

WELFARE NURSE WORKS MIRACLES

Visitor Cites Heroic Work
of Winnetka Infant Wel-
fare Station

CONCRETE EXAMPLES

Entire Family Learns Value
of Life

BY THE VISITOR

If you have ever been to one of the conferences of the Winnetka Branch of the Infant Welfare Station, you have seen an important part of the work, but still there remains much to be learned.

To know the whole story one must go with our nurse every day in the week through the streets and alleys and yards and up and down the tenement stairs into the home of our future citizens. For it is only through patient and repeated instruction in her home that the average mother becomes a dcer of the work and not a hearer only—the nurse must show her how a baby can be bathed and dressed and aired and how his food-formula can be made up. Sometimes she has to try to dispel the general atmosphere of filth from the room, and sometimes she has to go back of that to dispel clouds of superstition from a mother's mind.

Direct Attack Needed

Here sometimes an indirect attack is effective. A nurse once told me how discouraged she felt to find Mrs. Podesti's fifth baby in swaddling clothes and from his odor evidently unbathed for an indefinite period.

The mother explained pathetically that the others were girls and it was well known in her part of Italy that you might do what you would with girls but it was very bad luck to let water touch a boy baby.

"Oh, but not at ten o'clock in the morning," cried the nurse, "it is always safe at that hour, though at no other."

And so Joseph was brought up as clean as his big sisters.

Sometimes the nurse has to be content with a little progress at a time. I hear that though the O'Ryan kitchen is still filthy there is one spot scrubbed on the floor every morning and the baby set in the middle of it. When he can toddle perhaps a larger area will benefit.

Child May Save Family

Then again there are homes where our nurses work a complete revolution little short of a miracle. Of course every relief institution in Chicago is at their call, whereas the average destitute person is ignorant of the existence of such agencies. So the little child in their midst is often the means of saving a whole family.

As a Class A. Infant Welfare Station, the work of the Winnetka

branch is extended to the expectant they arrive, and many a Winnetka mothers as well as to the babies after woman has worked on the simple layettes used in this connection. I had always thought of the mothers who needed this help most being those who were looking forward to their first baby but as we read the case records it is easy to see that it is the mother of several children that needs most careful watching for varicose veins and other distressing symptoms as she also needs the greatest moral support. Mrs. Feroli was such a one.

Had Real Good Time

When our nurse first found her she was forty-two and in her eleventh pregnancy. She could not work on account of swollen limbs and was about to withdraw her fifteen year old daughter from school to help support this new burden. We procured her a rubber stocking so she could safely walk and persuaded her she could get through without her daughter's help and arranged for her to go free to the Lying-In-Hospital instead of employing an inadequate and, for her, expensive mid-wife. When she came back with her baby she said she hadn't had such a good time since she had been married.

One of the most striking records we have is of the Cantalano family, brought to the attention of the nurse at our station about a year ago last Christmas. They lived for twenty-five years on a small cotton farm in Texas. They had had nine children, eight living, all of whom had worked on the farm from early morning 'till late at night, none of whom spoke English or had ever been to school.

Then the flood had come and wiped out their farm and they had fled to Chicago to their only relative in this country who were almost as destitute as they. Mrs. Cantalano was forty-four years old and seven months pregnant.

Fighting Against Odds

The story of the fight that our nurse made for that family against almost overwhelming odds is too long to tell here. The report says, "The home they resided in had probably been used for a shed until the housing shortage, had plenty of draughts, many disadvantages and no advantages." All of them were ill and the oldest boy died. Both mother and baby had broncho-pneumonia, but pulled through somehow. The baby goes regularly to the Infant Welfare station and weighed over 19 pounds at ten months. The older boys are working but are studying English at the Commons at evenings, the girls are at school and Mr. Catalano has just taken out his first papers. They have paid back \$5 that they owed their relations. Without help it is almost inconceivable that the mother would have lived through her delivery.

Is the work of the Infant Welfare society worthwhile? If we believe it is, let us share in it to the utmost extent of our ability.

