



JOHN HERR MUSSER, M.D., LL.D.

---

Nor only the medical profession of Philadelphia, but also physicians throughout the United States, as well as his countless friends among medical men of other lands, were shocked by the sudden death of Dr. JOHN HERR MUSSER, which occurred in Philadelphia on April 3, 1912, after a brief illness.

Dr. Musser was born in Strasburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, June 22, 1856. It is interesting to note that Dr. Musser was descended from a remarkable line of physicians. Since the

early days of the colony of Pennsylvania, when William Penn granted to one of Dr. Musser's ancestors the right to practise, almost every generation of his family has contributed a representative to the medical profession: his great-grandfather, grandfather, and father all having been physicians of note in their respective communities.

After receiving his preliminary education at the Strasburg High School and Millersville State Normal School, Dr. Musser entered the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, from which institution he received his medical degree in 1877. The following year he spent in the Philadelphia Hospital as a resident physician. Shortly after leaving the hospital he became officially connected with the University of Pennsylvania, which institution he was destined to serve continuously, with extraordinary loyalty and enthusiasm, until the time of his death.

No phase of Dr. Musser's career brought him more pleasure and satisfaction, as well as distinction, than his work as a teacher of medicine. He began as quiz master in the practice of medicine when that form of instruction occupied a well-recognized place in medical teaching. In 1881 he became instructor of clinical medicine in the University of Pennsylvania; eight years later he was appointed assistant professor of clinical medicine, and in 1898 he became professor of clinical medicine in that institution, a position which he filled with distinction until his death. Dr. Musser was essentially a clinical teacher. His keen power of observation, wide knowledge of medicine, and thorough understanding of pathological processes, coupled with a vast clinical experience, rendered him particularly well fitted for bedside instruction, in which he excelled. The thoroughness and painstaking detail with which he studied his patients, together with the energy and enthusiasm which marked his teaching, profoundly impressed his students. Although always alert to be among the first to adopt and advocate every advance in scientific medicine, he was ever mindful of the importance of teaching the art of medicine, and his clinics were replete with helpful and practical suggestions, long remembered by his hearers.

In addition to his activity as a teacher in the University of Pennsylvania, he labored unceasingly in numerous Philadelphia hospitals. In 1884, after serving as a dispensary physician, he became pathologist to the Presbyterian Hospital, and three years later was appointed a physician to that institution, a position

which he held at the time of his death. He served in the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania continuously from 1879, first as medical registrar, a number of years as chief of the medical dispensary, and, finally, as visiting physician. From 1885 he was connected for twenty years with the Philadelphia General Hospital as visiting physician, resigning to become consultant to that institution. Dr. Musser's deep interest in the better development of hospitals in this country claimed his active support in aiding and improving the organization and equipment of the institutions with which he was associated.

From the earliest days of his career until his death, Dr. Musser was a staunch supporter of everything that made for scientific medicine and the betterment of the medical profession. Although a clinician himself, he was keenly alive to the value of experimental medicine, and was virtually the founder of the Department of Research Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania. The Social Service Department now connected with the hospital of that institution owes its successful development largely to his energy and foresight. Always a firm believer in the closer association of physicians with each other, he was a prominent and leading figure not only in the various medical societies of his own city and State, but also in national organizations. The long list of distinguished positions held by him in various societies from time to time, testifies to the high regard in which he was held by the profession, particularly the signal honors which were conferred upon him by his election as president of the American Medical Association in 1904 and his appointment as chairman of the American Committee of the International Medical Congress at Budapest in 1909.

The unflagging energy and extraordinary capacity for work displayed by Dr. Musser are further emphasized by the number and importance of the contributions to medical literature which he found time to publish, notwithstanding the exacting claims of the active practice and multitudinous other interests in which he was engaged. His most notable contribution was his comprehensive work on *Medical Diagnosis*. In addition, he edited, in conjunction with the late Dr. A. O. J. Kelly, *Practical Treatment*, and was an extensive contributor to Keating's *Diseases of Children*, Hare's *System of Practical Therapeutics*, Nothnagel's *System of Medicine*, and Osler's *Modern Medicine*. Moreover, from 1884 until just before his death, Dr. Musser was a frequent

contributor to the various medical journals, and demonstrated his versatility by the ability and authority with which he wrote upon all phases of internal medicine.

Not only was he recognized as a physician of exceptional ability, but he was also greatly esteemed as a broad-minded, public-spirited citizen, eager to aid in every effort for civic betterment, and as a leader in every movement directed toward moral, hygienic, and social uplift. His kindly nature, wholesome optimism, and rugged honesty inspired confidence and affection in all who came under his influence.

Although his untimely death falls most heavily upon the community in which for thirty-five years he labored so untiringly, his loss will be felt by laymen as well as by the medical profession throughout the entire country. Dr. Musser set an example of unselfish, tireless devotion to duty and high professional ideals, supported by unfailing cheerfulness and courage, which can never be forgotten, and which will be a lasting inspiration to all who knew him. To those whose privilege it was to be closely associated with him, his memory will endure as the symbol of all that is best in professional attainment and truest in manhood.

---