

Billings

OBITUARY:

JOHN S. BILLINGS, M.D.

*Much succeeds,*

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Early in his career Dr. Billings became interested in public health, and in hospital organization, and was in charge, of the preparation of the vital statistics for both the tenth and eleventh census of the United States. Of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Trust Dr. Billings was appointed adviser, drew up the plans for the hospital, and was active in getting it organized. An important interview I had with him illustrates the man and his methods. Early in the spring of 1889 he came to my rooms, Walnut Street, Philadelphia. We had heard a great deal about the Johns Hopkins Hospital, and knowing that he was virtually in charge, it at once flashed across my mind that he had come in connexion with it. Without sitting down, he asked me abruptly, "Will you take charge of the Medical Department of the Johns Hopkins Hospital?" Without a moment's hesitation I answered, "Yes". "See Welch about the details we are to open very soon; I am very busy today; good morning;" and he was off, having been in my room not more than a couple of minutes. In the early days of the hospital Dr. Billings counsel was always sought, and the growth of the school was a matter of pride to him. For years he lectured on the history of medicine. In 1891 he accepted the professorship of hygiene at the University of Pennsylvania, and became director of its new laboratory of hygiene. In 1896 he became director of the New York Public Library under the Astor, Lenox, and Tilden foundations, and the crowning work of his life has been to consolidate these collections, and to see them housed in the magnificent building that was opened two years ago. The extent of the library may be gathered from the fact that it has more than 2,000,000 volumes and upwards of fifty branch libraries, with a staff of 1,002 persons.

*More fallen!*

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