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## PLASTIC OPERATIONS AND THEIR PLACE IN SUR- GERY.

LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURAL  
MEETING OF THE MIDLAND MEDICAL  
SOCIETY.

BY SIR WILLIAM MAC CORMAC, F.R.C.S.,  
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Sir William MacCormac commenced his address by defining plastic surgery as that branch of the art which has as its object the relief of deformity or the restoration of a lost function by transplantation of healthy tissue obtained from the same individual or another, as well as to replace parts destroyed by accident or disease.

He quoted Dieffenbach's statement that plastic surgery is one of the highest achievements of the art, as an apology, if one were needed, for his choice of the subject, and mentioned the names of the many famous surgeons who had devoted their best attention to the matter.

The history of the art could be traced back to remote ages, rhinoplasty having been practised by the ancient Egyptian priests, according to Galen, and as a hereditary monopoly by the "Kooma" caste in India from earliest times.

In Europe, Tagliacozzi, of Bologna, in the sixteenth century, was best known as having placed the art on a scientific basis, though it appeared that rhinoplasty had been practised in Europe with success as early as the fourteenth century.

In Tagliacozzi's method, known as the "Italian," the new nose is formed from a

flap of skin taken from over the biceps, the arm being fixed to the head during the process of union by a special apparatus; and this method appears to have been the only one known or practised in Europe till the end of the eighteenth century; then the operation now known as "Indian rhinoplasty" was introduced, in which the new nose is obtained by the dissection of a flap of skin from the forehead, the flap being turned down and fixed in position over some supporting substance to prevent it from falling in.

The first operation performed in England was in 1803, the "Indian" method being employed unsuccessfully. But in 1814 Carpué employed the same method with perfect success in two cases, and since then rhinoplasty by various methods and plastic surgery in general has been practised and developed by many surgeons, so that hardly any portion of the external structure of the body remains to which the art has not been applied.

External deformity naturally affords the greatest scope for the practice of plastic surgery, but as success in this seems to have almost attained its limits, attention has for some time been directed to internal structures, and though certain complicated tissues, such as muscles, arteries, and veins are as yet beyond the reach of the surgeon, successful operations for the repair of divided bones, tendons and nerves have become comparatively common.

Sir William MacCormac then referred to the various ways of obtaining the new tissue required, by formation of flaps of healthy skin or the removal of portions of deeper structures from the neighborhood, or from distant parts of the body of the same individual or of another (as, for instance, from freshly amputated limbs) or even from animals, and quoted cases showing the relative advantages of different methods in the treatment of various deformities.

The methods of operation were next discussed, stress being laid upon the points requiring special attention in order to ensure success. Speaking generally, the two most important matters were gentleness in handling the tissue to be transplanted,