



A Textbook, Locomotive and the Air Brake: Car Lighting, Car Heating, the Electric Headlight, the New York Air Brake (Classic Reprint)

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Excerpt from A Textbook, Locomotive and the Air Brake: Car Lighting, Car Heating, the Electric Headlight, the New York Air Brake


1. Among the many advances that have been made in railroad equipment during the last few years, one of the most notable has been in connection with the matter of ear lighting. The ordinary oil lamp was never very satisfactory, its objectionable odor and heat, and its liability to explosion - to say nothing of its poor lighting qualities - emphasizing the necessity of producing something better. Hence, although on the majority of cars oil is still used, yet on the better class of trains, the railroad companies have for some years been adopting gas, and, in some cases, electric light.

The first step in the direction of improvement on the old oil-lamp system was the use of ordinary coal gas, stored at pressure and fed out gradually, but the illuminating power of this gas was impaired by compression. Now, however, oil gas is being widely used instead; it is stored at a high pressure and passes through a pressure regulator on its way to the lamps, thus having its pressure reduced to a proper degree. This gas is, in this country, made from a high-grade petroleum distillate, and in Europe from what is called shale oil. It has the property of enduring considerable compression without any loss in illuminating power, an advantage not shared by ordinary coal or "city" gas. This method of lighting by oil gas is safe, clean, and economical; the light itself is soft, and at the same time brilliant, and, being evenly distributed, renders reading in an part of the car a pleasure. The system almost exclusively used in this country is the Pintsch, and this is the one treated of in the present Section.

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