

# THE COMET.

THE advent of the comet which is at present visible to the naked eye in the northern heavens, was first made known by Professor Donati, of Florence, on the 3d of June. It was also discovered by Henry M. Parkhurst, Esq., of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, on June 29. We give herewith a representation of the comet as it at present appears, and also a diagram showing its position among the fixed stars through which its path lies, from August 28 to September 29, shortly after which time it will be lost to sight. By means of this diagram the reader will be able to trace its course on a celestial globe.

Its motion around the sun is retrograde; that is, in the direction opposite to the motions of the planets. Its distance from the earth at present is roughly computed at nearly 90,000 miles. Its tail is about 6,000,000 miles long. Its distance from the sun at perihelion, or when nearest that luminary, is calculated at 40,000,000 miles, and its velocity at that time will be no less than 2500 miles per minute. Its relative brightness has been calculated, and is shown in the following table:

| CALCULATED BRIGHTNESS OF COMET. |      |                 |      | was altogether a more remarkable body than the one now before the public.                               |  |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| August 20.....                  | 6.5  | September 13... | 32.5 | Its tail was, at one time, 106,000,000 miles long, and it approached the sun so closely that it is sup- |  |
| " 28.....                       | 10.2 | " 21....        | 67.0 |                                                                                                         |  |
| September 5.....                | 17.4 | " 29... 136.0   |      |                                                                                                         |  |



COURSE OF THE COMET THROUGH THE STARS.

It will therefore present yet its most splendid appearance.

The last comet plainly visible to the naked eye made its appearance in February, 1843. It continued visible during even the brightest days, and

posed it must have almost grazed it. Its perihelion distance was but 90,000 miles. The velocity with which it whirled around the sun, at the instant of its perihelion, was prodigious; such, indeed, that, if it had continued, the comet would have encircled

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the sun in the space of two hours and a half. In fact, it did pass half around it in that time. In forty days, the period of its visibility, it had described 173 degrees from perihelion; while to describe the next seven degrees required many years, perhaps centuries, its rate decreasing in an immense ratio with its distance from the sun. The heat it received from the sun at perihelion was computed by Professor Herschel to be 47,000 times greater than that received by the earth from a vertical sun. The comet was for some time red-hot; and spectators near the equator described the tail as resembling "a stream of fire from a furnace."

The present comet will be visible, probably, until the beginning of October. The best time to see it is early in the morning, between three and four o'clock. The direction of its tail is toward the North Star. Its elements have not yet been certainly computed; but it is supposed to have a period of thirty-one years, and to be identical with the comets which appeared in 1827 and 1764 (two periods). This would bring its return about 1889-1890.

