

weather bureau, indicate that the chances are best near the boundary between Alabama and Georgia; but there are several points in North and South Carolina where they are nearly as good, while the duration of the totality will be some ten seconds longer—an important difference for the astronomer. Near the coast, where the duration is longest, the chances are poor.

The Coming Eclipse.

ASTRONOMERS are now busy with their preparations for observing the eclipse of the sun, which will occur on the morning of Monday, May 28th, and will be total along a track varying from forty to fifty miles in width, and extending from New Orleans to Norfolk. From there the shadow will cross the ocean, will traverse the Spanish Peninsula, leap over the Mediterranean to Algiers, and finally leave the earth not far from ancient Thebes. Before reaching the United States it will have come across Mexico and the Gulf, its entire path being over seven thousand miles in length.

It is now more than thirty years since a total eclipse of the sun last visited the Atlantic coast of America, in 1869; nor will the thing occur again until 1925. At any given point, therefore, such events are extremely rare, and for this reason, if no other, are of great interest.

Even to the non-astronomical observer the phenomenon is perhaps the most impressive that the heavens ever present: the moon slowly and inexorably creeping over the face of the sun, the gathering gloom, the swiftly advancing shadow, the sudden darkness, followed by the wonderful spectacle of the jet-black disk, set around with the solar prominences like blazing rubies, and surrounded by the lovely radiance of the corona, with its streamers of pearly light, and then, all too soon, the flashing outburst of light and day, and the restoration of the world to its accustomed aspect. It is a glorious sight, not to be missed if its seeing is possible; once seen, never to be forgotten.

To the astronomer it is much more—a precious opportunity; for then, during a few moments,—about ninety seconds in this case,—he is permitted to study the surroundings of the sun as he never can at other times. All along the track observers will be stationed with telescopes, cameras, spectroscopes, photometers and other appliances, with which they hope, perhaps, to win some new discovery concerning the mysteries which involve the great star that rules our system.

The selection of stations is of course mainly governed by weather probabilities. The data for the last three years, carefully gathered by the