

disulphide insanity in Flechsig's clinic, and this substance is still largely used in German rubber works. In a recent French publication are described eight cases of mental breakdown among thirty men who were using carbon disulphide in pasting rubber strips on belting. In the British reports of earlier years this poison and naphtha (used in making rubber cloth with a paste of rubber and naphtha) were said to be the cause of much ill health and serious nervous trouble among girls especially, and though the use of carbon disulphide has been largely given up now, the fumes of naphtha are still a troublesome feature in British rubber works. Another volatile poison frequently mentioned in continental reports is benzenè (benzol, C_6H_6), more poisonous than benzine and naphtha, and cheaper than the latter over there.

A bulletin dealing with the use of poisonous substances in the rubber industry in this country has just been issued by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics as part of a series on industrial accidents and hygiene. The basis of this report is an investigation of rubber factories in different parts of the country manufacturing all varieties of goods. It is surprising to learn that so many poisonous substances are used in this industry. The list includes lead compounds, such as litharge, the basic sulphate of lead, the basic carbonate of lead, and red lead; aniline oil; sulphides of antimony; petroleum products; coal-tar benzene; carbon disulphide, and carbon tetrachloride. In addition to these compounds, concerning which definite information could be obtained, Dr. Alice Hamilton, who prepared the report, learned of the use in reclaiming rubber, of various phenols of different degrees of crudity, and also of pine oil, turpentine, tar, and a product of the action of carbon disulphide on aniline known as thiocarbonilide. The rubber industry has many trade secrets, and information about all the compounds in use, especially in rubber reclaiming, was difficult to secure.

In spite of this array of poisons, the report does not characterize the rubber industry in this country as an inherently dangerous trade. What danger there is, and it is evident that most factories are far from safe in certain departments, come from carelessness in the handling of poisons so that preventable dusts and fumes are allowed to escape. This was found to be true in almost all the factories inspected, even the best. That such accidents are not more generally known is explained by the fact that out of the whole force in a plant only a small proportion engage in work exposing them to poisoning, so that even if the sickness rate among them is high, it makes little impression.