

in great trouble over her baby, which she said she had lost.

When the relief nurse sat at her bedside the woman explained, in broken English, that during the winter she had been employed as a domestic in a private family and had boarded her baby boy with another family uptown. In February the family had written her that the child had been taken ill and they had placed him in St. Luke's Hospital.

Hastening up there the woman could find no trace of her son, and on going to call upon the family with whom she had left him, discovered they had moved, leaving no address. In the midst of a fruitless search for her child she had been seized with the rheumatism which had brought her to the hospital.

She further said that she had come to America not a year before, to join her husband, who had written that he had prepared a good home for her in a Pennsylvania town. She left three children with her parents in Hungary, bringing only the baby with her.

Soon after her arrival here her husband began to maltreat her, so that finally she was obliged to escape from his house, take refuge with a brother of hers who was living in New York, and accept work as a domestic to support herself.

The nurse in charge of the relief work set out to solve the whole problem. In the first place, she found that the baby had been entered at the hospital under the name of the family with whom he had been boarded, which explained why his mother could find no record of him there. The baby was given back to its mother and her brother was sought.

He verified the woman's story, but said that he was not able to support her, and that her husband was thought to be mentally unbalanced. The woman's parents had written, urging her to return to Hungary, and as she was not able to work and had no money to pay her passage back the nurse procured her deportation through the proper authorities, to her great joy and that of her family.

An aged Russian woman came into the convalescent relief department the other day—a picturesque old woman wearing the peasant's garb of her country, and with a snowy kerchief on her head. She was utterly exhausted and nearly out of her mind with grief.

She spoke not a word of English, but carried a letter which an English speaking friend had written for her, stating that she was searching for her son, a young man given to attacks of melancholy, who had disappeared from home two weeks before. For two weeks the poor soul had been tramping over the city, presenting her letter at different hospitals, without finding a trace of him.

There was no name upon the books of Bellevue like that in the letter, but among the "unknowns" there were two who slightly resembled the missing man. After she had rested and been refreshed with a cup of tea the nurse for relief led the aged mother to one of these unknown patients.

At the first glimpse of him she threw up her hands to heaven in thanks, and then fell upon his neck, kissing him and calling him by all sorts of endearing names. He did not even recognise her; and, as he was hopelessly deranged, the old mother was persuaded to have him sent to Ward's Island.

One of the most interesting features of the work at Bellevue is the assistance which the relief department gives to country boys who come to the city to work. When sickness overtakes them their means are soon exhausted and they must go to the hospital.

On the day of discharge they face the world without a cent., and without employment. Scarcely any employment is open to them. The nurse in charge of the relief work directs such a boy to an establishment where he is likely to find employment at once, and if he fails to do so provides temporary board and relief until he gets a start.

This last she is able to do through the donations of friends of the hospital, who have become interested in the new work. The city provides only the salary of the nurse and one assistant.

#### *The Need of Convalescent Relief Work.*

In the hospitals the long acknowledged need of convalescent relief work was primarily the cause of their establishing social or relief departments. Dr. Goldwater, of Mt. Sinai, thus explained it:

"The Superintendent of every hospital has noted that of the cases treated in its wards a large number return after a short period suffering from a relapse, brought on by having been sent while still in a weakened condition to their former environments and taking up the struggle for existence before they were fit.

"The need has long been recognised of having some one to inquire into the home surroundings which await the needy patient upon his discharge from the hospital, and if these are such as to retard or hinder his recovery to arrange that he shall be placed in some one of the existing homes for convalescents, where three or four weeks of pure country air, good food, and cheerful surroundings will completely restore him to strength and good spirits and send him back in condition to cope with the hardships of his life."

To follow the poor patient beyond the hospital walls to see that the cure there effected is made permanent and so prevent a return to its wards forms a chief part of the duties of the nurse in charge of the social relief departments of Bellevue and Mt. Sinai. Some of those for whom comfortable places have been procured in homes for convalescents had formerly returned again and again to the hospitals, trying with pathetic perseverance to support themselves between the successive breakdowns.

From this feature of the work the interest of the nurse extends to every possible form of convalescent relief and aid, and even to the family of the convalescent when it has been left needy or destitute through the illness of a wage earner.

STARS AND STRIPES.

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