

Report to the Executive Committee of Physicians and Surgeons interested in raising a national testimonial for the discoverer of the anaesthetic uses of sulphuric ether / by Charles Parker.

Contributors

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Executive Committee of Physicians and Surgeons Interested in Raising a National Testimonial for the Discoverer of the Anaesthetic Uses of Sulphuric Ether (New York, N.Y.)

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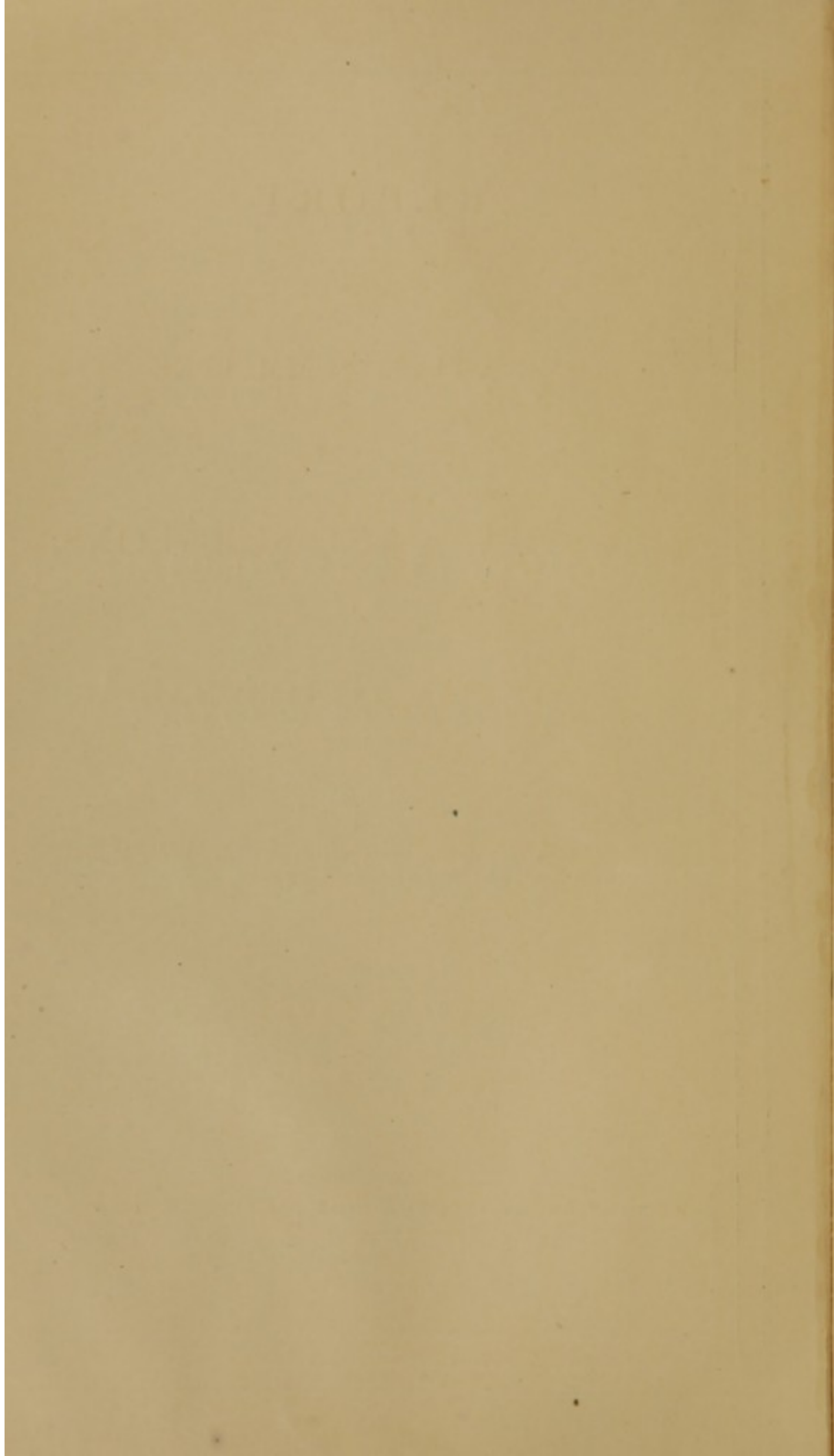
REPORT
TO THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS,
INTERESTED IN RAISING A
NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL

FOR THE
Discoverer of the Anæsthetic Uses of Sulphuric Ether.

