

USES OF A \$10,000,000 FUND

RESULTS ACHIEVED THROUGH MRS. RUSSELL SAGE'S GIFT.

A Great Clearing House of Information and Aid for Philanthropic Movements Established. Much Done for the Good of Children. War on Loan Sharks. A Model Town, the Latest Enterprise.

When Mrs. Russell Sage less than four years ago gave \$10,000,000 to create the Russell Sage Foundation there was a great stir in certain quarters. For one thing all the professional philanthropic beggars sat up and, metaphorically speaking, licked their chops in anticipation.

Even people connected with legitimate philanthropic enterprises, where there was real worth and real need, had their eyes on it. It was only natural. People had got into the way of thinking that the only way to help the world was to build something or to pay for something that somebody else had impulsively constructed on the fallacious principle of bricks without dollars. So everybody concerned, with a valiant effort to look pleasant and not too impatient, watched for the little gold bird to come out of the box.

And then all of a sudden, while they watched, they were politely but firmly informed that there wasn't going to be any little bird, not the kind they were looking for anyway. Some of them couldn't believe it even now. But if they will carefully study the following analysis, inadequate though it must be of the work of the Russell Sage Foundation they will realize that here is a philanthropic scheme which cannot be reduced to the terms of common charity giving, and still less of those not uncommon charity grabbing.

Mrs. Sage's letter of gift was dated April 19, 1907. It was followed by a flood of applications for help. In her letter Mrs. Sage had said that the aim of the foundation should be "to take up the larger and more difficult problems, so far as possible in such a manner as to secure cooperation and aid in their solution." Those who want really to understand the purpose and scope of the work should remember these significant expressions of the wishes of its founder.

From its very beginning the Sage Foundation, to use a homely expression, has been willing to stand behind other enterprises, other movements, and boost



AT THE BOSTON NURSERY FOR BLIND BABIES.

properly nourished, athletic leagues in the public schools, folk dancing, play festivals and a safer and saner observance of national holidays, especially the glorious but usually gory Fourth. An immense amount of material has been gathered on these subjects. Some of it has been obtained by personal investigation. A book just published by the charities publication committee called "The Wider Use of the School Plant" is the result of two years of investigation carried on by Clarence Arthur Perry, working as a special agent under this department of the Sage Foundation. It describes all the activities, from evening school to a civil center, now carried on in public school buildings after regular school hours. It gives all the details of cost, how they were developed and what the results have been.

Dr. Gulick and Dr. Ayres have covered the subject of medical inspection in schools, with all its allied phases, such as school nursing, teaching personal hygiene to the children, securing the adoption of the latest and most sanitary methods in the care of school buildings, as for instance the use of the vacuum cleaner instead of the old fashioned broom and duster. Dr. Ayres has investigated the subject of open air schools not only in this country but abroad and

cannot be denied that we had our share in it. We are not looking for credit nor working in the way to secure credit. What we want is that the results shall come through the natural and therefore the best means. In other words the foundation is perfectly contented to stand behind those who are trying to climb and to give them a hand up. Take the department of child helping, which is quite separate from that of child hygiene. This department was organized in May, 1909, after its present director, Dr. Hastings H. Hart, had spent a year investigating the placing out of children. The department does not place children, but it investigates all the agencies that do, it studies all the methods of caring for children and has collected a vast amount of information which it places absolutely at the service of those who wish it.

Some of the facts brought together by this department are rather surprising. For instance one investigation covered the infant mortality in institutions for children. In twenty-two of these institutions over 10 per cent. of all the babies received died inside of a year. In one institution out of eighteen babies admitted two were alive at the end of the year. In another institution where fifty-

children's committee. It is making a survey of institutions for the care of children in Virginia. Much of the material which the department has got together had not been available in any form until the foundation dug it out. The rest had been almost inaccessible. While the accumulation and study of facts constantly goes on the department already has a wealth of material to offer to those who need it. In addition advice and help are given by correspondence and by personal visits. Conferences are attended, methods of work recommended and organizations planned and started. Requests for this kind of help, in which the only pecuniary



ONE DROP OF A HARMLESS SOLUTION IN FACT THE WORLD HAVE PREVENTED THIS CHILD'S BLINDNESS.

element is the indirect one involved in the expense of acquiring the information, come from all over the country. The committee on the prevention of blindness is one branch of the Sage Foundation whose work has been directly constructive. The committee appointed in the summer of 1908 was known as the committee of the New York Association for the Blind, but it was a part of the Sage Foundation nevertheless. It was another instance of that almost perplexing willingness to stand behind another organization. Although it was known as the New York committee its work was national in its scope. It sent out publications and loan exhibits (lantern slides and panels of photographs and statistics) to thirty-six States which applied for them. It distributed 150,000 copies of pamphlets on the subject of preventable blindness. The very first lecture tour made in this country to arouse interest in the prevention of blindness was undertaken in 1909 by the executive secretary of the committee. Other lecture tours have followed.

