A NEW NASAL SPECULUM.

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An efficient nasal speculum is pre-eminently the desideratum in rhinological practice. We have been experimenting with the object of producing a speculum which would be equally valuable for either examinations or operations. Our experience has been more favorable with hinged lever specula than with any of the self-retaining or smaller, lighter and more springy patterns of specula which are so frequently met with.

To simply stretch the meatus is not the only requisite in order to obtain a good view of the nasal passage. The speculum employed must serve us in other ways in order that it may prove to be the acme of success. It should be of a size large enough to be easily grasped by the hand of the surgeon, and will thus serve as a convenient handle whereby the nose may be guided as desired, or held fixed in one position with a reasonable degree of firmness. Having one hand thus engaged is no detriment, as in most intra-nasal operations only one hand is required, while the other is best employed in steadying the field of vision by a firm though gentle traction with the speculum. In this way there will be but little requirement for a head-rest, even in a sawing operation, particularly if the saw is set to cut on the pull. In using burrs and trephines with the electric engine, no head-rest is required.

The standard styles of nasal specula of the variety under consideration were found to possess certain common characteristics which we have in many instances been compelled to regard as faults.

1. The blades are placed at about right angles to the handles, therefore, when being used, the handle falls too close to the patient’s chin. On the other hand, if the handle be held forward and away from the chin, the blades point to the floor of the nasal passage.

2. In opening the speculum, the upper edges of the blades travel farther, or open wider, than do the lower edges. To, in a measure, overcome this defect, some of these specula are hinged nearly half
way down the handle. As the nasal passage and meatus are wider below than above, it would seem wiser to have the speculum made to conform to the anatomical requirements.

3. The blades being generally wedge-shaped, display a frequent tendency to slip out while being used. In cases wherein the meatus is large, the blades slip inside the passage.

4. The springs met with are generally too strong. This, in combination with the location of the hinge pivot nearly half-way down the handle, giving nearly as great a degree of motion to the blades as is given to the handles when being compressed, causes increased difficulty in gently expanding the blades.

We here illustrate a nasal speculum, the result of considerable thought and experiment, made with the object of avoiding the defects previously alluded to.

![Coulter-Pynchon Nasal Speculum](image)

Instead of being at right angles to the handle, the blades are placed at an angle of about 70 degrees thereto. When viewed from the side, the handle is found to be slightly serpentine. The first downward bend gives increased room during instrumentation, and, by pressing against the upper lip when in use, tends to prevent the blades being too far inserted. To further assist in this latter aim, the upper, outer corner of each blade terminates in a horn, which horns so engage the meatus as to prevent the before-mentioned and undesirable "slipping into the nose."

When the blades are fully closed, while the upper edges touch each other, the lower edges are some distance apart, giving a space in vertical cross-section the shape of an isosceles triangle. The advantage of this arrangement is, that while as easily introduced as those specula, the blades of which approximate both above and below, it insures at all stages of expansion a greater stretch of the lower than of the upper part of the meatus. The handles, between the hinge and the blades, are somewhat apart even when the blades are fully closed; therefore, when the blades are separated, while the instrument is in use, the space between the handles is materially increased, so as to give the greatest amount of room during the employment of saws, drills, etc., while operating.

The most characteristic feature of this speculum is the "hump" on the outer, upper edge of both blades, in combination with the hollow
or depression between the humps and the horn-like terminals. This combination gives to the instrument its retaining feature, and prevents that frequent "slipping out" which has been previously noted, and thus permits of gently persuading the patient to remain stationary.

In the introduction of this speculum the tip and "humps" should first be entered within the meatus, while the blades are closed, and the handle held well out from the chin. After this, drop the handle down toward the chin, holding it parallel with the median line, and then expand the blades. The upper margin of the meatus will fit in the hollow or depression between the humps and horns. In use it will be found painless and, in fact, comfortable; certainly a feature of great merit. The humps also increase the expansion just inside of the upper margin of the meatus and thus facilitate a better view of the attic of the passage as the nose is pulled forward while the tip is being elevated.

Beyond the humps the blades rapidly diminish in size, and at the terminus are so delicate that the instrument serves admirably for examination of the smallest noses met with, or in those cases where the meatus is chapped or inflamed. The length of the blades is somewhat less than is that of the blades usually met with. To compensate for this shortcoming, the blade at the proximal end is made slightly wider from top to bottom than is usual. By these modifications, when the speculum is fully inserted, the expanding outer blade never presses against the inferior turbinal, and the maximum stretch of the meatus is obtained.

As this instrument does not aim to belong to the class of self-retaining devices, it is not provided with any set-screw to prevent closure of the blades. The spring is made particularly weak, and the sliding end rests in a groove to insure its remaining in place. The hinge joint is so made that tightening the screw-pin will not cause the joint to bind. A knob is placed at the end of either handle which allows the instrument to be more firmly held in the hand. The handles are somewhat longer than usual which gives increased convenience in use and is of particular value if the patient is to assist by holding the speculum.

This instrument has not been made more than ordinarily "acceptable," inasmuch as nasal surgery of the kind in which such a speculum will be used requires only simple, decent cleanliness. A thorough washing in boiling water, followed by drying and heating over an argand gas burner, is all-sufficient.

This speculum has been neatly constructed for us by Messrs. Truax, Greene & Co., of this city.

Columbus Memorial Building.