

about five minutes of arc south of the star, but with no evidence of any relationship between the nebulous clouds and the star.

On September 20 Ritchey at the Yerkes Observatory photographed the same region with a more efficient instrument and found that the nebulous cloud was very nearly circular, some ten minutes of arc in diameter, but of varying intensity in its different parts with the new star situated near the middle of the nebulosity.

A recent photograph, secured by Professor Perrine with the Crossley reflector, recorded the principal features of the nebulous cloud. He compared his photograph with the Yerkes photograph of the same object and made the interesting discovery that the brightest portion of the nebula, at least, and perhaps the whole nebula, had moved to the southeast more than one minute of arc in the past six weeks.

This observation is in every respect unique. Motion on this enormous scale or one fiftieth part of this scale has never been observed for any celestial body outside the solar system, and it is morally certain that the observed phenomenon is closely related to the violent disturbances which gave birth to the new star. It is perhaps as wonderful and important as any fact yet determined in connection with new stars.

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#### THE U. S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY.

IN his annual report to the President, Hon. John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, indorses the recommendation of the board of visitors to the Naval Observatory, that a civilian astronomer be placed at the head of that institution. Mr. Long says:

"Attention is called to the first and very important report of the board of visitors to the Naval Observatory. I earnestly commend its recommendations to careful consideration. This board was created by act of Congress in March last. I believe its visitations will be found valuable in making the observatory efficient and in rank with the best institutions of the land. It appears that no other observatory in the world has the expenditure of so much money, but also that its results are not commensurate with those of some other observatories the expenditures of which are less. Its

head should of course be the best astronomer' who has proper administrative qualifications, that can be found in the country. It is especially desirable that he should have continuity of tenure, and the observatory has undoubtedly suffered from frequent changes in its superintendents.

"While the average term of service of superintendents at Greenwich has been twenty-eight years and at Harvard fifteen, at the Naval Observatory it has been only a little over three. I urgently recommend that the legislation of the last Congress to the effect 'that the superintendent of the Naval Observatory shall be, until further legislation by Congress, a line officer of the navy of a rank not below that of captain,' be repealed, and that on the contrary it be enacted that there shall be no limitation upon the field from which the superintendent is to be selected. As well might the above-quoted statute have provided that the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries should be selected from the line of the Marine Corps, or the Director of the Geological Survey from the line of the army.

"There is no vital relation between the navy and the observatory. It may happen that some naval officer is preeminently qualified for such a place, in which case he would be appointed to it, but the country is entitled to have unlimited range of selection. The present limitation, which shuts out the whole body of civilian astronomers and even any astronomer in the navy who does not happen to be in the line, or, if in the line, below the rank of captain, is peculiar. Only a very small proportion of naval officers are not below the rank of captain, and as most of them are required for naval services—a requirement which is now increasing—the list from which selection can be made is a noticeably small one. It is evident, too, from the wording of the above quotation from the statute, that Congress in passing it had in mind further legislation in this respect."

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#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science will meet at the Quadrangle Club, adjoining the grounds of the University of Chicago, on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 1. Section H, Anthro-