The committee, working in cooperation with the American Medical Association, has secured the passage of two laws affecting the matter in this State. One requires that a notification of birth shall be filed within thirty-six hours instead of within ten days. It was hoped in this way to have some chance of saving the eyes if they were threatened. The other law provides for the free distribution to physicians and midwives of sealed tubes containing a 1 per cent. solution of nitrate of silver. This law may accomplish something, but the one on which the committee bases most of its hope of solving the problem is a law requiring training for midwives. This law has yet to be passed and the committee is not urging it. It is thought to be more advisable first to get some schools in operation where this training may be secured. Then the law can be passed and become operative without working hardship. Bellevue Hospital has already offered to establish such a school as a branch of the institution. This is said to be the only civilized country where midwives are not required to take training in schools. As 50,000 babies a year in this city alone, almost half the total number, are born under the sole care of midwives, the question is a pretty

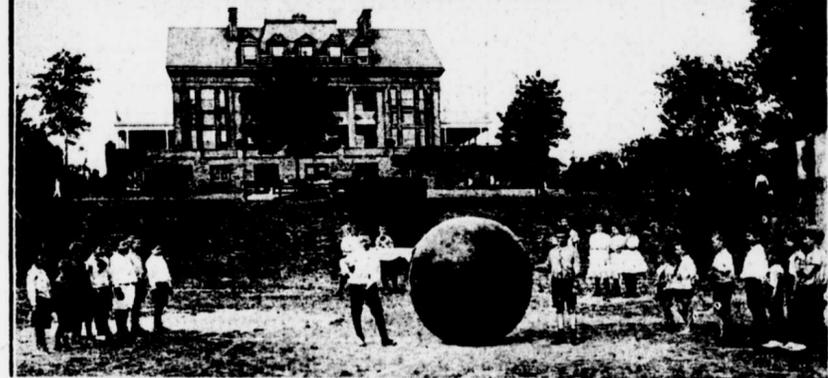


DANCING TO THE HURDY GURDY IN FRONT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL 15, NEW YORK.

big and vital one. It is through the failure of these midwives, or of the attending physician when there is one, to put into each eye of the newborn baby a drop of that 1 per cent. solution of nitrate of silver that one-quarter of all the children in the blind schools of this country are there. They need not have been blind. One drop of a harmless solution would have saved their sight. The work done by the New York committee finally grew to such proportions that a national committee was appointed also under the Sage Foundation. A few weeks ago a conference was held here and a national organization decided upon. The New York committee will now concentrate its efforts on this State, which it will try to make a model in methods of preventing blindness. It has its work cut out for it. Up to the present only blindness of the newborn has been dealt with, because it is the most prevalent and should be the most easily

prevented. As a result three companies could not renew their licenses and three other companies are in danger of being dissolved and losing their bond of \$5,000 each. The Sage Foundation agent, who is also a member of the executive committee of the National Federation of Remedial Loan Associations, has worked with that committee to secure the passage through Congress of a law regulating the loan business, so far without effect. Mr. Ham made a three months investigation of the chattel loan business here in New York which brought out some interesting facts. In the first place, according to the law, a charge of 2 per cent. a month and \$2 for papers allowed on loans of more than \$50 for less than a year and a charge of \$1 on loans of less than \$50. As matter of fact, however, the rates actually charged on the short time loans amount to 50, 100 and even 300 per cent a year! Here are some of the cases cited by Mr. Ham:

The charity organization department of the Sage Foundation is still another branch of the work. Its purpose is to extend charity organization work to communities where it has not yet taken root and to help other communities to increase its efficiency. Like all the other agencies of the foundation, it is a bureau of information and advice along its special lines. It helps by correspondence, by sending out a field secretary and by making studies of particular conditions. It has organized conferences. It has under way a study of the methods of caring for independent widows and children and is to hold a summer institute for paid charity organization workers as a sort of summer school of philanthropy. The department publishes pamphlets and a monthly bulletin. One of the first things which the Sage Foundation made possible was a model playground at the Jamestown exposition.



Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. BEFORE THE PUSHBALL GAME.

