

SCIENCE

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SHERBURNE WESLEY BURNHAM,

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WE record, with deep regret at his passing, but with high appreciation of his long and valuable service to astronomical science, the death of Sherburne Wesley Burnham, *emeritus* professor of practical astronomy at the Yerkes Observatory, of the University of Chicago.

Born on December 12, 1838, in the upper valley of the Connecticut, at Thetford, Vermont, Mr. Burnham had the ordinary advantages of the district school, supplemented by some study in the local academy, but he did not go to college. He became an expert stenographer and shorthand reporter, long before the days of the typewriter, and this was his profession for some thirty years. During the Civil War he served in his professional capacity with the Union Army while it was occupying the city of New Orleans. He came to Chicago, after the close of the war, and became attached to the United States Courts.

His interest in astronomy must have developed very early in the sixties, for he purchased his first telescope during a visit to London in 1861; and in 1870 he became the possessor of a fine six-inch refractor, a masterpiece of Alvan Clark, which he had ordered in 1869. Mr. Burnham's vision was extraordinarily keen, for among the 451 new double stars which he discovered with that instrument many were found by other observers to be extremely difficult to resolve with much larger instruments.

In 1873 and 1874 he sent five lists of new double stars to the Royal Astronomical Society, which were published in the *Monthly Notices*. At first he had no micrometer, and was obliged to give estimated angles and distances. A correspondence developed with Baron Ercole Dembowsky, who gladly made