

Note on Comet (b) 1916.

ON April 27th, 1916, Professor Wolf discovered an object with a stellar nucleus and nebulous envelope which was first of all thought to be a new planet, but has now turned out to be a comet, which may be visible as a prominent object in the sky next year.

Professor Barnard found the comet on a photographic plate taken three days before it was seen by Professor Wolf. The position on April 30th was—

R. A. 12 hrs. 38 min. 51 sec. Dec. $2^{\circ}-39'-35''$ N.

The daily motion was about— $31.7''$ N., R.A. and 5.2 N. in Dec. That is to say, the comet was travelling north. The magnitude was 12.8

The position of the comet on June 19th was R. A. 12 hrs. 27 min. 7 sec. and Dec. $4^{\circ}-57'$ N. and at the end of August it was at R.A. 38 hrs. 8 min. and Dec. $1^{\circ}-46'$ N., so that it had by then turned south in its course. It was in conjunction with the Sun on November 1st, and consequently invisible. It will not be visible again until it appears as a morning star in February next. The comet is approaching the Earth, and will be nearest to it about June or July next. It will pass perihelion on the 16th June 1917.

The probability is, therefore, that we shall have an interesting object for observation next year, and it will be a fine test for our sky searchers to pick it up in the constellation of Pegasus where it will be seen most of the time it is visible. In the meantime we want to know the place in the sky as accurately as possible where it will appear, and for this purpose the assistance of our mathematical members is asked. The calculation is not difficult, and I can let those who will take it up have both the elements of the orbit, and the necessary formulæ. No ephemeris has as yet been published as far as I am aware, and the preparation of one is a piece of practical work which will be of use, not only to our own members, but to others who wish to look for the comet. It is necessary to begin at once, however, and I invite mathematical members to send in their names as soon as possible.

The positions will then be published in the monthly notices of the Society, and the attention of those who are watching the sky directed to it. If the matter is taken up keenly, there is no reason why the Society should not have to its credit a very satisfactory series of observations of this object.