ignores everything but "institutions of purely public charity."

The question thus becomes one of interpretation of these words.

Now everybody knows that in construing Constitutions we reason (or try to reason) as statesmen—in construing statutes, we reason as lawyers. A statute is generally remedial, and we look at the old law, the mischief and the remedy, and if the latter has gone too far, it can be altered by subsequent statute.

But a Constitution, though it may also be remedial, is also

Declaratory and
Prohibitory,

and is intended to be (at least for some generations) unalterable, and the growing wants of society must fit themselves into it as best they can. Hence those who are judicially to interpret a constitution, and especially one of recent date, must rise above the mere rules of technical law.

And first, it being conceded that the legislature possesses every power not expressly withheld from it by constitutional prohibition, it is natural that in considering the construction of statutes framed to carry a constitution into effect, great respect should be paid to the legislative interpretation, and where the constitution admits of a broad or a narrow construction, courts do not lightly disturb that which the legislature has adopted.

Upon general principles, this scarcely needs authority, but the question has been recently settled in this court in a very important case.

One of the chief evils which the Constitution tried to cure was special legislation, and Article III., section 7, was very elaborate, providing, among other things, that the legislature should not pass any local or special law