

PENNY-A-GLASS MILK STATION

Philip L. Seman

Superintendent Chicago Hebrew Institute

After considerable thought and careful investigation, it was found a good plan to open on the grounds of the Institute the first "Penny-a-glass Milk Station" in Chicago, where pure pasteurized milk is sold, especially to mothers and children, at one cent a glass during the hot summer months.

It was found that there were many puny children that were brought by their mothers to enjoy the free open space that the Institute offers the neighborhood, by means of its park and playgrounds, and to whom the opportunity of procuring such milk would prove a great service. Besides this, the sale of milk tends to counteract the desire on the part of the younger children to purchase from the filthy wagons that are stationed near the entrance of our grounds the cheap and much-adulterated, therefore, very harmful, so-called ice cream and scrape ice balls, generally saturated with chemically colored flavors.

This is not only true of Chicago. All the congested districts are confronted with the same difficulty. This new departure has the warm endorsement of the Infant Welfare Association and the Chicago Pure Milk Commission. It is our sincerest hope this year, if our experiment proves a success, that we may be instrumental in establishing a "penny-a-glass milk association," whose function it will be to operate many such stations throughout the city. Intelligent women are in charge of the station, who, besides selling milk to mothers and children, act as advisors and indirectly instruct mothers as to the value of using pasteurized milk at all times. Circulars are published in Yiddish and English and distributed at the station. These circulars are addressed to the mothers, and such information as the fact that one baby out of every six dies as a result of dirty milk; that not a single case of tuberculosis has ever been traced to a certified milk farm; that no epidemic of scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria or sore throat has ever been traced to pure milk; that certified pure milk has a different taste from so-called commercial milk; that its taste is pure and rich and sweet; that it lacks the cow taste

that so many find objectionable; that such milk is invariably over thirty hours old when it reaches the door of the consumer; that it is on ice from the time it leaves the cow until it reaches the consumer, etc., is contained in the circular.

One need only watch the lack of care given the average infant in the congested districts of any large city, because of the lack of knowledge that the mother has of the danger of not properly looking after the child's feeding for the first two years of its life, to see the enormous amount of good (if from no other point of view than this alone) our milk station is bound to do.

Chicago has by no means been a pioneer in establishing milk stations of this kind. Similar stations have been conducted in the city of New York for the past twenty-one years through the generosity and public-spirited service of Mr. Nathan Straus. The Straus stations in New York are conducted in connection with six public parks, five city recreation piers and one on the roof garden of the Educational Alliance. The interesting fact, however, is that the Chicago Hebrew Institute has been the pioneer in Chicago, the second largest city in the country, and this, too, in face of the excellent and most successful work in New York.

Mr. Nathan Straus, in a letter addressed to the Institute, says: "I have noticed in the press that you have started the sale of 'penny-a-glass' milk. I am delighted that you can already record such a success, and I hope that your expectations of increasing the stations manifold will be realized. *I am glad that it is a Jewish institution that has taken the lead in this grand movement in Chicago.*" Here in New York, in addition to the actual good which the distribution of pure milk has accomplished, the "penny-a-glass" milk has been the greatest temperance lecture, as many men availed themselves of the opportunity of the milk in preference to the corner saloon.

The milk station, which has now been operated a little over a month, has grown to proportions beyond even our own expectations. We have sold over 41,000

glasses of milk the first month. When we originally started, milk was sold from the quart, but it was only after a few days' experience that it was found impossible to keep on selling milk from the quart, and cans, containing eight gallons each, had to be resorted to. The milk that we supply is the same that is used by the largest and the best hospitals in Chicago. It is pasteurized milk and each can is labeled "Hospital Milk."

The station is substantially built, all white on the inside, giving the complete assurance of sanitation, and dark green on the outside, to harmonize with the green of the trees and the shrubbery. It is equipped with running water, a patent glass washer, milk vats and double jacket milk containers, cooled with ice. Besides the milk, we sell soda crackers at one cent a package, each package containing six crackers.

Our observations during the month have been very interesting and quite illuminating. We found many persons taking advantage of the sale of the milk and crackers, and regularly making at least one meal a day on this splendid substitute, especially during the hot summer months, for meat and other heavy foods. The children wait for the opening of the station at 12.30 week days as a regular feature; then, too, between the hours of 5.30 and 7.00 in the evening many of the children and some of the mothers can be seen sitting on the benches around the milk station partaking of their lunch of milk and crackers. It is difficult to spend five cents and still remain hungry, for two packages of crackers cost two cents and three glasses of milk for three cents, making a total of five cents, is about all one person can reasonably enjoy.

I think it of interest to quote from one of the editorials in a local paper regarding this new venture: "The Chicago Hebrew Institute did something more than supply a pressing summer need on the West Side when it opened the first penny milk station; it showed the way for Jewish enterprise in the supreme matter of social health; too often Jewish institutions are satisfied merely to imitate work inaugurated by others. To do this, if often merely to adopt sociological fads, sometimes at tremendous cost in original outlay and in the creation of

additional evils." It is time that we boldly struck out in the wilderness, creating by our efforts a path of social initiative, thus presenting patterns for others to copy. We have everything to gain by seeking for originality by readiness to do the thing that others are not ready or not confident enough to do. Thus shall we gain the credit that falls to all true pioneers who take chances and prove the wisdom and worth of their work. It is not true to say that the establishment of the penny-a-glass milk station is original with those who fathered and financed the experiment in Chicago. Nathan Straus of New York City years ago demonstrated the great good that pure milk stations can do in a big city, too busy to concern itself with the welfare of its inhabitants. However, it is true that the "penny milk station" in Chicago, even the idea itself, was established under Jewish auspices, and we are happy to record this fact, and the Institute is deserving of great praise not only for their readiness to meet a very pressing need, but for the evidence the work affords that the institute intends to lead, as it should, in showing the way toward a socially better Chicago.

The object of this article is, first of all, to give the information, and, second, that it may act as an incentive to other cities and communities to establish similar stations in connection with their respective works. From the practical side, it may be of particular interest to those who may contemplate to work out a similar scheme in their community, namely, that the cost of running such a station, if properly conducted, will be nearly, if not ultimately, wholly self-supporting. For those who are further interested in the subject, I hope I may be pardoned if I suggest the following literature on the question:

"Diseases in Milk: the Remedy, Pasteurization," compiled by Lina Gutherz Straus, containing a full history as well as papers read before various learned scientific bodies on the pasteurization question by Mr. Nathan Straus; Bulletin No. 41 of the Hygienic Laboratory in Washington; "Milk and its Relation to Health," a volume of 750 pages, compiled under the direction of ex-President Roosevelt; and the "Common Sense of the Milk Question," by John Spargo.