BY
CHARLES PARKER,

NEW YORK :
WM. C. BRYANT & CO., PRINTERS, 41 NASSAU ST., COR. LIBERTY.

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<i>Williamsburgh</i>	“ “	“ BRADY.
<i>Kings County</i>	“ “	“ TURNER.

GENTLEMEN :

The present condition and prospect of the movement, in this city, for a National Testimonial to the discoverer of the Anæsthetic uses of Sulphuric Ether, render it desirable that a report should be presented to you of what has already been done by those actively engaged in forwarding its objects, and afford at the same time a suitable occasion for submitting to your inspection and approval a plan for future operations.

During the three spring months three hundred individuals were called upon, and the opportunity afforded them to add their names to the subscription list for the National Testimonial. A list of some hundred known benevolent men still remains. In consequence of the absence of many of these persons from home, and the time taken by most of them to consider the subject before giving their final answers, a longer time has been occupied in this portion of the labor than might otherwise have been expected. Pains have been taken in every case to forward to the address of each individual so called upon the "Appeal of the Members of the Medical Profession," and in some instances also "The Trials of a Public Benefactor."

The publication of this work, recommended by the Executive Committee, setting forth, as it does, "the circumstances connected with and growing out of the discovery," has been of vital importance. The early steps in this movement were laborious, tedious, and attended with unsupportable delays and considerable expense, owing to the repeated public attempts to revive exploded falsehoods, and deprive Dr. Morton of the sympathy and support of the public, the press, and the medical profession. The attempt to reply through the newspapers to these misrepresentations of the supporters of rival claimants soon made it clear that no honorable, fair, and decisive controversy could be carried on with them. Simple statements of

truth were offset by the appeals of partizan prejudice, and the appeals to sincere philanthropy mocked by the demands of interested virulence. It only remained, therefore, to resort to the circumscribed influence of a private circulation of facts and documents.

Though the "Trials of a Public Benefactor" may have some sale, yet as the facts which it contains were indispensable to those urging forward this movement, and to the formation of a correct public opinion and sentiment, its value and returns should not be estimated by the number of its purchasers alone. The slanders against the private character of Dr. Morton were gaining credence, the press were unwittingly falling into error, and the facts of history were suffering perversion for want of such a publication. To meet these necessities has added largely to the expenditure.

Without pretending to minuteness of detail, the annexed statement of disbursements up to the present time will be found not far from correct; Financial agents, stationery, printing, circulating "Appeal of the Medical Profession," copyright of "Trials of a Public Benefactor," publishing ditto, defence in cases of rival claimants, deduction from and expense of collecting subscription of Board of Ten Governors—\$4,103 00.

The following subscriptions have been made up to the present time:

Board of Ten Governors,	\$1,500
Society of New York Hospital,	500
Commissioners of Emigration,	250
1 of	500
3 "	250
1 "	150
28 "	100
25 "	50
20 "	25
14 "	10
6 "	5
Total,	<hr/> \$8,220

It is proper to remark, in conclusion, upon this branch of the subject, that in setting on foot a measure of this kind many delays are to be encountered and much expense incurred which usually are not repeated.

It has recently been made known through the action of the Board of Ten Governors of the city of New York, a copy of which is herewith transmitted, that there is no longer any reason for public institutions making use of anæsthesia to delay promoting the objects of this National Testimonial, on the ground which the President of the Board labored so hard to establish, namely, its illegality. On the contrary, there now appears in the proceedings instituted by that Board the evidence that they have a clear right to participate in this movement; and indeed the recent verdict and judgment in the case of an officer of the United States Navy establish the fact that all such institutions have a right to pay, and may even be made to pay for the use of this discovery, and that Dr. Morton has power, and no one else has, to authorize its use, and that he is entitled to injunctions upon such institutions, with power to call their Governors or Directors into Court to render an account for its past use.

The following plan is herewith submitted :

It is respectfully requested that the Executive Committee invite the Presidents of the various eleemosynary Institutions in New York and vicinity which make use of anæsthesia, to meet them in conference, and consider the propriety of unitedly paying to the National Testimonial one-quarter of the one hundred and eighty-seven thousand dollars required to reimburse Dr. Morton for his expenditure, in giving this discovery to the world, each institution making up its proportion.

