PRESENT STATUS AND PROSPECTS.

It is hardly necessary to say that this country is not yet free from danger of an invasion of cholera simply because there is now a cessation of alarming reports from Europe. Periods of remission, more or less complete, have characterized every epidemic spread of cholera since it first invaded the latter country. Until it entirely disappears from the European continent it will not do for us to relax our vigilance or to remit a single precaution. On the contrary, this delay in its march should be utilized to strengthen our defenses, and to perfect our precautionary system. It must be remembered that the duration of a cholera invasion of Europe is not limited to two or three years. From the date of its first appearance in 1829-30 in Russia, to its final extinguishment in Italy, Austria and Germany, a period of seven years elapsed, during which, at one time or another, every one of the Continental countries was invaded—some of them more than once. Similarly in 1847, it again entered Russia at two points, and before its final disappearance in the Levant in the winter of 1855-56, it had traversed every part of the Continent and invaded Great Britain. In its last pandemic spread it appeared first at Malta in 1865, continued to ravage various parts of Europe until 1869, when there was a complete remission, only to break out again in 1871, and finally disappear in 1873.

With immigrants from every portion of Europe continuously landing upon our shores and rapidly distributed throughout the interior, we will not be freed from this menace until every trace of the contagion in that country has vanished. At the close of the year the disease still remained in southern Spain, in France at Brest, in Italy near Venice, whence it had spread to the Austrian port of Trieste, and it has also effected a landing on the Western hemisphere, in the French penal colony Cayenne. Thus far the disease has not extended in Europe to the regions whence our heaviest foreign immigration is derived, and to this fact is probably largely due our present immunity. When the German and Scandinavian countries and the British Islands become infected, if they should, our serious danger will then begin.*

I am often asked: "Do you expect to keep cholera out?" To which my reply is, that it is the duty of every sanitary authority to try to do so; to strengthen the weak places and perfect the strong; to utilize every possible resource; to secure the best attainable condition of his own immediate territory, and to put himself in a position to receive help from, or to extend help to others in fighting and excluding a common foe. We may not be able to entirely shut it out, but it will be a great achievement if its invasion be postponed and its spread limited, and greater still, if it is prevented a lodgment in this country. If an outbreak at a port or locality can be deferred until toward cold weather, that ally would itself help us to extinguish it, and it might require a fresh importation the next season to start another. It is our duty to try to shut it out, and not fold our hands supinely and join in the condemnation of quarantine and preventive methods, which, in a great measure, are a new outgrowth since the Fever-Summer of 1878; which have received a great stimulus to development by the present dread of cholera, during the past two years; and which, so far as they

* Reports continue to appear in the public press of new outbreaks in Spain and elsewhere.