

**JOSEPH NICOLAS BLAISE FORLENZE**

Joseph-Nicolas-Blaise Forlenze (3 February 1757 - 22 July 1833), was an Italian ophthalmologist and surgeon, considered one of the most important ophthalmologists between the 18th and the 19th century. He was mostly known in France, during the Napoleonic Empire, for his cataract surgery.

In 1797, he practised an eye surgery at a retirement home in Paris, in the presence of a commission appointed by the Institute, as well as several members of the government, and French and foreign scholars. In 1798, he became surgeon at the Hôtel national des Invalides and the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, where he made many remarkable interventions.

Forlenze cured the soldiers of Napoleon's army returning from Egypt, affected by serious eye diseases. He healed renowned personalities such as Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, minister of Worship, and the poet Ponce Denis Lebrun, removing a cataract which had been present for twelve years from one of his eyes. Lebrun dedicated to him a verse in his ode called *Les conquêtes de l'homme sur la nature*. Napoleon, with a royal decree, gave him the assignment of "chirurgien oculiste of the lycées, the civil hospices and all the charitable institutions of the departments of the Empire" thus Forlenze was sent into the French provinces to treat eye diseases.

His activity extended to England and Italy, where he performed free surgeries in cities such as Turin and Rome. In Rome, he cured the Cardinal Doria and was publicly honored by Caroline de Bourbon, Duchesse de Berry. His manuscript *Considérations sur l'opération de la pupille artificielle* (1805) is considered one of the most important medical works of the time. Forlenze died in 22 July 1833, stricken with apoplexy at the "Café de Foy", in Paris, where he spent often his evenings.

*Dr. Shephali Jain*

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