

The Total Solar Eclipse of January 14, 1926.

NUMEROUS parties have been organised to observe the solar eclipse on January 14 next, which is total in central and eastern Africa, Amirante Islands, Sumatra, Borneo, etc. (Fig. 1). The duration of totality is $2^m 12^s$, and the sun's altitude about 26° on the African coast, which is to be occupied by Signor Horn d'Arturo. The Amirante Islands will not, apparently, be occupied, the meteorological conditions being unpromising.

Most of the parties will be stationed in Sumatra,

stood that this shift will be investigated by a party from Potsdam, stationed near Palembang, and by Prof. Miller of Swarthmore Observatory, who will use a coronagraph of 60-feet focus.

Several other parties from the United States will also go to Sumatra, representing the Observatories of Harvard, Mount Wilson, and Washington (Naval); the names of Messrs. Anderson, Littell, and Stetson have reached us as belonging to these parties.

Messrs. Vanderbilt and Voute are going from Java

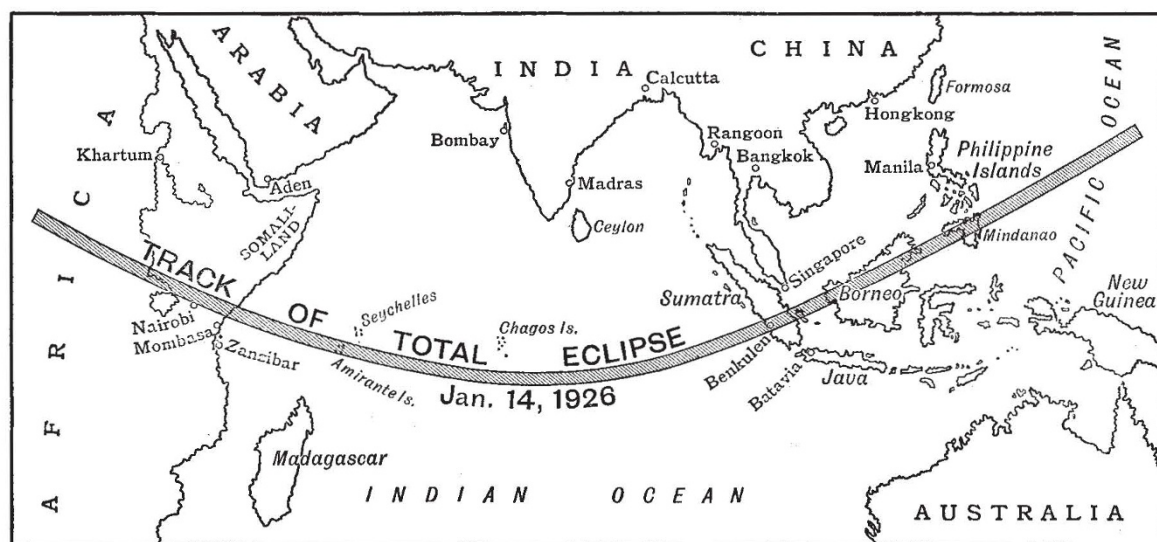


FIG. 1.—Map showing the track of the solar eclipse of January 14, 1926.

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where the duration of totality will be about $3^m 13^s$, and the sun's altitude 54° . Benkulen, on the west coast, is near the central line; the British party, consisting of Col. Stratton, Mr. C. R. Davidson, and others, will be stationed here. They will reach Benkulen via Palembang on the river Musi, the landing of heavy packages at Benkulen being difficult. They are taking two cœlostats and the Copeland coronagraph lens of 40-feet focus, which has seen service at several eclipses. Their work will be wholly on problems of solar physics, the "Einstein" shift being considered as sufficiently established in 1919 and 1922. It is, however, under-

to Palembang. There is no news to hand of any parties occupying the islands east of Sumatra. This is the second time that Sumatra has been visited by eclipse expeditions in the present century; there was a very long totality there in May 1901, when Sir Frank Dyson, among many others, made successful observations, though the weather conditions were not wholly propitious. There will be another totality in Sumatra (northern part) on May 9, 1929, with high sun and more than 5 minutes' totality. The island will then have a rest until March 18, 1988, which is a return of the Indian eclipse of 1898 after five saroses.

Obituary.

PROF. JEAN MASSART.

BRITISH botanists will have learnt with regret of the death of Prof. Jean Massart, of the University of Brussels, which occurred somewhat suddenly at Houx, a little village on the Meuse, in August last. Prof. Massart had retired thither to recuperate, his health being possibly impaired by a long journey in Brazil with some of his students, followed by a strenuous lecture tour in America.

