Development of Plastic Surgery in Britain.

(By Courtesy of British Information Services)

Plastic surgery has been practised for many years now, and during World War II decisive progress was made in this important sphere. While skin-grafting, skin-removal, and similar operations, coming within the sphere of surgery, were formerly for the purpose of beautifying the human body, a new field confronted plastic surgeons in World War II.

This consisted of work of much greater significance from the health and social point of view, for example; the treatment, not of individual cases, but of thousands of patients suffering from burns or wounds caused by bombs or artillery missiles. Some of the airman taken from crashed planes were so terribly burned that any hope of restoring them to health would have been impossible without the use of plastic surgery. Without it they would have gone through life as helpless cripples.

PERFECTING OLD METHODS.

Britain, whose Royal Air Force fought on all fronts during the war, had special hospitals or hospital departments where doctors were given the opportunity of perfecting the former methods used in skin grafting. The original method was to take a piece of skin from the thigh or arm of the patient and graft it on to the wound. It was soon found, however, that such fresh skin grafts were not always advisable owing to the presence of bacterial flora, or some other reason.

Preserved skin was, therefore, used in such cases and according to the report published in the London medical journal, The Lancet, by Dr. Adrian E. Flatt of a Ministry of Pensions Hospital, the main problem as regards skin used for grafting was the question of storage. The customary methods were complicated because of the changes in temperature occurring in automatic refrigerators, that is, those operated by electricity or gas. It was then discovered that the most constant temperature was to be found in the dish used to catch the condensed moisture falling on the cooling coil.

The old method of packing skin for storage in Piloifilm sheets and two sterilised cloths was found to be impracticable. Dr. Flatt's new method consists in rolling the skin on paraffin-soaked tulle grass, which is then placed in screw-topped, glass pathological specimen bottles.

BEDSIDE OPERATION

In all 17 patients involving 50 graftings have been treated with preserved skin. The youngest of the patients, most of whom were of the male sex, was only two years old and the oldest 67. The wounds treated originated from thermal, electric or X-ray burns, traumatic, full-thickness skin loss, or varicose ulcers.
these grafts were made at the bedside of the patient, and not on the operating

Health Visitors’ Page

The Health of Your State is the State of Your Health

The term health implies more than absence of disease in the individual and
indicates a state of harmonious functioning of the body and mind in relation to the
physical and social environment so as to enable him to enjoy life to the fullest
possible extent in order to be of service to others.

Having this principle as our basis, let us now see the health of our country.

India is a vast country over a million and half square miles and her population
nearly 400 million, speaking about 20 major languages, of various castes, creeds and
religious. Facts and figures are dull things, except to experts, yet if we are to visualize India today, we must have a few of these big facts and figures in our minds. The
villages are innumerable in comparison with the few towns and cities. There are
about 850,000 villages in which 99 percent of the population live, and the historic
cities and bazaars are packed to their capacities.

If we look into the social and economical level, poverty still is a major problem,
owing to the remarkable increase in population. The production of food and the
development of industry have not been able to keep pace with rapidly expanding
numbers. The caste system, the practice of child marriage, the persistence of
unchastity habits, the extravagant expenditure on social and religious ceremonies
still exist and are obstacles to her development and advancement. The education
status is very low when compared with other countries and mainly in the villages
there are very few people who can read and write. When health is lacking, then
education is also lacking. In other words, health and education must go together.

Our villages, though flourishing in an abundance of fresh air, are lacking in
healthy living. Many of our villagers produce fruits, vegetables, poultry, etc. but
alas very seldom they make use of them. The production is sold for money and
the village is even willing to sacrifice one or two meals.

There are well-to-do families undergoing starvation in most places due to lack
of education. The master of the house enjoys life by engaging in gambling, drinking, smoking etc. leaving behind him discontentment, misery and unhappiness.