

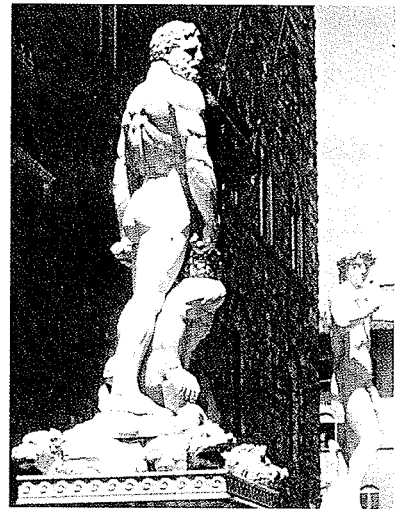
Prologue

*A Face Without a Nose Is Almost as Useless
as a Sundial Without Its Gnomon*

Through the ages man's nose, positioned out in front of his other features, a projecting "bull's eye" of the face, has borne great brunt. It has been mutilated for punishment; shot, blown off, and burned in battle; bitten, avulsed, and sloughed in peacetime; shriveled from within by disease; scorched by the sun; eroded by cancer; deformed by surgery; crunched on the road; and punched in the ring.

Even the noses on sculptured human statues, due to their relative prominence and fragility, are prone to injury from weather, vandalism, and accident. It was most depressing for me in 1949 when I observed so many of the noses of the glorious statues in the Uffizzi Gallery in Florence, Italy, revealed the lines of injury where the nose seemed to have been avulsed and replaced. Dr. Piera Bocci, Director of the Archeology Department of the Uffizzi Galleria, explained to my friend, Dr. Giuseppe Francesconi, "Originally many of the statues were stored in the inner part of the crypts. Due to the aging of the building in which the crypts were located, the statues fell down and the most prominent parts such as the nose were damaged."

The great Sphinx of Egypt, built around 2600 B.C. of sandstone, was shaped at the bottom like a seated lion but with the head of a man and the features of King Ka-f-ra. A great part of his nose is missing, while all else seems intact. Some say when Islam entered Egypt, a Muslim destroyed the nose to prove the Sphinx was but a statue. Others say the nose was blown off by Napoleon's cannons. This is unlikely because Napoleon expressed great respect for the antiquity of



Egypt. It is far more likely that the sandstone nose, the most protruding feature of the face of the statue, suffered injury over time from sun, rain, wind, and sand storms.

As the central and prominent feature of the face the nose commands front billing, and even minor nasal abnormalities and discrepancies draw immediate attention. There has always been an inherent desire in man to look like his fellow man and not appear horrible, peculiar, or different. Six centuries before Christ in ancient India a Hindu surgeon, Susruta Samhita, recognized this fact when he wrote, "The love of life is next to the love of our own face and thus the mutilated cry for help." Any deviation from the normal quickly evokes ridicule, as J.F. Dieffenbach said in 1831 of one possessing a mutilation "at whose presence children cry and dogs bark." William Mayo, American surgeon of the twentieth century, expressed it succinctly: "It is the divine right of man to look human." Each of these sensitive surgeons, spanning a period of more than 1500 years, has defined in a general way the basic purpose of plastic surgery.



There has also been a marked variation in the ability of man to adjust to deformity. Comedian Jimmy Durante, whom I had the privilege of interviewing, used his huge nose to plow his way to fame and fortune, while the swashbuckling Cyrano de Bergerac actually came to his death because of a nose of similar size. Between these extremes the rest of us muddle along to the best of our ability. Yet a huge nose, a peculiarly shaped nose, a tiny nose, a nose with part missing, or no nose at all can elicit despair. It has been so poignantly presented by Edmond Rostand in 1891 in the words of his Cyrano de Bergerac: "Yet I can dream how it would be to walk slowly in the moonlight with someone on my arm. Elated, I forget myself; but suddenly why there's the shadow of my profile on the wall . . ." As the nose is front and center, the skill of its reduction, reshaping, and reconstruction is important, and proof of success of the surgical result rests not only in the harmony of its aesthetic proportions, relationships, and symmetry, but in its *naturalness*.