This spirit has characterized the whole personnel of the organization. As Robert V. de Forest, vice-president of the foundation, says: "It is with an eye single to the beneficent result to be accomplished with absolute disregard of the degree of effort which might come to the Russell Sage Foundation that the work has been carried on."

As it stands today the foundation is a great clearing house of information, advice and assistance along philanthropic lines. Take for instance the department of child hygiene which was one of the first to be organized. Dr. Luther H. Gulick is its director, with Lee F. Hammer and Dr. Leonard P. Ayres as associate directors. When one begins to inquire into the work of this department it seems as if one never would come to the end of its applications. But when one looks for the ordinary concrete results of such work one is puzzled by what at first seems a formlessness, a vagueness, which is rather baffling.

One is told that the department was established to conduct researches and to promote activities favorable to the physical, moral and intellectual welfare of children, and that "playgrounds, public recreation and the health and progress of school children are the leading features of its work."

But if any one should go out on the strength of that statement looking for a chain of Sage playgrounds, after the manner of the Carnegie libraries, it would be a wild goose chase. That's not the way the Sage Foundation people are working. What they are doing is perhaps bigger and better.

They have investigated playgrounds wherever there are any. They have accumulated all the information, digested it and put the resulting conclusions at the service of any persons or any community wishing to know the best way, under existing local conditions, of starting and conducting a playground. Not less than thirty pamphlets have been printed by the department dealing with different phases of the recreation problem. Some of the titles are: "First Steps in Organizing Playgrounds," "Landscape Gardening for Playgrounds," "Winter Organization of Playgrounds," "The Home Playgrounds" and so on. The department corresponds directly with people and gives advice suited to the particular case in hand. Representatives of the department make personal visits to towns or cities where the matter is being discussed, give talks and lectures and help in perfecting a scheme best adapted to local resources and needs. Lantern slides illustrating what is being done by other cities are loaned on request, the only charge being the expense of expressage. What is being done in this one matter of playgrounds is a sample of the department's methods. They have taken up also the question of securing more recreation centres for the use of adults, the wider use of the school plant (school buildings, equipment and yards), medical inspection in the schools, dental hygiene, backward pupils, open air schools, school feeding (free lunches for children who are im-

has made the results available. He has made also a complete study of the backward child. The work of Dr. Gulick in encouraging folk and national dancing is one for which New Yorkers are just beginning to be properly grateful. It was on his initiative that dancing became one of the most picturesque features of the life of the schools and playgrounds. Of course there were people who said it couldn't be done. There's one race that never runs out and that's the race of doubting Thomases. They had to see the children dancing in playgrounds, in the parks and in the streets themselves before they could be convinced. About a year ago it occurred to Dr. Gulick that it would be a good thing for a hurdygurdy company to send out one of its street pianos equipped with a selection of folk dances so that the children who already had learned the figures in school could have the pleasure and healthful exercise of doing them to music out of doors as part of their own life. The hurdygurdy people declined to be lured into such foolishness. They refused to have the rolls made, said it never would pay. So Dr. Gulick had it done himself. Then he couldn't get a man to grind out this programme, which, it was declared, nobody would pay to hear. He had to hire a man to play his despised folk music. And the result? Well, that hurdygurdy man took in just twice as much as the others averaged. But it proved to be successful only out of school hours. The general public, not being open to the charm of dancing in the street, did not care for it. So Dr. Gulick has tried to get the hurdygurdies to have a repertoire in which some folk dances shall be included. That part of their programme can then be reserved for the school children's free hours.

That there was need of just such collecting and tabulating of information as the department has undertaken is proved by the fact that the books in which these facts were set forth ran into three editions within a short time. The department gets up special articles suited for newspaper use and covering phases of work in which it is desirable to arouse public interest. These special articles are printed and sent out to papers all over the country with an invitation to use them without charge. "Open Air Schools" was the subject of one of the more recent of these articles and "Municipal Entertainment" of another.

Some of these activities of the department impresses the conventional inquirer as showing concrete, tangible results. There are no brick and mortar achievements with "Sage Foundation" in big letters over the front door. But it is not to be doubted that the results do exist. When the foundation took up the question of medical inspection in the schools there were forty-one where it had been introduced. It is now a feature in between 300 and 400.