NOTED RABBI SPEAKS HERE

Rabbi William Fineschriber of Memphis, Tenn., will speak before the North Shore Branch Sinai Congregation Tuesday evening, April 17, at 8:30 o'clock, in the Hubbard Woods school, Laurel and Burr avenues, Hubbard Woods.

Builders Will Confer With Edna Dean Baker

The Winnetka Builders of the National Kindergarten and Elementary college will hold a conference Monday, April 9, at 4 o'clock in the Neighborhood room at Community House. President Edna Dean Baker of the college will be present. All residents interested in the college, which is to be moved to the north shore in the near future, are urged to attend this important meeting.

Mrs. Langworthy Attends Municipal League Meeting

Mrs. B. F. Langworthy, Winnetka Village trustee, recently elected a vice president of the Illinois Municipal league, last week attended a meeting of the executive committee of that body held at Springfield.

The committee met to consider necessary legislation for municipalities before the session of the state legislature.

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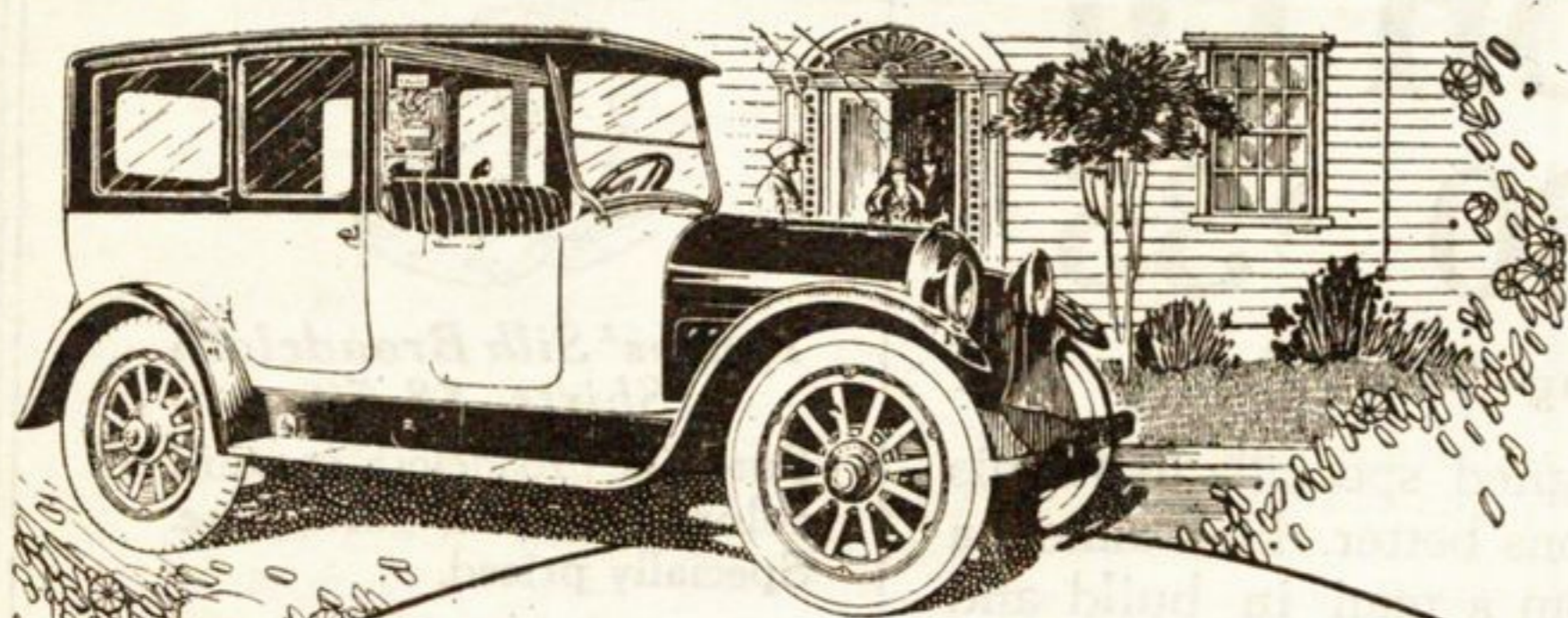
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