

NITRATE OF SILVER IN INFLAMMATIONS OF THE THROAT.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,—It is not at all my intention to speak of the affections of the throat to which the use of nitrate of silver is applicable, or of the rules which should govern us in its use, but only to call the attention of the profession to a mode of applying it which I have found exceedingly convenient and serviceable. I have for a long time discarded the use of that instrument so disagreeable to most patients, the throat-swab, and instead thereof I make, as we may say, the throat swab itself. It is done in this way. From a third to half a teaspoonful of the solution of the desired strength is thrown into the back part of the mouth, the act of swallowing being relied upon to diffuse it over the surface of the throat. The quantity is so small that this is all that the act can do, and it does this quite as effectually as swabbing can do it.

Besides getting rid of the disagreeableness of the common swabbing operation, we secure in this way, in many cases, a better application of the remedy. As the patient can use the remedy himself after this plan without any difficulty, it can be used with any frequency that may be desired. I have found that generally a solution of the strength of eight grains to the ounce, applied frequently, answers the purpose better than a stronger solution used at longer intervals. In acute cases I commonly direct its use four times a day—in chronic cases every night at bedtime. Of course there are cases which require a stronger solution.

The mode of application indicated is peculiarly serviceable in the case of children. With them the use of the swab is at least awkward, and in all cases where quiet is important, the disturbance necessarily attending its use is very objectionable. Since I have resorted to a better mode, I have been more ready to examine the throats of children with reference to the use of this remedy, and have found them more often affected with inflammation than is commonly supposed.

Most other topical remedies for the throat cannot be applied with the same facility in this way, because they have not the same disposition to attach themselves to the surface over which they are diffused.

So much gratification has been expressed by physicians who have tried the above method of using nitrate of silver, that I have thought it best to communicate it to your JOURNAL, that its benefits may be more widely diffused. Though it be one of the minor improvements, it is one which, from its frequent applicability, is of much value, and is therefore worthy of record. The idea on which it is based is a simple one, and undoubtedly has occurred to some others as well as myself, though I have not seen it adverted to in any journal.

W. HOOKER,

New Haven, Conn., July 11, 1859.

VOL. LX.—26*