JOHN STEFANOS PARASKEVOPOULOS, the Superintendent of the Boyden Station of Harvard Observatory at Mazelspoort in South Africa, died suddenly on 1951 March 15. "Dr Paras", as he had long been known affectionately to astronomers the world over, had a slight illness during the two weeks preceding his death. On the evening of March 14 he seemed well on the way to recovery and it came as a great shock to his many friends in and around Bloemfontein to hear the sad news that death had overtaken him so suddenly. Through his death, Astronomy has lost one of its most devoted, conscientious and capable servants, a man who dedicated his life to providing for his colleagues precision tools and basic material for the exploration of the universe of stars and galaxies.

Dr Paraskevopoulos was born on 1889 June 20 at Piraeus in Greece. He received the degree of Doctor of Science from the University of Athens in 1910 and spent several years as laboratory assistant in Physics and Chemistry at the University of Athens, the late King George II of Greece attending laboratory courses under him at that time. His scientific career was interrupted by nine years of military service in the Greek army during the Balkan Wars and during the First World War. He ended his military career with the rank of First Lieutenant. During part of his military service he was an instructor in Navigation at the Observatory in Athens ; he was active in the field as well and received several Greek war medals including thirteen bars for battles in which he had fought.

After demobilization in 1919 he was sent to America to study astronomical methods of research and to gather information and estimates of prices regarding a possible large telescope for the Athens Observatory. The funds which had been set aside for the purchase of this telescope evaporated during the inflation of Greek currency in the post-war years. Dr Paras spent most of his two years in America studying spectroscopy at the Yerkes Observatory, but he worked also for several months at the Mount Wilson Observatory and at the United States Weather Bureau in Washington, D.C.

During his stay at the Yerkes Observatory he met his future wife, Dorothy W. Block, then a graduate student at the Yerkes Observatory. The Parases were married in the summer of 1921, two months before his return to Athens, where he became Head of the Astronomical Department of the Observatory.

When it became evident that the large telescope for the Athens Observatory would not materialize, Dr Paras accepted in 1923 September, from Dr Harlow Shapley, an offer of the Superintendency of the Harvard Observatory's Southern Station. At that time the Boyden Station was located at Arequipa, Peru, and one of Dr Paras's first assignments was to investigate conditions for the removal of the Boyden Station from Arequipa to a more suitable location. During 1923 to 1925 Dr Paras made three experimental expeditions to investigate conditions at high altitudes in Chile and in Southern Peru, but in 1927 it was decided that the Boyden Station was to be transferred from Arequipa, Peru, to South Africa.

Dr and Mrs Paras arrived in South Africa in 1927 and undertook there the difficult and delicate tasks of, first, selecting a site for the Station, and of obtaining this site, and access to it, under the most favourable conditions, and, finally, of remounting the equipment that had been sent across from Peru. In the execution of this difficult assignment, Dr Paras was nobly assisted by his wife.

The Boyden Station can truly be said to be the Parases' Observatory. Under Dr Paras's Superintendency the original equipment was extended and modified. New mountings were made for several of the older telescopes and the two biggest items of new equipment that were set up under his direction were the 60-inch Rockefeller Reflector and, only a few months before Dr Paras's death, the Armagh-Dunsink-Harvard telescope of Baker-Schmidt design. It was indeed a privilege for the writer to have been with Dr Paras at the time when he was mounting and adjusting the precision optics of the ADH telescope. With Dr Paras's supervision and participation in the work, one hardly felt surprised that the first test plate showed the telescope to be in almost perfect focus and with hardly any need for further night-time adjustment. Dr Paras had an uncanny knack with instruments and he could unfailingly detect the exact spot where the trouble lay when any difficulty arose in the running of any telescope. His greatest joy was to have all of the delicate telescopic equipment of the Boyden Station in perfect running order at all times.

The building of a good observatory means more than equipment and maintenance. Efficiency of operation requires the presence of a competent and devoted staff and of good relations with many elements in the community. Dr Paras was truly loved and respected as a father by his staff, observers and mechanics alike; he was one of the best-known figures around Bloemfontein, and he was held in great respect by all elements of the community. The Boyden Station, one of the finest of Southern Hemisphere observatories, can truly be said to be a monument to Dr Paraskevopoulos.

