

42 West Washington Place,
New York Dec. 26th 1876.

Dr. B. J. Harrington,
Dear Sir:

It has been my intention for some time past to prepare an obituary notice of my lamented friend Mr. E. Billings, for the American Jour. Sci; but partly from the press of other duties and partly from the want of certain facts that I have thus far been unable to obtain it has been delayed. Recently, however, Prof. Dana, in the course of one of his letters to me, refers with especial

regret to the appearance
thus far, of only the
briefest notice of the decease
of so eminent and worthy
a scientific man, and
states that he has made
endeavours to obtain
a notice from Moulton,
but has thus far failed.
Knowing of the personal
relations of friendship
which the writer had
the great good fortune
to hold with Mr. Billings,
I felt in some sense
rebuked for not having
moved more strongly
in the matter; for, al-
though I wrote two or
three papers shortly
after his death with
a view of obtaining some
facts upon this head
I did nothing beyond this.

Having frequently heard
Mr. Billings refer to you
in terms the most kind
and appreciative; and
feeling that the advantages
of your official position
as well as your more
or less intimate know-
ledge of the man would
perhaps enable you to
furnish me with much
at least of the information
desired, I have taken the
liberty to write you re-
questing you to furnish
me as far as possible
the following facts: (1)
Mr. Billings' full name;
(2) The date and place of
his birth; (3) His vocation
prior to his appointment
on the survey, and where;
(4) a sketch of his work

done in science prior to such appointment; (5) The date of his marriage, and whether his wife survives him; (6) The date of his death.

I shall be most deeply grateful to you for any of the information asked for that you may be able kindly to furnish me with, and shall be glad to acknowledge the same. While feeling deeply sensible of my own unfitness for the task which I have undertaken, I have still felt it to be my duty; and while it is, with me, in a large sense a work of sorrow, it yet is, in a wider and higher sense a labor of love. Believe me, Sir,

Very sincerely yours
Amos S. W. Ford