

SOCIAL SERVICE AND HOSPITAL EFFICIENCY.

sequent amputation of the leg. He needs strengthening food and, later, a \$100 wooden leg to enable him to fill the position that is waiting for him. Little Jane F. needs glasses or a brace--the family are too poor or ignorant to realize the importance of this. The social worker is successful in educating them to the right point of view, perhaps has to assist them, and Jane becomes a valuable working member of society instead of a half-blind discouraged woman or cripple.

Similar service may be rendered to cases in the outdoor clinics of hospitals or dispensaries. In the three cities of Boston, New York, and Chicago, the out-patient departments and reputable dispensaries are providing for fully 2,500,000 people (45% of the population of Chicago and in Boston and New York 1-3%) and are expending annually at least \$1,500,000. In the country as a whole, millions of dollars are thus spent. Practically nothing has been done, however, to estimate achievements in relation to expense--to compare results with the cost. An out-patient clinic diminishes its efficiency and wastes a large part of its time and money in examining patients who never come back for treatment. Thousands of dispensaries now treating disease are still content to assume that if the patient does not come back after the first visit he is probably cured.

As Dr. Cabot, of the Mass. General Hospital says: "This is like supposing that a school boy who never comes back after the opening day of school is staying away because he is cured of all ignorance and possessed of all knowledge." The frequency and regularity of patients' return are undoubtedly affected by the length of time they have to wait; the pleasantness or curtness with which they are treated by the employees of the institution; the clinical routine, the amount of privacy during examination, the number of personal questions asked, and the tact and skill with which such information is sought. Even objects of charity are human beings. Mr. Michael M. Davis, Director of the Boston Dispensary, says in this connection: "If we would realize our ideal of treating not only diseases but men, women, and children, one of