New York and its suburbs have about forty eleemosynary institutions constantly making use of Dr. Morton's discovery. Over twenty-five one-hundredths of the people of New York are either treated in or by physicians sent from these institutions, and about one-eighth of these patients exhibit cases requiring the use of anæsthesia.

You are too familiar with the casualties so frequently occurring in this city and vicinity which fill the surgical wards of these institutions, to need to be told that the number of persons

thus receiving treatment, is much greater in New York than in Boston and Philadelphia taken together. It is, therefore, with propriety that New York is looked to for an amount of subscription which shall establish the success of the National Testimonial.

No one familiar with the facts in the case can doubt that a large share of the benefits arising from this discovery are realized by the governors of these institutions. Under these circumstances, it is not more than reasonable that they should pay one-half of the sum expected from New York City, viz., fifty thousand dollars.

It was proposed that each institution making use of the discovery, subscribe its proportion according to the number of patients so treated up to the present time. Many of these institutions, however, have kept no report of the number of cases treated by the aid of anæsthesia; and some not even of the proportion of surgical cases to those of other sorts.

It would, however, be an insult to them to treat the matter as one requiring a nice calculation of such tables, and a penurious weighing out of dollars and cents; while, on the other hand, some method of calculation is necessary to give the plan proposed that definiteness which is essential to an estimate of its merits, as well as indispensable to its success. Another mode that has been suggested for getting at the proportion each institution should make up of the above amount, is that which is based upon the summary of admissions in the last annual reports of these institutions. For this purpose, Table A, in the Appendix, has been compiled, and the attention of the Executive Committee is respectfully requested to its details. It will be seen that a few cents upon each patient admitted since the discovery, will make up, in the aggregate, the required amount.

The summary in Table A embraces many patients who have been treated without charge; yet the governors of these institutions, as is well known, are provided with funds for the very purpose by the General, State, and Municipal Governments, and by private donations, and annual subscriptions from the benevolent, so that no peculiar reason exists in their cases for not joining in the present movement.* The benefit of the dis-

* See Table B.

covery they have, in common with the rest of the world, enjoyed, now enjoy, and will continue to enjoy. But their enjoyment of it is an illegal one, which can only be turned into an honest possession by paying to Dr. Morton a fair equivalent, each in its proportion, towards reimbursing him for his actual expenditures, deficits, and losses, in giving the discovery to the world.

It may be urged by some that these institutions do not all have the money in hand for such a subscription, or that what they possess is in buildings. The objection, however, is not a decisive one. In such cases, they can come into the general arrangement, and pay off their particular subscriptions by instalments.

By some it has been suggested that they feared such a payment is illegal. The decision above referred to completely removes this objection, however, and, what is more, establishes the fact, that it is their present use of the anæsthetic discovery which is illegal, and that in their continued use of it, under existing circumstances, they are setting at naught all the laws of private property.

But no less lofty motives than a sense of public honor are appealed to. It is believed that Dr. Morton may still refrain from standing upon his legal rights, and asserting his legal claims, all the more, because they have been, at last, so fully and decisively established. It is believed that he may still put his trust in public justice and generosity, though waiting the movements of the Committee and of those institutions to know whether or not the gold medal awarded him by the Institute of France, the silver casket given him by the citizens of Boston, and whatever else he possesses that may be turned into money must be melted up. It cannot be that by the failure of these institutions to join in some arrangement like the one proposed above, he will be subjected to the searching processes of chancery, and the operations of the law, which will forever remove from him his patent, and thereby all right in this discovery, and involve the loss of his house and farm, as well as the amounts already paid upon them from this subscription.

These institutions treat annually over two hundred thousand patients, and own millions of dollars worth of property. Through your efforts they may be induced to set an example to the

whole country, and do that which is not more than justice to themselves. None but the medical and surgical profession, who are competent to assert and maintain Dr. Morton's claims, can secure him any remuneration on the present basis. By such a conference as the one proposed, and by the exertion of the Executive Committee, the original plan formed at the meeting in June, 1858, may be triumphantly carried out. If these institutions do not make up their proportion of such a fund, the result is not even problematical, but certain—the National Subscription falls through; and relief, if it ever comes to Dr. Morton, will come too late.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES PARKER.

Table A.

