

REPORT OF EYE AND EAR DEPARTMENT.

The report herewith presented shows that 189 patients have been in attendance during the year—a larger number than on any previous year with one exception.

It is now 28 years since the Dispensary was reorganized. Previous to 1867 it was in charge of a single physician. The post of physician became vacant, and a number of medical gentlemen met together and agreed upon the present organization, with an indoor and outdoor staff. They submitted their proposition to a number of leading citizens, and it met with their approval. Now there are four physicians connected with the indoor work, and four with the outside, besides one for Dartmouth. Very few of the citizens are aware of the magnitude of the professional work done.

REFLEX VALUE OF MEDICAL BENEVOLENCE.

It is now 21 years since I became connected with the Dispensary. I have had some thousands of cases under treatment. From a scientific point of view every progressive physician takes an interest in any given case of disease, and watches its behaviour under treatment; and if the means employed have been successful in bringing about a restoration of health, he feels that he has added to his stock of knowledge, and enlarged his experience. He has also a peculiar satisfaction, arising from the consciousness that he has been instrumental in relieving the pains and discomforts of a fellow-being, and aiding in the restoration to health and the activities of life. This pleasurable feeling is heightened when it is seen, as in the great majority of cases, that the services rendered are appreciated by the recipients. Some appear to act as if they owned not only the Dispensary, but the physicians. But even in the cases of those least thankful, attendance upon them may have been a blessing in disguise, for it afforded a training in the discharge of duty under difficulties. Still it is better not to have too numerous examples of this character, as physicians do not profess to be angels nor paragons of virtue, and there is danger of their becoming soured towards humanity.

DISCRIMINATION NEEDED—AND A SUGGESTION.

But there is one part of the work which is positively disagreeable and distasteful, and the physicians should be relieved of it, as it is not really professional work. The Dispensary was established for the indigent poor, but application is often made by those who do not really belong to this class. Some do not even deny that they are able to pay a moderate sum for treatment, but claim that they are as much entitled to treatment as Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so, or their family. Heretofore the physicians have had to decide this question as to the circumstances of the applicant, and when in