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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR

U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

S. N. D. NORTH, DIRECTOR

BULLETIN 15

A DISCUSSION  
OF THE VITAL STATISTICS  
OF THE TWELFTH CENSUS

*Dr. John Shaw Billings*



WASHINGTON  
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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS,  
*Washington, D. C., Oct. 1, 1904.*

SIR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith Census Bulletin 15, entitled "A Discussion of the Vital Statistics of the Twelfth Census," and prepared by Dr. John Shaw Billings. The tables in this bulletin were compiled in the Bureau of the Census, under the supervision of Mr. William A. King, chief statistician.

In no branch of the work of the Twelfth Census was the requirement of Congress that the volumes must be published by July 1, 1902, so serious an obstacle to the preparation of a satisfactory report as in the field of vital statistics. This was due not to inherent difficulties in the inquiry, but to the fact that any analysis and interpretation of the statistics of deaths, to which field the division of vital statistics is at present restricted, was entirely dependent upon corresponding data for the population in which the deaths occurred, and the population details could not be compiled and supplied in sufficient time to permit making the necessary computations and comparisons before the entire report was required, by law, to be printed.

Under such conditions it was inevitable that much worth noting about the vital statistics of the Twelfth Census would be omitted. In the effort partly to fill this gap, the Census Bureau sought and, much to its gratification, obtained the cooperation of Dr. John Shaw Billings, who had charge of the division of vital statistics at the Tenth and Eleventh censuses and whose work in that field is probably better known than that of any other man in the United States. The supplementary data regarding deaths and death rates were obtained by the Bureau of the Census for the use of Doctor Billings through the courtesy of the local registration officers. A few life tables which could not be prepared in time for the original report have also, at his suggestion, been included.

Very respectfully,



*Director.*

Hon. VICTOR H. METCALF,  
*Secretary of Commerce and Labor.*

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