

**AN HISTORICAL REPORT OF
THE BOSTON DISPENSARY
FOR ONE HUNDRED AND
ONE YEARS. 1796 - 1897**

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An Historical Report of the Boston Dispensary for One Hundred and One Years. 1796 - 1897 by
Robert Willard Greenleaf

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ROBERT WILLARD GREENLEAF

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OF THE
BOSTON DISPENSARY

FOR

One Hundred and One Years.

1796—1897.

PREPARED BY

ROBERT W. GREENLEAF, A. M., M. D.

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1898.

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THE following Report—appropriately called both “Centennial” and “Historical”—of the Boston Dispensary, prepared by one of its Medical Staff, is herewith presented to the friends of the Institution and to the Public, by the Executive Committee of the Board of Managers, who heartily endorse the recommendations made therein, feeling that, if the needs of this old and most deserving charity are generally understood and appreciated, a sufficient sum of money will be forthcoming to enable them to carry out the proposed improvements.

For the Executive Committee,

FRANCIS W. LAWRENCE,

Chairman.

Boston, January, 1898.

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PREFACE.

DURING the past few years several physicians of the Boston Dispensary have thought of plans for perfecting the work of the Institution and for still further extending its field of usefulness. Hitherto each physician had been accustomed to perform his duties independently, each following the traditions of his predecessor and meeting his associates only in occasional consultations. Not until this year have plans for a better organization been perfected.

At a meeting held January 27th, 1897, committees were appointed to consider the needs of the Dispensary. A subsequent meeting was held June 2d, at which, among other important matters, it was voted to recommend that an historical report of the Institution be prepared and placed before its friends, together with such an account of the proposed lines of development as would show wherein the coöperation of its friends was necessary for the accomplishment of the desired results.

It is hoped that the following report, prepared in accordance with this vote of the Staff, will not merely interest its readers in the doings of this venerable Institution, the oldest organized medical charity in Boston, but that it will also inspire them to emulate the example of its early benefactors, through whom so much of well-directed charity has been possible.

In thus voting to have an historical report prepared few of the Staff were aware that the Dispensary had completed a

century of active life, nor that sixty years ago the physicians of that date had an efficient organization which resulted in important measures for the work of the Institution.

Excepting the annual statistical reports of the Superintendent, no report of the work of the Institution has appeared since the admirable account compiled in 1859, by Dr. William R. Lawrence, and entitled "A History of The Boston Dispensary." This book is now out of print. It is therefore especially fitting that some extended account should be given at this time to the friends of the Dispensary in honor of its centennial.

In the preparation of this report especial indebtedness is acknowledged to the late Dr. Lawrence's "History" above referred to, also to our Superintendent, Dr. William H. H. Hastings, from whom, besides the data from his annual reports since 1876, the writer has received continued courtesies and assistance.

For the Staff,

ROBERT W. GREENLEAF.

BOSTON DISPENSARY.

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