

Georgia :

Dr. J. T. McFarland, Health Officer of Savannah, furnishes the following in response to my letter:

"The quarantine station is located seaward of the city, distant between fourteen and fifteen miles, upon an oyster-bed shoal; this shoal is entirely surrounded by water and is covered about four feet in every flood tide. One short angle of the river channel runs within about three hundred yards of the station. All vessels from infected or suspected parts and latitudes are required to discharge ballast all the year round at this quarantine station. No ballast from the West Indies, or suspected localities north of Rio de Janeiro, has been allowed to be brought to the city of Savannah since 1876. This regulation was instituted as a guard against yellow-fever introduction.

"The facilities of the station are not as great as are required; an increase of wharfage and the erection of a storehouse are needed.

"All vessels are inspected at the quarantine station by the resident physician. Vessels in cargo, from foreign ports, seldom come to this port between May 1 and November 1. I believe this is the case at the other South Atlantic ports. During this season but one vessel in cargo (gunno) has arrived here. Coffee vessels have been in the habit of coming to this port, and have been required to undergo sulphur fumigation with cargo in place; the fumes of the gas do not injure the quality of the bean in the slightest degree. The cargo is then allowed to be taken by lighters to the city, while the vessel is detained at the station; her bilges and timbers are cleansed and disinfected with solution of sulphate of iron or bichloride of mercury, and, along with all clothing and bedding, she is then subjected to a second fumigation. The requirements having been carried out, and no sickness having occurred on board during detention time, permit is granted by the health officer for vessel to come to the city. The clothing on board any such vessel is subjected daily, during detention, to the action of fresh air, all bedding and clothing being exposed on deck of vessel and in some cases these are subjected to boiling. Fumigation with chlorine gas is frequently resorted to—always when there is any suspicion of small-pox infection.

"So soon as cholera became epidemic in Spain this past summer, orders were issued to the pilots of this port, not to board, but to direct to the Sapelo Quarantine station, any and all vessels arriving from ports infected with cholera. This National Quarantine station is distant only about sixty miles from the mouth of the Savannah river. Recently orders have been issued allowing pilots to lead to the port quarantine station any vessel from the Mediterranean coast, when such vessel has not had death or acknowledged infectious disease aboard during her voyage. This change of order was made in consequence of the decrease of cholera in Europe. These vessels were ordered to the National Quarantine station because they were all deemed entitled to thorough cleansing, and the health authorities of Savannah decided that if cholera did make its appearance on board any of them while having the clothing, bedding, etc., attended to, it would be decidedly preferable to have them away from this port. Vessels arriving at this port from yellow-fever latitudes are not boarded by the pilots. Such vessels are led into quarantine grounds if they have not had sickness on board during voyage. If they have had sickness on board during voyage, which the captain acknowledges to have been suspicious, he is directed to the Sapelo station. If any vessel arrives at the port quarantine station and it is determined after investigation that she has had infectious or contagious disease on board, she is immediately ordered to leave the port, and is directed to the National Quarantine station. This refuge is unquestionably a very great safeguard and help to this portion of the Atlantic coast, and in helping and protecting us it protects the country at large.

"Should a vessel arrive at this port with cholera on board, and the National Quarantine station be closed, the ship would be placed at the greatest distance from line of travel (say three-fourths of a mile) and guard boats, with most reliable crews, would prevent any communication with or from her, excepting the quarantine physician, who would have to remain and look after the sick. Telegraphic communication would be opened at once with the authorities at Washington, asking the immediate opening of the National Quarantine station. If such station was opened the vessel would be sent there. If it was not opened the health authorities of Savannah would have to assume the responsibility and do the best in their power to prevent the spread of the disease.