OUR WATER SUPPLY.

A Description of the System of the Houston Waterworks company.

A fluid, that is the most abundant and most necessary for living beings of any nature, except air, is water, for without it man could not exist. As we pass along the street we seldom realize that we are walking above iron tunnels but a few feet below the surface of the streets in every direction that furnish the blessed fluid that quenches the thirst and the means to extinguish the conflagrations that often threaten lives and property.

The Houston Waterworks company supplies Houston with a water system that is second to none in the South. Their mains branch out in all directions, and have been put down at a great expense. Constantly are they making improvements and there is hardly a section of Houston that is not within reach of their system. The works are situated in the Sixth ward, a short distance from the Preston avenue bridge. The company has an admirable tract of land of fifteen acres, which, for the purposes it is being used, is desirably located.

In order to present to the public the exact condition of affairs at the waterworks, an attache of The Post was detailed to visit the works and see what their customers are paying for. The pump house interior is a model of beauty. The walls are nicely whitewashed and a gallery around the entire interior enables one to lean on the railing and watch the slow but measured working of the immense pumps. There are four of these pumps, the first two of which were put in use in 1879 having a capacity of one and two million gallons; the third has a capacity of six million gallons and was placed in the engine house in 1886.

The fourth, which has a capacity of nine million gallons in twenty-four hours, will pump more water with less fuel, is in service at all times and was placed there in 1893. The H. R. Worthington Hydraulic works of New York are the makers of these immense machines. The pumps are run by four Heine safety boilers, especially built for the company, which are at all times steamed up, so that any one of them can be used in an emergency. Combined they have a 500 horse-power. In the engine room there is a complete set of auxiliary pumps to feed the boilers. There is a connection in this room with the fire-alarm system, and in case of fire the alarm locates the trouble and increased pressure and water is given.

There are thirty-nine artesian wells of 4½ to 15 inches in diameter, and ranging from 140 to 1200 feet in depth. These wells have an aggregate flow of seven million gallons daily. The daily consumption at present is 4,500,000 gallons and later it will reach 6,000,000 gallons. All the wells

are under one large manifold suction pipe. In order to store the surplus water, which is the overflow from that pumped into the mains, there are two standpipes, one 20 feet in diameter and standing 150 feet high, the other 20 feet in diameter and 81 feet high.

There are sixty-six miles of mains in Houston, which consists of pipe from six to twenty inches in diameter. These mains are all tapped by fire hydrants, the total number now in use being 500. Although the company has a contract with the city to furnish water from Buffalo bayou above the dam, yet they went to an additional expense of $125,000 to procure pure artesian well water, which is the water we are using for any purpose, as they have abandoned the bayou supply entirely. Even in case of a large conflagration they would not have to resort to the bayou for their supply, for the thirty-nine wells with their flow of 7,000,000 gallons would be fully sufficient for any such demand. They have a derrick that bores 3000 feet and which can be used for any emergency if so desired. Their entire works are illuminated by 100 incandescent lamps furnished by their electric light plant. The present company has been organized since 1878 and its officers are: T. H. Scanlan, president and general manager; T. W. House, vice president and treasurer; C. H. Sprong, secretary; F. J. Smith, superintendent; T. H. Scanlan, T. W. House, M. G. Howe, J. A. Baker, Jr., C. G. Pillot, Houston; J. Richardson, New York; E. Hawley, New York; C. Hawley, Connecticut, directors.