Date of Report.	Name of Institution.	When Established.	Number of Surgical cases in last Report.	Whole number of cases in last Report.	Supposed number of Surgical cases since discovery.	Supposed number of all kinds since discovery.
Dec. 31, 1858.	New York Hospital.....	1790	1,502	2,222	21,028	31,108
Do.	Bloomingtondale Asylum.....	....	Not classified.	258	....	3,612
Feb. 8, 1858.	Emigrants' Hospital.....	1847	1,608	12,608	20,904	163,904
Do.	Marine Hospital.....	....	Not classified.*	1,856	....	26,984
Mar. 1, 1858.	Nursery and Child's Hospital.....	1854	Do.	385	....	2,310
Jan. 1, 1859.	St. Vincent's do.....	1849	Do.	475	....	5,225
Jan. 1, 1857.	St. Luke's do.....	1858	Do.	No report.	....	....
Jan. 9, 1858.	Jews' do.....	1852	Do.	225	....	1,800
Dec. 31, 1857.	Women's do.....	1854	Do.	75	....	450
Jan. 3, 1859.	Ophthalmic do.....	1852	Do.	973	....	7,784
Jan. 13, 1859.	Seaman's Retreat do.....	1831	Do.	1,291	....	18,074
May 12, 1859.	New York Eye Infirmary.....	1820	Do.	4,202	....	58,828
Jan. 8, 1859.	New York Lying-In Asylum.....	1823	Do.	523	....	7,322
Jan. 14, 1859.	New York Dispensary.....	1790	{ Surgical.....7,458 }	47,032	174,468	658,448
Jan. 3, 1859.	Northern do.....	1827	{ Minor.....5,004 }	20,347	56,910	284,858
Jan. 12, 1859.	Eastern do.....	1834	{ Surgical.....1,964 }	32,918	57,092	460,852
Jan. 17, 1859.	Northwestern do.....	1853	{ Surgical.....2,101 }	20,611	37,219	144,277
Jan. 1, 1859.	Demilt do.....	1851	{ Surgical.....1,876 }	29,356	55,863	264,204
Jan. 1, 1859.	Williamsburgh Dispensary.....	1851	{ Minor.....2,202 }	6,285	6,003	56,565
Jan. 1, 1859.	Brooklyn City Hospital.....	Not ascertained.	{ Minor.....3,376 }	887	....	12,418
July 31, 1857.	Brooklyn Central Dispensary.....	....	{ Surgical.....1,941 }	4,168	....	58,352
July 31, 1857.	Brooklyn Dispensary.....	....	{ Surgical.....2,676 }	No report.	....	....
1857.	Long Island College Hospital.....	....	{ Minor.....3,531 }	Do.	....	....
	Kings County Hospital.....	....	{ Minor.....667 }	2,945	....	41,230
	Kings County Lunatic Asylum.....	....	{ Minor.....474 }	384	....	5,376
	Sailor's Snug Harbor.....	....	....	....	....	....
	Institutions in charge of 1 en Govs.	....	....	7,919	....	110,866
			36,380	197,945	429,487	† 2,423,847

* In this column, the words "Not Classified," indicate that cases of surgery were not specially classified. The probable proportion of cases where Ether was used may be estimated by a comparison with the reports of other hospitals, where the surgical cases are specially enumerated.

† These numbers are not strictly accurate, being the product of the multiplication of the number of cases reported in the last year by 14, or by the number of years since the founding of the institution, if less than 14, that being the number of years since the discovery. No other estimate is feasible, as annual reports do not exist in all cases.

Table B.**NEW YORK HOSPITAL.**

State Annuity,.....	\$12,500 00
To supply a deficient appropriation, 1855,.....	500 00
Board of Seamen,.....	19,635 86
Pay Patients,.....	11,561 65
Donations,.....	1,590 00
Donations from 1852 to 1857, \$158,860.	
	<hr/>
	\$45,786 51

BLOOMINGDALE ASYLUM.

State Annuity,.....	\$10,000 00
Board of Patients,.....	45,690 76
	<hr/>
	\$55,690 76

NEW YORK EYE INFIRMARY.

Donations from State Legislature, 1857,.....	\$1,000 00
Part do do 1858,.....	500 00
Donations from Corporation of New York,.....	500 00
Donations,.....	6,005 00
	<hr/>
	\$8,005 00

NEW YORK LYING-IN ASYLUM.

Interest,.....	\$935 00
Subscriptions,.....	646 00
Donations,.....	384 50
	<hr/>
	\$1,965 50

NURSERY AND CHILD'S HOSPITAL.

