

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP.

A Bostonian Discovers Important Facts in an English Borough.

Charles E. Haven, a Boston Nationalist, has recently returned from England, where he has been making some important investigations as to the practical working of public ownership in cities. The Evening Transcript prints an article written by Mr. Haven concerning the gas works at Ayleston, a suburb of Leicester. The Leicester gas company was incorporated as a private company in 1821. The plant was transferred to the borough of Leicester in 1888, since which time there have been three reductions in the price of gas. Over \$1,000,000 was paid for the good will of the company. This was the price paid for the false step taken in 1821. The profits realized during thirteen years of public ownership have been \$1,486,540. Of this sum over \$77,000 per year has been paid into the treasury of the borough. A sinking fund has been established, which will pay off the capital debt in 1934. Mr. Haven continues his account substantially as follows:

"The price of gas to private individuals to-day is 56 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. A reduction in favor of the lighting committee of the borough has been allowed for many years, of 4 cents for every 1,000 cubic feet, so that the corporation pays its own gas works 52 cents per 1,000 feet. A meter is attached to street lights. Since 1878 the price of gas has been reduced 12 cents per 1,000 feet. During the thirteen years the wages of the workmen have been advanced 20 per cent.

"The cost of coal at the works to-day is \$2.94 per ton, and the actual cost to manufacture the gas ready for distribution is 26 cents per 1,000 feet, and at 44 cents the corporation could have sold the gas without loss or profit, so that 18 cents represents the cost of distribution and the interest on each 1,000 feet.

"The corporation claim that by the year 1934 they will own their own magnificent gas works, clear of all indebtedness, and from sale of the residuals will be able to furnish gas, if it is thought desirable, free.

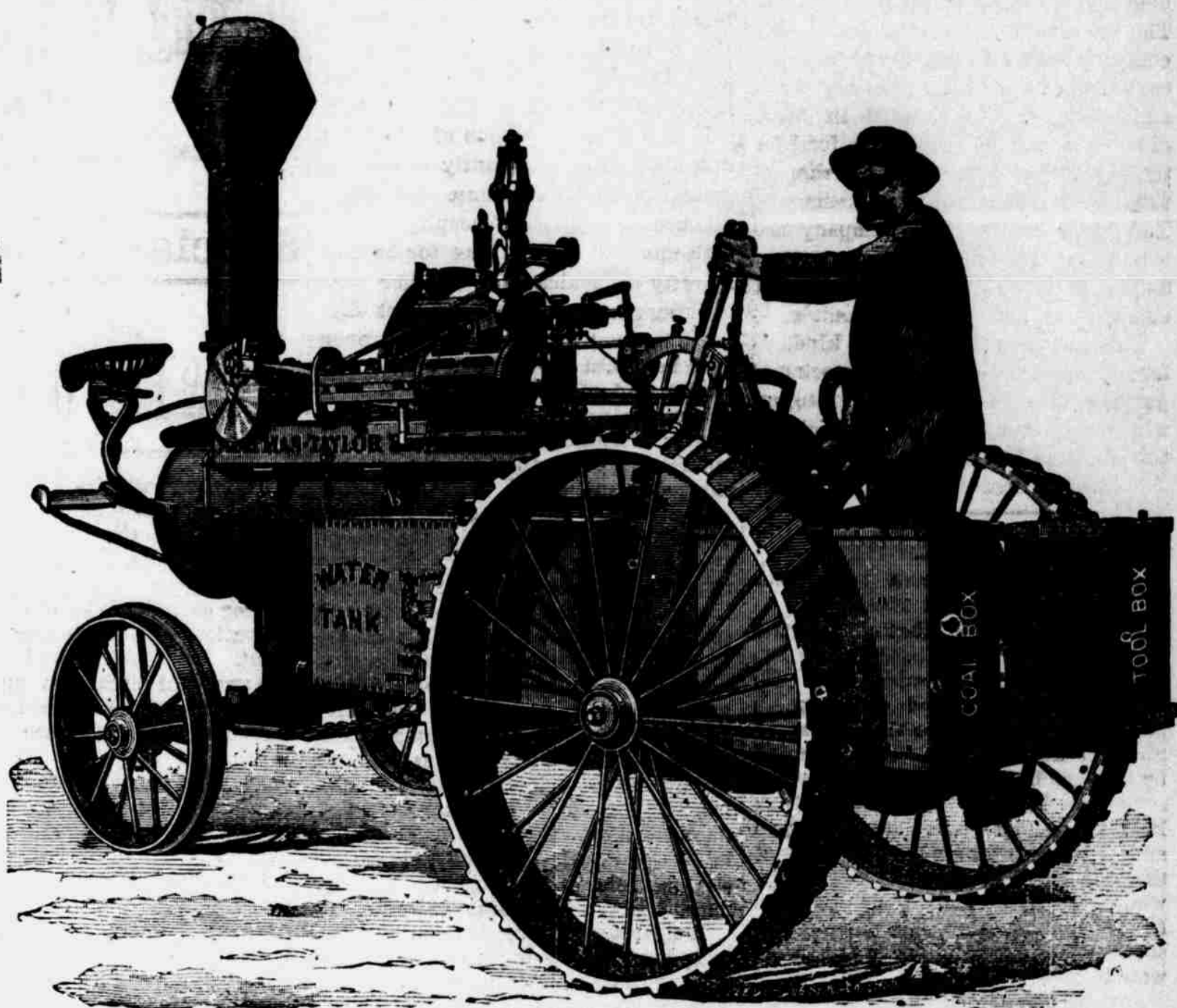
"Special attention, too, has been paid to the comfort of the workmen by the provision of mess rooms, lavatories and baths, also a reading and recreation room. This latter room is well provided with papers and magazines, and has a library of several hundred volumes. During the winter months, entertainments, organized by the engineer, Mr. Alfred Colson, or members of his staff, consisting of concerts, readings, lectures, dramatic entertainments, etc., are given every fortnight. These are always well attended and appreciated. In connection with the works there are also a well organized band, a cricket club, an ambulance division and a sick and funeral allowance society.