Born in 1865 at Etterbeek, a suburb of Brussels, Prof. Massart obtained his doctorate in science at the University of Brussels and became professor there in 1895. His early researches turned upon general biological problems, such as chemotaxy, pathologic

infection by micro-organisms, immunity, etc. From a study of the lower organisms, especially flagellates and fungi, he passed gradually to still more botanical fields of work. After the death of his former teacher, Prof. Léo Errera, he was nominated director of the Institut Léo Errera, and a great deal of his botanical work is published in the memoirs of the Institute. His early work upon the lower forms of plant and animal life has imparted a distinctive character to his recent text-book, the "Éléments de biologie générale et de botanique." Prof. Massart, however, is probably most widely known outside Belgium for his beautifully illustrated vegetation studies, especially of the polder country. His account of the recovery

of the vegetation in the devastated region of the Belgian battle front was referred to in NATURE (vol. III, p. 97, Jan. 20, 1923).

During the War, Prof. Massart's outspoken comments upon the actions of his country's invaders led to his enforced departure, and he found refuge first in Holland and then in France. During this period he continued botanical work so far as possible, and also tried by various means to raise funds for the aid of necessitous fellow-countrymen, Red Cross work, etc. Prof. Massart was back in Brussels in January 1919, where the present writer found him busily engaged in re-establishing order in Institute and Botanic Garden. Students were gathering around him and further investigations were already projected or in progress.

A quiet, forceful personality, immersed in his scientific work and the interests of the students under his guidance, Prof. Massart's departure makes a gap in the ranks of Belgian botany that will not easily be filled.

J. H. P.

THE funeral took place in Paris on November 3 of M. Eugene Tisserand, for many years a most prominent figure in French agriculture. Born at Flavigny-sur-Moselle, he lived to the great age of ninety-five years. In 1850 he entered the recently founded Institut Agronomique at Versailles. After a distinguished student career he spent five years in visits to other countries, studying their methods of agriculture. On his return he set about the task of enriching large areas of poor agricultural land. After the war of 1870 he was appointed Inspector-General of Agriculture, and he commenced his great campaign in favour of the furtherance of scientific agriculture in France. In 1879 he was appointed director of the newly reconstructed Institut Agronomique. At the same time he

was Director-General of Agriculture. Under his directorship the study of agriculture spread rapidly, and he was instrumental in establishing new laboratories and institutes. In the little time he had to spare from administrative duties he was engaged in research, and among his chief publications are "Economic Studies of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein," "Vegetation of High Altitudes," and "The Low Temperature Treatment of Milk." He was a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences and also of the Academy of Agriculture, of which he was president in 1911. For many years he was chairman of the editorial board of the Journal of the Institut Agronomique. For his services to agriculture he was awarded the Grand-Croix de la Légion d'Honneur. The passing of so notable a figure is a great loss to French agriculture.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. J. Guiteras y Gener, professor of general pathology and tropical diseases in the University of Havana, president of the Cuban National Board of Health and a founder of the *Revista de Medicina Tropical*, whose name is associated chiefly with the campaign against yellow fever, aged seventy-three years.

Dr. George Reid, formerly medical officer of health to the Staffordshire County Council, who was known as an authority on sewage disposal with reference to bacterial filtration and as the author of "Practical Sanitation," on November 6, aged seventy-one years.

Canon C. H. Robinson, editorial secretary to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, formerly lecturer in Hausa in the University of Cambridge and the pioneer white man in Hausaland, on November 23, aged sixty-four years.

Prof. H. J. Waters, president of the Kansas State Agricultural College from 1909 until 1917, who was known for his work on the nutrition of farm animals, on October 26, aged fifty-nine years.

Current Topics and Events.

THE death of Queen Alexandra on November 20, when within a few days of the end of her eighty-first year of age, has aroused world-wide expressions of regret and brought Great Britain and Denmark close together in sorrow at the loss of one whose memory will long be cherished with affection in both countries. From the moment when, as Princess Alexandra, she arrived in England in 1863 for her wedding with the Prince of Wales, to the day of her death, the Queen-Mother occupied a place in the hearts of British people which can never be filled again. She was loved by all, and her sympathy and active interest were always forthcoming for any institutions or organisations which worked to promote human well-being. It was through her that the Finsen light treatment was first introduced into the London Hospital, of which she was president. While on a visit to her native city of Copenhagen, she was so much impressed with the good results obtained there by the treatment of lupus by light that she presented a set of the apparatus to the hospital and thus initiated here the treatment of disease by light, which has now a recognised place in the domain of therapeutics. While Princess of Wales, and as Queen

Consort when the Prince of Wales ascended the throne under the title of King Edward VII. in 1901, her royal and beautiful attributes did much to mould the character of our national life. She identified herself with many progressive movements, and with King Edward in 1909 opened the Victoria and Albert Museum and the new buildings of the University of Birmingham. Though Queen Alexandra has now passed into silence, her life and influence will be remembered with pride for many generations.

BIRTHDAY congratulations are due to Prof. J. Ambrose Fleming, who will be seventy-six years of age on November 29. Son of that well-known divine, the Rev. Dr. James Fleming, he was born at Lancaster, November 29, 1849. He was educated in the first instance at University College, London, and at St. John's College, Cambridge, and early enjoying the advantage of study under Sir Edward Frankland at the old Royal College of Chemistry, almost the whole of Prof. Fleming's long working life has been devoted to teaching, in University College, the theory of electricity and magnetism, together with its manifold developments and, in addition, the industrial