

THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF MAY 28

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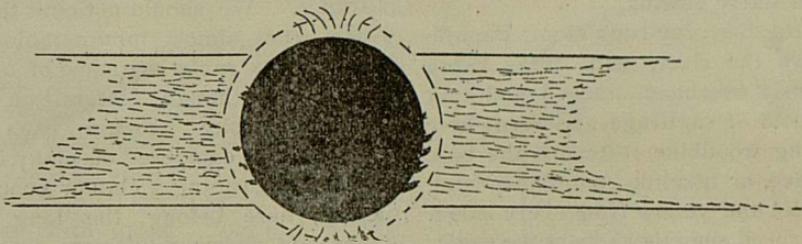
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BY GARRET P. SERVISS, PH.D.

My station for viewing the eclipse was near Newberry, S. C., about three miles north of the center of the totality belt. Although I selected a point of observation which gave an unobstructed view, extending about twenty miles westward, the velocity of the lunar shadow was too great to permit its approach over the face of the country to be observed. The spectacle of gathering darkness in the West was, however, exceedingly grand and imposing. The sky was perfectly cloudless, but as totality approached the purple-black curtain of shadow produced the impression of an on-rushing storm.

The darkening of the air before totality was not effected in a uniform manner. At



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times a notable brightening would occur, followed gradually by deepening of the shadow, and then another temporary increase of light, like the slow passage of great atmospheric waves of varying refraction.

The corona burst forth a few seconds earlier than had been predicted. The inner corona, of a ring-like form, was very bright, and in its silvery illumination, I could easily read the second marks on my watch. The form of the outer corona was very striking and perfectly characteristic of the minimum sunspot period. It was also clearly accordant with the prediction of its shape made by Prof. Frank H. Bigelow. Its borders were remarkably straight and sharply defined.

Its largest ray extended Westward nearly in the direction of the planet Mercury, which glowed very brilliantly about two and a quarter degrees from the hidden sun. The polar rays were visible, and the limb of the sun, especially in the West, was serrated with the red flames of the prominences. The spectacle was so absorbing in its weird splendor that the eighty-five seconds during which it lasted seemed to pass in a breath.