

CIRCULAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,
SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Richmond, Va., Oct. 16, 1863.

The pernicious results which have followed the careless employment of impure virus in vaccinating the army, require that the attention of medical officers be called to the subject, and that they be urged to abstain from the use of virus not of specific appearance, and from subjects not perfectly healthy.

In most cases it is perfectly practicable for the surgeon to procure from the vaccination (*gratis*) of healthy infants, sufficient material for perfecting this protecting process among those under his charge, and there can be no excuse under any circumstances for his inoculating the system with that, concerning the purity of which he has any doubt.

By reason of the rapid increase of our armies, the attention of medical officers in field and hospitals, and at camps of instruction, is earnestly called to the necessity for continued vaccination, and it is hoped that their industry and assiduity in its prosecution, will obviate the call for any further instructions on the subject from this office.

The observance of the requirements of paragraph 50, Regulations for the Medical Department, is strictly enjoined. When conscripts *not vaccinated* are received at regimental head quarters from camps of instruction, the regimental surgeon will forward a statement of the facts through this office to the commander of such camp, for his information.

Blank Forms of Vaccination Reports for the district embracing the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi, will be procured by requisition upon the Inspector and Superintendent of Vaccination at Columbia, S. C.; and for the district embracing the States of Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia, from the Inspector and Superintendent of Vaccination at Richmond. The reports, properly completed, will be forwarded to this office.

The following instructions relative to vaccination are published for the information and guidance of medical officers.

SAM'L PRESTON MOORE,
Surgeon General.

Mode of Vaccinating with the Scab.

The best instrument for the purpose is an old lancet, with the point broken off. The little angles thus formed are admirably well fitted for the operation; and the lancet cannot then (as it ought never to) be used for any other purpose. Prepare two glass plates two inches by an inch and a half. Lay a small piece of crust upon one of them; add a drop or two of water; lay the plates together, and grind the crust with the water to the consistence of mucilage. Grasp the patient's arm with your left hand, so as to draw the skin tensely. Dip the lancet in the solution of virus, and place a little upon several spots in a group over the insertion of the deltoid muscle. Make several light incisions in each of these spots. The incisions should be barely deep enough to draw blood. When the hand is removed from the arm, the gaping incisions close, retaining some of the virus between their edges; and it is therefore not liable to be rubbed off. Let the solution of virus and the blood become perfectly dry, and then the sleeve may be slipped upon the arm, without risk of rubbing off the virus.

The mode of vaccination by scraping off the epidermis, takes a longer time, and the virus is more liable to be rubbed off. The mode of inserting a piece of scab within the skin by incision, is more wasteful of virus; and as but little of it is dissolved, the remainder is liable to act as a foreign body, thus producing suppurative inflammation, and interfering with absorption.

Mode of Vaccinating with Lymph.

Prepare several pieces of thinly cut bone or whalebone about an inch and a half long and one-fourth of an inch wide, and round off an end of each, or cut off the barrel of a goose quill at each end. On the seventh or eighth day, while the vesicle is umbilicated, and retains its pearly lustre, and before the areola has fully formed, puncture the vesicle at its edge. Dip the rounded ends of several pieces of bone, or turn round one end of a quill-barrel in the clear lymph which oozes from the puncture, and allow the coating of lymph to dry. One or two more coatings of lymph may be added. Split the quill-barrel into four or six strips. These should be wrapped carefully and dated. The virus cannot usually be preserved in this mode longer than a week or ten days: but it may be procured at an earlier day than the scab, and seems to be more active, if procured early. There is reason to believe that the earlier the lymph is procured, the greater is its activity. To use the lymph, make the incisions as before, and rub the ends charged with virus upon them. The

blood which oozes from them dissolves the virus, which is thus deposited between their edges.

Spurious Vaccination, as it has been called, which is only a successful effort to cast off the poison as a foreign body, is especially liable to occur if the virus be not of good quality, or in vaccinations where the system is fully protected.

Diagnosis.

Always examine the patient not later than the day week after vaccination. If the vesicle be umbilicated, if it have a clear pearly lustre, and at the close of the eighth day be surrounded at its base by a narrow bright red areola ("the pearl upon the rose"), the vaccinia is genuine. If there be an acuminate pustule, it is spurious; and if it be a primary vaccination, it must be repeated.

To secure the Scab.

In the best sample of virus, the scab drops, or is ready to be removed, on the fifteenth day. The proper rule then in using this virus, is to visit the patient on the day week from date of vaccination, for the purpose of inspecting the vesicle, and to visit him again on the day fortnight, for the purpose of removing the scab. As an additional security, the scab may be covered with isinglass plaster two or three days before it shall be ready for removal. If this rule be observed punctually, there will be less complaint of the want of protective power of vaccinia, and of the loss of scabs through the carelessness of patients.

Appearance of the Scab.

The scab should be circular or oval, of a light mahogany color, umbilicated, translucent, and when dry, having a resinous fracture. If it have been taken from a negro, it will be of a much darker color, nearly black, or of a walnut color. If taken from a mulatto, the shade of the scab will vary with that of the skin. If the scab have a whitish, yellowish or light oak color, and be of a crumbling, scaly character, reject it.

To preserve Vaccine.

Soften a piece of gutta percha in boiling water, and roll it into a cylinder about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, between two boards; then roll it with a round rule, into the form of a thick tape, about three-fourths of an inch broad. (In working the gutta percha, the implements used as well as the hands should be kept constantly wet, to prevent the gutta percha from adhering.) Cut this tape into pieces about an inch and a half long, or cut sheet gutta percha one-fourth of an inch thick into pieces

of the above dimensions. Hold a piece with forceps, near a flame until it is well dried and softened. When the temperature is about that of the hand, cut the scab, which has been well dried for four or five days, into four or six pieces, and lay one of these on the strip of gutta percha, near one end, and then double over the other end upon it; press the gutta percha together around the piece of scab, to exclude the air; then roll it between the hands, and press the ends with the fingers until it is moulded into the form of a capsule. It is better to put up pieces of scab, because when a capsule is opened, the contained piece must be used immediately. The virus thus hermetically sealed may be preserved in an active state for several years. The capsules being small and of tough material, are admirably suited for transmission by mail.

The following rules and regulations are recommended for general adoption:

First.—Select the virus from a stock which has been found to produce characteristic effects, and to afford complete protection, and use that from infants only, as far as practicable.

Second.—Observe carefully the appearance of the vesicle on the seventh or eighth day.

Third.—Remove the scab from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day, and never accept that carelessly obtained by nurses, &c.

Fourth.—Select a few scabs; seal them hermetically in gutta percha, and lay them aside in a cool, dark place.

Fifth.—Whenever a soldier, sutler, servant or other employee is received into the army, examine his arm, make a record of his case, and revaccinate him.

Sixth.—At intervals of ten years, revaccinate the entire army.

Seventh.—Whenever small-pox may occur as an epidemic in any locality, vaccinate all the men in that locality and also all citizens in the neighborhood who have not been recently vaccinated.

Eighth.—Prohibit the men from vaccinating each other, in order to avoid the dangerous consequences of spurious vaccination, and see that this regulation is strictly enforced.

Ninth.—Make careful observations, and keep strictly accurate records of all vaccinations.

NOTE.—By Circular of December 23d, 1862, medical purveyors were directed to issue, upon the requisitions of medical officers, all material required in the preceding processes, with the exception of vaccine, which will be supplied from the Surgeon General's office.