

The Eleventh Plague

By Samuel Rosinger

Now that the cool weather has set in, and we breathe a sigh of relief at having gotten rid of the pests which annoy humanity during the torrid season, viz., mosquitoes, ants, bugs and boils, the plague of the multifarious campaigns is ready to descend upon us, and scatter its joy-killing blight in the community. I am sick of campaigns with their flamboyant oratory and exaggerated emotional appeals. I am sick of the very name campaign, which is a military term and a nuisance bequeathed to us by the war. Its English equivalent "drive", grates even more on my ears, as it savors of the rounding up of cattle. I hate the lurid publicity, the acrobatics and the clownish antics that accompany the farce of campaigns.

I can well understand why children derive a fiendish joy from noise and racket. Making a din is nature's way of exercising their lungs and limbs, but the assault and battery which a campaign conducted by adults makes on one's tympanum, is an inane performance, which no serious person can relish. Why this big annual ballyhoo of raising funds for the Community Chest? Why call in paid, professional performers for staging the show? Why not apportion the share of each citizen in this constructive community effort according to his income tax, or municipal and county tax, and give the rich tightwad and middle-class miser to understand that, if they refuse to contribute voluntarily, the community would have to resort to a charity tax levy, when compulsion would accomplish what compassion failed to perform?

Our loud method of giving charity is vulgar, unbecoming of the giver and degrading of the cause which it is solicited for. Only a voluntary offering, which is the spontaneous outpouring of a grateful and sympathetic heart, deserves to be called sweet charity. Money that is pulled out of one by high pressure methods is not charity, but a miser's mite, smelling not with the delicate fragrance of generosity but with the sweaty odor of greed.

We need re-education in giving charity, not only as to the amount, but also the methods. True charity is given in secret and the Community Chest ought to be filled not by the pressure of a big noisy campaign, but by a silent, voluntary renewal of subscriptions by mail.

ROTARYGRAMS

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Slants At The Meeting

The teacher asked the pupil to write something about an English sovereign, and this is what he wrote: "Elizabeth was known as the "Virgin Queen," and as a queen she was a success." Well this was the same Lizzie that used to go knocking around with Sir Walter in an old Model "T", and about that time there was a young feller by the name of Willie Shakespeare pitching in the Theatre Guild. Willie did his own ballyhooing and would get off some pretty hot wise-cracks among which was this: "Brevity is the soul of wit." If that old axiom was good when Sir Walter was just discovering Lucky Strikes it ought to be better now in the days of lying and legislatures. All of which proves that if brevity is the soul of wit Charlie Butler is a great humorist.

Charlie's talk last week was just about as brief and concise as you could expect any lawyer to make it. In fact there was no more lost space than exists around a fat woman's corset when she is trying to make a "36" after being catalogued as a "42." Charlie didn't have to juggle digits . . . bond issues, tax rates, sinking funds and Over-heads seem to fall in line like "wooden soldiers on the march". Too, we understand his skill at archery is superb . . . he can perforate more balloons than a standing committee can put on the run. When he got to speaking of the ins and outs of municipal movements and particularly about the pollution of the noble Neches, with her tributaries off-color, in the event of passage of a certain bill and that strong committee necessary at Austin, we knew he was talking about "water pressure." There are some who think for the past twelve years "water

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pressure" is what got us where we are. It produces a paradoxical aridity, making us "spit cotton" and creating a greater surplus than night-shirts and the Ku Klux Klan can absorb in their nocturnal movements.

We have the same motive for writing these SLANTS as Cal Coolidge has for writing articles . . . to fill space; only the remuneration is different. Cal gets a dollar a word and we get the "ugly" word.

Anyway this introduction to-day reminds us of the committee last week. One introduces the introducer that will introduce the introducer of the speaker. After getting down to the nth degree one Doc Hammond, being an osteopath would naturally "muscle" up before the "Mike" and introduce the introducer with the cryptic comment "let Paul Tell-us." Well he did, economically and banktorially as a vee pee would.

—Check.

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CLEVER CROOKS

Says Art Young the artist: "It seems to be the prevailing opinion that if you look a man straight in the eye you must be honest. Some of the most crooked men do that and don't bat a lash."

That is good observation.

Clever crooks always acquire and perfect the common marks of honest, successful men. Success is often indicated by good office equipment, engraved stationery, well-made clothes, pleasant manners; an appearance of well-being. Crooks will outdo Rockefeller in all of these. An honest man—so it is said—grips your hand firmly, answers questions frankly, and looks you square in the eye. A first-class crook, like an actor, will improve on the original model.

An old merchant once turned down a proposition, and the backers were annoyed. Pressed for a reason he exclaimed, "I don't like the smell of it."

That's the way to tell a crook.

You've got to smell him.

Making Jobs for 25,000 Men

"I never asked for charity in my life and I ain't askin' for it now—but oh, Mister, can't you get me a job?"

A grey-faced man leaned anxiously across the desk. But there were no jobs. For weeks, last winter, a constant procession of these troubled men had passed by William H. Mathews in the office of a New York City charitable organization. They were not unemployables, or chronic poor, but men who had always maintained themselves and their families. Now they were stranded and helpless.

"Work was their only hope," writes Gertrude Springer in the current "Rotarian" magazine. "Without it their self-respect would be shattered. With it, however humble or small, they would be tided over and saved from the stigma of public charity until industry could once again absorb them. So, Mr. Mathews set to work to make jobs where no jobs existed."

A city-wide campaign for funds brought in more than eight million dollars. With it Mr. Mathews made non-competitive employment for 25,000 men, thus saving at least that many families from destitution, despair, and the demoralizing result of recourse to public charity.

Most of the created jobs were in the parks and was rough work with the pick and shovel. But a genuine effort was made to place the skilled and enfeebled men in jobs fitted to their capacity. Several were absorbed by the relief organization.

"I've always been a bookkeeper, but I had pneumonia and lost my job," said one applicant. He was at work within twenty minutes in the accounting department of Mr. Mathews' organization. Skies turned blue for a discouraged chauffeur when he was assigned to a car that carried a paymaster around to squads working in the parks.

New York's success with "made work" last winter, as a temporary aid in coping with unemployment has pointed the way for many cities. This winter, the plan will be invoked on even a larger scale in numerous communities where unemployment is acute.—From "The Rotarian" Magazine.