

Grinder's Consumption.

DR. CANEDY of Shelburne Falls, Mass., recently read a paper before the Franklin District Medical Society on grinder's consumption, being the results of his observations on the grinders employed by a cutlery company at that place, numbering, on an average, forty men and boys for the past twenty-five years. During the ten years just ended, twenty-three grinders have died with chronic disease of the air-passages, and three are now confined to the house with similar affections; and five in whom the disease has made considerable progress are still at work in the cutlery. Of all the occupations in which the workers are compelled to inhale an atmosphere loaded with irritating dust, as coal-mining and iron and metal polishing, none seems more certain or fatal in its effects than grinding. Investigations made at Sheffield, Eng., fix the average period which grinders can work at thirteen years. The first symptom which manifests itself is cough, soon followed by shortness of breath upon exertion, as walking up hill. During all this time an inflammatory process is going on in the lung, which results in a gangrenous or purulent condition; the patient having fever, and often a terrible cough. During this attack the patient is confined to bed from ten to twenty weeks. After six weeks an abscess forms in the lung, and, when the pus is expectorated, improvement begins. The progress of some cases is exceedingly slow; some of the patients living ten years or more, after being compelled to leave the shop by their cough, most of the time in chronic invalidism, and dying at last from the exhaustion dependent upon pulmonary disease.

In spite of all treatment, the inevitable tendency of the disease seems to be toward a fatal termination, and Dr. Canedy states that he has never seen any recoveries. The picture which is given us in this paper is a most distressing one; and it would seem that some attention should be paid to the subject by those in power. The improvements which have been made in unhealthy trades by the substitution of sanitary for unsanitary conditions have been so marked that some of them can certainly be applied to the reduction of the great suffering and mortality among the cutlery grinders. The State Board of Health can here doubtless find an opportunity to do more good work in a field in which it has so long and so well labored.