INVISIBLE STARLIGHT

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Invisible radiation was first observed when Sir William Herschel, in 1800, found a blackened thermometer bulb to be warmed when placed beyond the red end of the sun's visible spectrum. The following year, J. W. Ritter noted the darkening of silver chloride caused by light beyond the violet end of the solar spectrum. Three quarters of a century elapsed before the study of invisible starlight was begun by Sir William Huggins, who, in 1876, photographed both visible and ultra-violet stellar spectra. Although of obvious interest, the investigation of invisible starlight has developed slowly, not only because of serious practical difficulties but because it was natural and proper to exploit first the more readily observed visible portion of the spectrum. The time has now come, however, when astronomers can perhaps afford to de-

1 Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of the Section of Astronomy, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Boston, December, 1933.