

FILE NAME: State of the Art Literature (SAL)

DATE: 1902

DOC#: SAL002

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Book Excerpt - Dangerous Trades

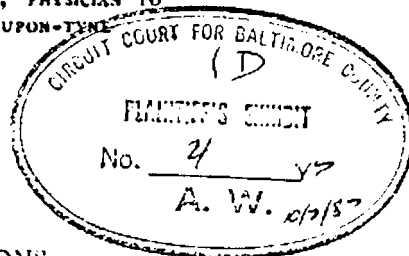
1902 **3**

DANGEROUS TRADES

THE HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND LEGAL
ASPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS
AS AFFECTING HEALTH, BY A NUMBER
OF EXPERTS

EDITED BY THOMAS OLIVER, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.

MEDICAL EXPERT ON THE WHITE LEAD, DANGEROUS TRADES, POTTERY, AND
LUCIFER MATCH COMMITTEES OF THE HOME OFFICE; PROFESSOR
OF PHYSIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM; PHYSICIAN TO
THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LIBRARY
CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY
1902

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & CO.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY

1902

health. The change cannot be accounted for, completely, either by change in the methods and organisation of industry, or by increased knowledge, medical, economic, or social. Nor can the increased breadth of conception be attributed solely to that increased intensity and quantity of human suffering which inevitably accompanied concentration and growth of industry. In all ages there have been physical, moral, and economic evils which fell to the lot of the labourer, probably differing from time to time on the whole more in degree than in kind, and doubtless felt at each stage by the sufferers, and sometimes by onlookers, with an intensity which relatively was great, and which with adequate discernment of a remedy and the duty or expedience of applying it, would have led to legislative action.

In the great civilisations of antiquity, whether in the East, West, or in Europe generally, there was sufficient concentration of the forces of labour to produce the intensest forms of the maladies classed by Pliny as the "diseases of slaves." Some of the most injurious processes known to us now are extremely ancient. To mention but a few: lead and quicksilver mining, the potters' craft, and the textile processes of preparing and weaving asbestos and flax.

The long history, in another department of social ills, of legislation and organised guild efforts for protection of buyers from dishonest manufacture and dishonest trading in adulterated products, or again, of efforts to regulate supply of labour and to enforce honest service from workers, affords many illustrations of the action that could be taken in Middle Age and Renaissance Europe, where an evil was both recognised and also believed to be remediable. It is to be noted how few the indications are that the strivings after social improvement of handicraftsmen and labourers were in those times inspired by any clear vision of the physical safety and health of individuals as part of the well-being to be sought. Illustrations might indeed be gathered from records of craft guilds and municipal organisations, of provisions and regulations that tended to results similar to those expressly aimed at by modern sanitary regulations. This is especially true of England, where the masses of manual workers came earlier than in other countries of Modern Europe to comparative physical comfort. We must, however, avoid the mistake of reading into past events, however interesting, ideas that are consciously at work in practical affairs only in our own times.