A PLAN TO AVOID HEATING THE MIRROR OF THE LARYNGOSCOPE.

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Among the devices for overcoming the fogging, by the patient's breath, of the surface of mirrors used in examining the upper air tract, the one most relied upon is that of warming the mirror over a lamp. This commonly results, after a comparatively short time, in the destruction of the mirror because the mercury coating becomes overwarmed from time to time. If the face of the mirror is watched during the heating, it will be seen that as it warms a film of moisture evaporates from its surface passing in from the circumference and finally disappearing about the centre. Now if the mirror is quickly removed just after this film has faded, it will be warmed to the right degree and can be safely introduced at once into the pharynx. The life of the instrument will be greatly, if not indefinitely, prolonged by this care.

The examiner in talking with his patient or those about him, not infrequently forgets to watch the mirror however, and after a few such lapses he finds his mirror is ruined. Such injury to these instruments is especially common in clinics where they are handled by various men; and where students are being trained in their use, the likelihood of injury to the equipment if of course still greater. Again the electric light is now very widely used in place of the gas or kerosene lamp, and in such event a spirit lamp must be provided to warm the laryngoscope, or some other method adopted to overcome the difficulty.

A very simple method which I have used for a long time with great satisfaction is as follows:

Dip the clean, dry mirror into a bowl of Lysol solution. This compound of soap and carbolic acid is an excellent antiseptic for the office desk at all times, and if kept fresh acts exceedingly well in this dual capacity. A laryngoscope mirror warmed to the limit of safety for the instrument, and of comfort for the patient, will keep an undimmed surface in the pharynx for about three-quarters of a minute. The same or even a longer time for such examination can be secured with a mirror equally clear, by wetting with the Lysol solution, and this with less time and trouble than is necessary for proper warming—a point of importance to the worker at a heavy clinic.

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