"If we should claim that the Sage Foundation had secured its adoption in all those schools," said Dr. Gulick, "we should be saying what isn't true, and yet it

seven babies were received just three of them managed to survive more than a twelvemonth. The managers of still another institution after adopting the methods advocated by the Sage Foundation reported that they were "happy to state that the mortality had been reduced from 100 per cent. to only 30 per cent." Thinking that there must be some error here the foundation people wrote to the attending physician. He replied that the figures were correct; that previous to the changes made all the motherless babies admitted to the institution under six months of age had died within a year. Dr. Hart has investigators on his staff who have been making a special study of the care of children, in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota and California. These eight States were selected as covering the widest range of methods now in vogue. The department is assisting in organizing a child helping conference in Texas and in the work of the Maine

handed. Now a campaign is being undertaken which will deal with faulty illumination of factories and schools, industrial accidents and other causes of blindness. A little more than a year ago the Sage Foundation appointed Arthur H. Ham a special agent to help fight the loan sharks, who have thousands of victims in this country. In Mr. Ham's office in the Charities Building there hangs a map rather sparsely peppered with ticks of different colors. There are twenty-one blue ticks, each representing a loan society approved by the Sage Foundation. Ten red ticks represent others which will be running in six months. Twelve yellow ticks indicate cities where such societies are officially contemplated. And a good many more white ticks indicate the cities which are corresponding with the foundation in regard to the matter. Last year Mr. Ham cooperated with the State Superintendent of Banks to secure supervision of the chattel mortgage loan companies operating under the State law allowing an interest charge of 2 per cent.



A PUBLIC PLAYGROUND IN NEW YORK.



FOLK DANCING ENCOURAGED BY THE SAGE FOUNDATION.

For a loan of \$50 for eight weeks the borrower gave eight notes for \$10 each, payable weekly; if one payment is missed, 50 cents extra is charged. For a loan of \$50 for twelve weeks the borrower made twelve weekly payments of \$6.25 each, a total of \$75, which was at the rate of 200 per cent. a year. One man was found whose original loan was \$500. He had paid back that amount, \$3,000 in addition, and was then paying \$100 a month! It had been going on seven or eight years and he was getting constantly deeper in his slavery. The loan business of this nature in New York amounts to \$20,000,000 a year, but the capital invested is only about \$5,000,000. A loan of \$100 may be made for two months and renewed six times in the year. The original \$100 is the only capital invested, but the companies count each renewal as a fresh loan, thus making it appear that they have six times the working capital really involved. One man who went into the business with a capital of \$10,000 cleared \$65,000 in two years and sold his business for as much more.

The foundation contributed the money for that and for the model school garden, also one of the features of the exposition. Since the foundation began its assistance more than two hundred new playgrounds have been opened or projected. It has helped to educate teachers for school gardens and has assured a model one near New York. The foundation provided the money for a campaign in New York State on the question of tuberculosis. As a result over a million dollars has been given by cities, counties and individuals in this State for tuberculosis hospitals, dispensaries and other agencies. It has also helped the work locally in Manhattan and Brooklyn. It publishes the handbook of the national association and has enabled that body to undertake and to carry out special work which would have been impossible otherwise. Much of this work will begin by the foundation is now supported by other contributions.

The foundation has made a study of workmen's and other forms of small insurance. It paid for an investigation by Dr. Edward T. Devine of the employment agencies of this city, and as a result, the National Employment Exchange was incorporated in April, 1909. At the time of the San Francisco earthquake the foundation made a study of the relief methods employed, the idea being to make the lessons learned there useful in dealing with possible future disasters. Much of the foundation financed the now famous Pittsburgh Survey, which has had decidedly concrete results. Four schools of philanthropy, or schools for social workers, in New York, Boston, Chicago and St. Louis have been established by the aid of the foundation to enable departments for social research. Contributions have been made to the National Red Cross to secure an efficient director, to the President's Homes Committee of the city of Washington, to the Child Life Saving Congress at Washington, to this week's Child Welfare Exhibit and so on indefinitely.

The latest form of work undertaken is the model town of Forest Hills Gardens on Long Island, about three miles this side of Jamaica. It was described recently in THE SUN. It will be unlike most other model towns in that property will be sold to private owners, the Sage Foundation merely retaining large enough holdings to insure a controlling oversight. It is not a charitable scheme in the sense of spending money without hope of receiving a return. The investment is expected to yield a fair interest.

On account of the avalanche of applications for help which followed the \$10,000,000 gift the trustees unanimously reached the following decisions: There shall be no relief of individual or family need, the aim being to eradicate the cause of poverty and ignorance. The sphere of higher education is not within the scope of the foundation. It is cared for by the general education board. Not so with elementary and other forms affecting social and living conditions, as industrial education. Aid to churches is not within the scope of the foundation.

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