A SIMPLE, GENTLE, SELF-RETAINING BRAIN RETRACTOR

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A simple, handy, gentle, self-retaining brain retractor has been in use in the author’s hands for the last year. Many times during intracranial procedures, brain spatulas or brain retractors are held by the surgeon and his assistants in order to maintain adequate exposure of deep-seated tumors. This is particularly true during transventricular procedures, separation of the cerebellar hemispheres during fourth ventricle explorations, and during the removal of a mural nodule in cystic gliomas. This instrument was used also in a series of transventricular psychosurgical procedures during which micro-electrodes were inserted into the septum pellucidum for the performance of electrical stimulation of these and other subcortical nuclei (to be published).

The instrument* is a modification of the Patton self-retaining nasal speculum (Figs. 1 and 2). It is exceedingly gentle on the retracted brain substance and it stays open to the desired diameter with the mere pressure of the cerebral tissue on its blades. It has the dual advantage that it does not move and does not dig into the brain tissue as so frequently happens when an assistant is holding a brain retractor for a prolonged period of time.

* This instrument can be obtained at the Coshow Specialty Shop, 1801 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans 16, La.