



Vanderbilt University Observatory, Nashville, Tenn. Here Barnard discovered seven comets and many nebulae. Photograph made by Barnard in 1884.



Barnard's residence on Vanderbilt campus.

ASSOCIATIONS WITH MR. BARNARD

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The associations I had with Professor Edward Emerson Barnard date from January of 1903, at which date I joined the staff of the Yerkes Observatory. For nearly seven years thereafter I occupied an office across the hall from him, and in this contiguity and because of his hospitable, generous spirit, came to know him intimately.

Searching the heavens was the passion of his life, consecrated to Urania, and never did man devote himself more completely to the service of his muse. He worked unflaggingly in dome, dark room, and office. With the great telescope he worked feverishly; with the Bruce photographic telescope he guided with the utmost patience; in his office his desk was always in distressing disorder but it was the disorder accompanying construction, not neglect.

Long before dark his nervous, hurrying steps could be heard through the halls as he went to the doors to scan the sky for prospects of the night.

"I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon the little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky
And at every idle cloud that trailed
Its ravelled fleeces by."

He was joyous if the night were fair. He was undaunted by the long hours of the bitter cold winter nights; he had the courage and fortitude to go through from dusk till dawn. His was a will of steel.

"What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?"

One could always tell what the night had been by his reaction from it. If clouds or bad seeing had marred the observing, his unconscious sighs were clearly audible. If the sky had been kind, his spirit was gay with song: then his infectious humor found vent. The spirit of a child in a man of stupendous strength and character. There was something elemental in his make-up, in his simplicity, in his frank joy in poetry, trees, and song. An artist of the truest sort in his observing, full of naive enthusiasms. Yet there was something almost terrifying in the relentless pace he set in the pursuit of truth, the unsparring rod with which he drove himself.

Here is a character about which legends will form and cling,—we see a rise from obscurity and poverty to the attainment of the most prized recognitions of greatness in this possessor of a most kindly, generous, and lovable personality.

You, here in Nashville, know of his early life lived among you and have watched with pride his later career. It is to the credit of

the citizens of this City that they gave him early recognition and opportunities. Fifty years ago the American Association for the Advancement of Science met in Nashville and at that time the youth, Barnard, urged on by his friends, approached Simon Newcomb to speak of his aspirations. Newcomb outlined a formidable program for this unschooled young man, but to that program he set his course. It would be a happy outcome of these meetings if another Nashville youth should be similarly inspired.

But I have been thinking of something specific that might be done in the spirit of this commemorative meeting to perpetuate the memory of Barnard in this City of his birth. I am reminded that the old observatory in Berlin stood on Encke Platz; that in Paris I walked in streets about the Observatoire de Paris, Rue Lalande, Boulevard Arago, Rue Herschell, Rue Cassini, and near l'Ecole Polytechnique in Rue Descartes and Rue LaPlace; and I have been wondering if in Nashville there is not an appropriately located street fine enough and beautiful enough to be called Barnard Boulevard.