In 1885-86 residual works were erected in the southeast corner of the land adjoining the gas works, and abutting on the river and canal. These works deal with the whole of the tar and ammoniacal liquor obtained at these works, consisting of sulphate of ammonia, sulphur, crude naphtha, oil, carbolic acid, heavy naphtha, creosote, naphthalene, light green oil, anthracene oil, anthracene and pitch.

"In connection with the gas works, there is a fitting department, in which some forty men are constantly employed. This was formerly the business of Mr. S. C. Robinson, engineer and manager previous to Mr. Colson, from whom it was transferred to the corporation in 1882. It in no way enters into competition with the gas fitters or ironmongers of the town. A schedule of prices has been fixed by the gas committee, practically the same as those charged by the best tradespeople in the town, and these prices are rigidly adhered to. No

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work, under any circumstances, is tendered for, the department merely carrying out any order or work that may be entrusted to it. In connection with it are two show rooms in which are exhibited chandeliers, stoves, burners and other apparatus, all of the best of their several kinds.

"In no town in the kingdom have gas cooking stoves become more popular than in Leicester. The number of stoves on hire at present time is nearly 3,500, and the quantity of gas consumed by these and the private stoves amounts to at least 64,000,000 cubic feet per annum. The consumption of gas by the stoves during the summer months is nearly 20 per cent. of the quantity consumed. The stoves give the greatest satisfaction, and are increasing in popularity with all classes; in short, they are rapidly coming to be looked upon as a necessity, and many architects make special provision for them in designing new houses. They are placed in private residences at the request of owners or occupants free of charge, and kept in repair for a nominal rental, the price ranging from 12 to 72 cents per quarter, according to the size of the stove.

"In the fitting department may also be found gas burners for fireplaces. Many houses are heated in this manner, and as they can be lighted or extinguished in an instant, they are economical, and have the added advantage of being free from dust and dirt. Many of the mantels about the fireplaces are draped with tapestry, which can be done without fear of burning or soiling, and the effect is extremely pleasing.

"The total population of the area of supply by the gas works is 180,000, and the present number of consumers is 24,053. The corporation has recently obtained a provisional order, empowering it to establish an electric light plant."

A Substitute for Awnings.

A cozy idea is that of hanging curtains of blue depim on the sunny side of unsheltered verandas, a pair of curtains between each post. These are looped back with bands of crimson cloth and seem more picturesque, while affording protection from the sun, than awnings. Bags of scarlet cotton shirred up on drawstrings, overlaid with fish net and generous in size, are convenient receptacles for the fancy work and books, glasses, and things needful for the morning on the veranda.

She Will Impersonate the Pioneer.

Miss Laura N. Ford, a Philadelphia authoress, has purchased ten acres of land on one of the highest summits of the Green mountains. The location is now a wilderness and Miss Ford is to impersonate the pioneer. The forest is to be cleared and a number of summer cottages will be built on the site, to furnish a summer retreat for herself and friends. She has christened the place "Rome," because of the seven mountain pinnacles that tower above it. It is six miles from the railway station of Danby, Vt., and is approached by a picturesque mountain road.

Made of a Packing Box.

When a woman will show that was how the first box was made of a packing box and a clever woman who could find a suitable place for her belongings any other way. After getting fitted with shelves at the top she covered it herself with blue matting, edging it with the split half of an old rug nailed in place with fancy nails. From a brass rod she hung a curtain of yellow cloth, with a border of yellow "brown-eyed Susans," and called them, which she worked in coarse, long stitches.

When Thimbles Came to England.

Thimbles were scarcely known in England before the reign of James I., when John Loplín, a mechanic, came over from Holland, bringing with him a stock of them. Finding very soon that the demand for his ware was increasing and would soon exhaust the supply, he established a factory of thimbles in Islington and invited over several of his countrymen to assist in working it. The success and profit of the undertaking were greatly beyond his expectations.

For Dainty Feet.

No woman can make a mistake as to the correct footwear for the season. For everyday wear white canvas ties and boots are the style. They are tipped and trimmed with patent leather; white canvas ties have also a white kid tip. Russet shoes and those of tan leather are also much worn. A novelty is the walking boot of Russian leather, with the uppers of white buckskin. Slippers of black suede are perfectly plain, save for the presence of some remarkable gilt buckles over the instep.