Appropriation by Legislature,.....	\$10,000 00
Interest and Incidentals,.....	1,722 94
Nursery Income,.....	2,516 23
Donations to Building Fund and Furniture,.....	2,295 00
Subscriptions collected,.....	1,377 25
Proceeds of Charity Ball, December 22, 1857,.....	3,609 93
	<hr/>
	\$21,521 35

ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL.

Pay Patients,.....	\$7,309 00
Proceeds of Fair, 1856,.....	2,200 00
Bequests,.....	550 00
Donations,.....	235 00
	<hr/>
	\$10,294 00

JEWS' HOSPITAL.

Donation from N. K. Rosenfeld,.....	\$1,000 00
“ Bachelor Loan Association,.....	8,000 00
“ Coal (Ludwig Schaper),.....	500 00
“ From other sources,.....	2,616 26
Dues of Members,.....	1,475 00
Board of Pay Patients,.....	248 40
Interest on Bonds, &c.,.....	460 80
Debt of Theological Seminary,.....	227 50
	<hr/>
	\$7,328 05

WOMEN'S HOSPITAL.

Portion of Grant from the State of New York, of \$10,000,	\$3,000 00
From U. S. Trust Co., balance of Interest ac. on \$3,000 deposited with them,.....	46 09
From Joseph Lawrence and R. B. Minturn, Esqrs., Trustees, per U. S. Trust Co., being interest of \$7,000 to November 1, 1857,.....	293 81
From Joseph Lawrence and R. B. Minturn, Esqrs., Trustees, and deposited with the United States Trust Company,.....	\$2,000 00
Less amount not drawn for, being balance with U. S. Trust Co,	457 53
	<hr/>
	1,542 47
From Annual Subscriptions.....	458 00
Donations,.....	4,321 93
Boards in Hospital,.....	1,017 08
	<hr/>
	\$10,679 38

NEW YORK DISPENSARY.

Annual Subscriptions,.....	\$665 00
Donations and Life Membership Subscribers,.....	375 00
Rents,	1,850 00

Dividends and Interest,.....	\$1,164 72
From State of New York,.....	1,000 00
“ City “	1,000 00
“ James Egbert, for 18,667 copies of Pierson’s Seelling Book, sold at one cent each,.....	186 67
“ Vaccine Forfeits and sales of Virus,.....	476 00
	<hr/>
	\$6,617 39

NORTHERN DISPENSARY.

Subscriptions,	\$1,104 00
Donations,.....	60 81
Interest on Bond, 6 months,.....	210 00
From City of New York,.....	1,000 00
“ State “	750 00
	<hr/>
	\$3,124 81
Less paid for collecting,.....	61 77
	<hr/>
	\$3,063 04

EASTERN DISPENSARY.

Donations,.....	\$150 00
Annual Subscriptions,.....	517 00
Vaccine Virus,.....	431 14
Interest on Investment,.....	700 00
From State of New York,.....	750 00
“ City “	1,000 00
Copyright of Speller,.....	159 00
Exchange of Erie Bonds,.....	821 54
	<hr/>
	\$4,394 77

NORTHWESTERN DISPENSARY.

Appropriation of Legislature,.....	\$750 00
“ Common Council,.....	1,000 00
Private Donations,.....	837 50
	<hr/>
	\$2,587 50

DEMILT DISPENSARY.

Interest on temporary Loan,.....	\$93 73
Donations from the City,.....	1,000 00
“ “ State,.....	750 00

Donations from Individuals,.....	\$850 00
Rent of Rooms in Dispensary Building,.....	1,175 29
	<hr/>
	\$3,860 02

NEW YORK OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL.

Donations from the City,.....	\$500 00
“ “ State,.....	1,000 00
Sundries,.....	49 11
	<hr/>
	\$1,549 11

SEAMAN'S RETREAT.

Custom-House, for Hospital Tax,.....	\$31,420 68
Collections at Office,.....	1,038 85
Sailors' Snug Harbor, for Insane Patients,.....	1,346 38
Sundries,.....	466 98
	<hr/>
	\$34,272 89

WILLIAMSBURGH DISPENSARY.

Received from Subscribers and Donors,.....	\$434 50
“ State Treasurer,.....	500 00
“ City of Brooklyn,.....	209 16
Interest to January 1, 1859,.....	43 53
	<hr/>
	\$1,187 20

COMMISSIONERS OF EMIGRATION.

Income,.....	\$385,000 00
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BOARD OF TEN GOVERNORS.

Income—A sufficient draft on City Treasury to cover expenses.

