowed 180 lbs. of soap and 1,200 gallons of limewater. When Sir Robert died an autopsy was performed, and unfortunately for the cure's reputation three stones were found in his bladder.

The crushing of stone was known and practised in Alexandria as early as 230 B.C., but it did not receive any widespread popularity in Europe until a Frenchman named Civiale described in 1824 a lithotrite which consisted of two parts, the one an outer sheath contained an inner one with three prongs. The instrument was passed into the bladder and the prongs made to grip the stone. The inner tube was then pulled into the outer one, held there firmly and a screw-like instrument passed through the inner tube and the stone crushed. We had, however,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)