There is a considerable Greek element among the population of South Africa. Dr Paras was the unquestioned leader of the Greek community of Greater Bloemfontein, but throughout South Africa, in fact throughout Africa south of the Equator, Dr Paras was looked upon as one of the principal Greek leaders. Dr Paras was known especially for his successful efforts on behalf of Greek War Relief during the Second World War, but he derived perhaps even more his great strength with the Greek community through his kind and wise counsel freely given.

Dr Paras held life membership in many scientific societies, including the Royal Astronomical Society, the American Astronomical Society, the South African Association for the Advancement of Science and the Société Astronomique de France. He had the honorary degree of Master of Arts from Harvard University, was a corresponding member of the Greek Academy and was the recipient (in 1950) of one of the highest Greek medals, that of the Order of Phoenix. He was an extramural Professor of Astronomy at the University of the Orange Free State and two days before his death he received official notification that he had been appointed by the French Government an Honorary Consular Agent for France for the Orange Free State and Basutoland. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific awarded him a Comet Medal in 1940.

Throughout his life photography was one of Dr Paras's chief hobbies and he left behind excellent collections of photographs of cloud formations over Harvard Kopje. Dr Paras was a cultured and widely-read man. He was an accomplished linguist, who spoke six languages fluently while being able to express himself reasonably well in another two or three. One of his great hobbies throughout his life was to keep copies of quotations and his widow,

who assisted me in the preparation of the present obituary, has selected from among these one that serves eminently as his epitaph :

" To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."

BART J. BOK.

CHARLES LANE POOR, a Fellow of the Society since 1893 November 10, died at his home in New York City on 1951 September 27. He had been Professor of Astronomy and Celestial Mechanics at Columbia University for 44 years until his retirement in 1947. He was born in Hackensack, N.J. on 1866 January 18. He took the Bachelor of Science degree at the College of the City of New York in 1886, and the Master's degree from the same college in 1890. For his graduate work he went to the Johns Hopkins University where Simon Newcomb was then Head of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy, and he assigned to Poor as a dissertation for the partial fulfilment of the degree of doctor of philosophy the perplexing and challenging problem of Comet 1889 V.

The comet, discovered by Brooks on 1889 July 6, soon attracted the widest attention. On the observational side, on August 1, Barnard at the Lick Observatory found that the comet consisted not only of one body but of a family of comets moving together in space. The companion comets were observed by Barnard until November 25, and the last observation was made by him on March 20, a month later than by any other observer. The comet followed an elliptic path of period about seven years.

Strange as were the happenings of the comet as witnessed by Barnard, the changes in the orbit were far more remarkable, for in all probability the 1889 comet was identical with a comet observed more than a hundred years earlier in 1770. Upon the computation of the orbit of this comet by Lexell, it was found to be revolving about the Sun in a period of five and a half years. This was considered to be remarkable, for the comet was visible to the naked eye and should have been seen at some of its former returns. However, the comet had never been seen before, nor has it ever been seen since.

Lexell found that the comet made several close approaches to the planet Jupiter and that in the year 1779 the attraction of the planet on the comet was over two hundred times as great as that of the Sun itself. The body, because of its never having been observed since 1770, has been called " Lexell's lost comet of 1770 ".

S. C. Chandler investigated the orbit and found that " several months before reaching its perihelion in 1886, it passed into the sphere of Jupiter's attraction and was deflected into a hyperbolic path about the planet, remaining for more than eight months under its control—the disturbing action of the Sun being insignificant ".

Poor's careful investigation showed that the comet passed the centre of Jupiter at " a distance not greater than 3·65 and not less than 1·00 radius of the planet itself. In other words, the centre of the comet may have grazed the surface of Jupiter. ..... There are many interesting problems connecting the comet with the fifth satellite of Jupiter. There is certainly great probability that the satellite passed directly through the comet; the mean path of the comet intersected that of the satellite, so a direct collision was possible ".