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COMMUNICATIONS

THE OCCURRENCE OF GLASS-WORKERS' CATARACT
IN "PUDDLERS" (IRON-SMELTERS)

BY

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FOR some years past cases of cataract have presented themselves at the Wolverhampton and Midland Counties Eye Infirmary which clinically are of the type known as "glass-workers' cataract," but which have occurred in "puddlers," *i.e.*, men who work at iron-smelting furnaces and who have never worked as glass-blowers.

The cases are comparatively few in number, perhaps one or two only are seen each year; but against this it must be remembered that puddlers are few in number, and are not likely to increase, for the reason that steel is coming more into use than puddled iron.

In an important iron works in this district employing 1,500 hands, rather less than 40 are engaged in puddling.

The first case of this kind, which for the purpose of distinction may for the moment be called "puddlers' cataract," was shown by the writer at the February meeting of the Ophthalmological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1915, and a full report was published in the *Ophthalmoscope*, Vol. XIII, 1915.

The case was also shown at the meeting of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress in July, 1915, and at the same time two cases of glass-blowers' cataract were shown by Mr. Robinson, of

Sunderland, who was the first to draw attention to the occurrence of this peculiar type of cataract in glass-blowers.

It may be of interest to mention here that Mr. Robinson expressed the opinion that the case of "puddlers' cataract" shown was more typical of the condition than were those shown by himself, and which had occurred in glass-blowers.

A second case of this kind was published by the writer in Vol. XIV of the *Ophthalmoscope*, and since then other cases have been observed at the Wolverhampton Eye Infirmary.

On the whole, there seems to be little or no doubt but that the type of cataract known as glass-workers' cataract can occur in occupations other than that of glass-blowing, one being that of "puddling."

Inasmuch as the glass-blower is entitled to compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act, it would be fitting that the puddler should be placed in the same category, and it is hoped that before long this will be done.

THE PREVALENCE OF LENTICULAR OPACITIES IN THE EYES OF TINPLATE MILLMEN

BY

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DURING the early months of 1920, I was interested in the number of cataract cases occurring in tinplate and sheet millmen, which I came across in the course of my practice. The early clinical manifestations of the disease in these men seemed to me similar to those in some cases of bottlemaker's cataract, which I had had the opportunity of seeing at Sunderland Eye Infirmary. In the course of the enquiries which I began to make I found that there was a prevalent belief among the workers themselves that cataract was very rife in their midst, and certain different conditions at the work were assigned as a cause. In order to satisfy myself, I visited some of the works, and the following is a description, as I saw it, of a tinplate mill in operation.

Nature of the Work

The millmen work in three shifts of eight hours each. Each mill has a personnel of four men, named respectively the furnace-man or heater, the doubler, the rollerman, and the behinder or catcher. Steel bars are heated red-hot in a coal fire furnace which is attended to by the furnacemen. (The weight of the bars varies; in tinplate mills in this locality they average about 23lbs.; in sheet