

REMINISCENCES OF EDWARD EMERSON BARNARD

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I do not assume to speak with the authority of the others on this program. My contacts with Dr. Barnard extended through the years 1908 and 1909, at which time I was a student under him at the Yerkes Observatory. Long nights in the Observatory and hours in the dark room gave me an opportunity to know the heart and mind of Dr. Barnard. We would discuss science, philosophy and religion. One cannot over-emphasize the sincerity and the fundamental honesty of Dr. Barnard. No visitor was too lowly or too noted to share the genuine hospitality of Dr. Barnard's home. Mrs. Barnard was equally delightful and their home was the Mecca of scientists from all over the world.

It will be remembered that in the first days of September, 1909, Halley's comet was re-discovered. For over a year Professor Barnard had searched for this object. It was his theory that there was greater probability of finding it with his beloved ten-inch Bruce photographic, because of its wide field, than with a more powerful telescope with its correspondingly narrower field. For weeks every time the telephone would ring, the observers would step into the hall and listen for the news. One afternoon in September about three o'clock the telephone rang. As was our custom, we stepped to the door. Dr. E. B. Frost called out, "Hoo-hoo, it is found." I shall never forget Dr. Barnard's white face as he stepped to the hall. "Who found it?" he said. "Dr. Max Wolfe." Dr. Barnard closed his eyes for a moment. He asked for the position, and without saying a word, he turned and walked back to his office, picked up a photographic plate of two nights before, and by the aid of the comparator found he had the object on a Bruce plate, but not one word or complaint that would detract in the slightest from the glory of Dr. Wolfe's discovery was uttered. Dr. Barnard wanted his own, but he was equally insistent on giving everybody else due and just credit.

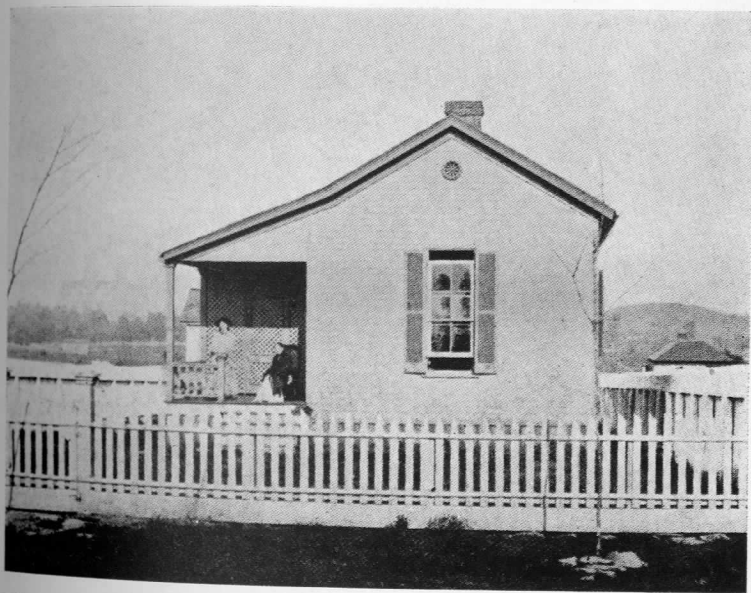
It was his habit, if the clouds should interfere for a few minutes during the night, to step out on the roof and estimate the position angles of the lights along the lake shore, determining their magnitude, the color and the transparency of the sky. One night about twelve o'clock, after I relieved Dr. Barnard at the Bruce telescope, he stepped outside and saw the gegenschein unusually bright. He stood there for a half-hour describing it to me. What torture, with a desire generated through many years of search for this unusual phenomenon, to keep my eyes glued to the telescope. What agony, I say, that I must keep to my post and listen to the words of this master as he described the unusually elusive phenomenon.

Carlyle has said that there are two world voices that have spoken, Dante in Italy and Shakespeare in England. If this can be applied

to the world of astronomical photography, that only two world voices have spoken, Edward Emerson Barnard of America is undoubtedly one. He believed sincerely with Carlyle that "the day is always his who lives it with sincerity and high purpose. The unstable estimates of men crowd toward him whose heart is filled with richness as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon."



Barnard's residence at 1919 Patterson Street, Nashville, at the time he discovered his first comet in 1881.



The Comet House at 807 Sixteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, which Barnard built with the proceeds from his discovery of comets.