

# The SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE SECTION

A Magazine for your Reading Table

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS' PAGE



Mayor William J. Gaynor

### Charity—Its Uses and Abuses

By William J. Gaynor  
Mayor of New York

THIS MATTER of taking care of the aged, the maimed and the sick is a large one and is of acute and growing importance. I do not think it ought to be a matter of charity at all. I think the community is in duty bound to take care of them. It is their right to be taken care of by the community. And it is my belief that in the fullness of time all worthy people now dependent on charity will be taken care of by process of government.

I know of no reason why workingmen and workingwomen who are injured by machinery or who become sick and decrepit, or incapable through age, should be turned out to depend on charity instead of being taken care of by the community through some agency of government. My conviction is that government—the community—is bound in morals and good conscience to take care of them. Some think that it would be too vast a scheme. On the contrary. It would be easy—far easier to do it well that way than to do it ill in the way it is now done; namely, by voluntary charity.

#### The Producers Should Pay

A SMALL tax on production, on articles produced by manufacturers, and on railroads, and all industrial agencies, would be sufficient to foot the bill. And such a tax would be a decimal so small that the public would hardly be conscious of it. The employers would pay it in the first instance, of course; but it would be one of their costs of production, and would be added by them to the price of their finished product. In that way, the whole community would bear it. Such a tax added to the cost of the hat you wear, for an instance, would be so small that you would not know you were paying it. Under such a system, all those hurt and disabled in industrial employment, or who may grow unable to work from age, would be taken care of by the community; that is to say, by government.

Much progress is being made in this

## CONTENTS

COVER DESIGN—THE CLEARING HOUSE OF TREASON P. J. MONAHAN

CHARITY—ITS USES AND ABUSES—*Editorial* WILLIAM J. GAYNOR Page 3

THE CLEARING HOUSE OF TREASON VANCE THOMPSON 4

*Illustrations by P. J. Monahan*

THE TARDY CANNON BALL GEORGE PATTULLO 6

*Illustrations by Edward Borein*

THE BORDERLAND OF SLEEP H. ADDINGTON BRUCE 8

*Illustrations by G. H. Mitchell*

EVE'S TUTORS CAROLYN WELLS 9

*Illustrations by Elizabeth Ivins Jones*

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT NUMBER 19

STEERING CLEAR OF ACCIDENTS CHARLES B. HAYWARD 19

direction all over the country. I verily believe that inside of fifteen years laws to carry out this method will have been passed by every state in the Union. Several states have such laws already, and though we passed a statute in New York which was a mere beginning in this direction, the courts declared it void. But I think there will be no more such court decisions. The courts of other states have held such laws to be valid, and the Congress of the United States is now passing one with full assurance that it will be upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States.

#### A Farm Colony for Tramps

A KIN to this general subject, I may say that here in New York state has just been established a farm colony for tramps. The purpose is to teach the tramp fraternity habits of work. New Jersey, Georgia and Texas are now considering a similar plan. In the same way the city of New York has established a farm colony for inebriates, the purpose being to cure them of the liquor habit and also to teach them to work. Connecticut now has a bill before its legislature for the same purpose.

Through its Department of Public Charities, the City of New York looks after 13,000 children in the various public eleemosynary institutions, the system of public hospitals notably affording help to thousands of worthy persons yearly who are unable to pay for treatment.

#### The Small Share of the Poor

THE contrast, however, between our public charities and private charity associations presents an unpleasant condition. No less an authority than the Commissioner of Charities for the City of New York recently said of the private charitable agencies:

"I come into close contact with private philanthropic organizations in this city, and according to what I see a large percentage of the money some of them collect goes not to the poor but to pay salaries to the charity workers."

The recent committee on congestion of population in New York City reported that the 3,500 private charitable societies of the greater city collect \$20,000,000 a year from citizens and from charitable society endowments. On the other hand, an estimate made by a member of the Charity Organization Society is that only \$600,000 of this huge total goes to poor people in distress. Think of it! A difference of \$19,400,000! This ought to be looked into as something imperative.

If the Department of Public Charities had such a record, it would be justly subjected to a storm of criticism.



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