CHARLES FREDERICK CHANDLER
1836–1925
NEW YORK'S FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH CHEMIST

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The chemistry of discovery and its interpretation to the laity are almost the commonplaces of every day’s news, and no field of human curiosity and exploration is richer in its contribution of great men and women or in its abundant gifts to the fullness of life.

What concerns us particularly is the use of chemistry through government for social ends, and in this Charles Frederick Chandler was a pioneer who shared with Stephen Smith, Edward B. Dalton, Dorman B. Eaton, Elisha Harris and William B. Worthen the distinction of making the Metropolitan Board of Health of the State of New York a power and a tradition in the public health history of this country.

It will be recalled that immediately upon the close of our Civil War the larger municipal communities in the United States took note of their sanitary shortcomings, and, stimulated by the experience of army camps and hospitals, the successes of the volunteer Sanitary Commission and the return to civil life of physicians and other officers of broad experience, and - with ambition and energy for reconstruction, social as well as material, there developed public action to save the people from the devastation of epidemics which swept the homes of the rich and poor alike.

To realize the movement of events one must recall that Edwin Chadwick’s classical report to the Poor Law Commissioners on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain which led to...