

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES

Eclipse of the Sun.—An annular eclipse of the Sun will occur on April 17, but no phase of the phenomenon will be visible in India. The path of the annular eclipse begins in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and passing through Mexico and the extreme southern part of the United States, ends in the Atlantic Ocean.

Planets during April 1940.—Mercury will be visible as a morning star throughout the month; on April 12 it will be at its greatest western elongation ($27^{\circ} 40'$). Venus will continue to be a conspicuously bright object in the western sky during the early part of the night. It reaches greatest elongation east of the Sun ($45^{\circ} 44'$) on April 17, its stellar magnitude at the time being -4.0 . Mars also will be visible high up in the western sky soon after sunset, but is gradually becoming fainter. It will be just to

the north of the first magnitude star Aldebaran and as the two are of nearly equal brightness and of the same colour, the objects will present a noteworthy appearance.

Both the planets Jupiter and Saturn will be too near the Sun for observation during the month; the former will be in conjunction with the Sun on April 11 and the latter on April 24.

A New Star in Monocerotis. Information has been received of the discovery of a nova in the constellation Monocerotis by Prof. W. Schmidt of Hamburg on December 17, 1939 (I.A.U. Circular No. 565). The star was of the eighth magnitude at the time and its spectrum is reported to contain numerous emission lines. The position of the nova for 1939.0 is given by R.A. $6^{\text{h}} 40^{\text{m}}.5$ and Declination $1^{\circ} 55'$ (south).
T. P. B.

MAGNETIC NOTES FOR FEBRUARY 1940

THE magnetic activity during the month of February 1940 was much less than that in the previous month. There were 9 quiet days, 19 days of slight disturbance and one of moderate disturbance during February 1940 as against 8, 16 and 2 days respectively in February of last year. There were no days of great or very great disturbance during the month while 2 days of great disturbance occurred during the same period of last year.

The day of greatest magnetic activity was the 25th and that of least disturbance the 18th. The characters of individual days are shown in the table below:

There were no magnetic storms during the month of February 1940, while three storms (two of great intensity and one of moderate intensity) were recorded during the corresponding period of 1939. The mean character figure

Dates of the month	Quiet	Disturbed	
		Slight	Moderate
February 1940	5, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18, 22, 27	1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29	25

for the month is 0.72 as against 0.39 for February of last year.

M. R. RANGARAYAN

The Observatory,
Bombay,
March 6, 1940.

BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

WE wish to tender our hearty felicitations to the Government of India on their speedy decision to set up the Board from 1st April 1940. They have secured the co-operation of a number of prominent scientists and industrialists in the country to serve as its members. The Board is to be a consultative and advisory body; its functions will be to advise the Government as to the lines on which industrial research should be conducted and the channels into which it should be guided in order to ensure the co-ordinated development of India's industries, particularly those the importance and possibilities of which, have been prominently brought into the foreground as a result of war conditions. The Board will utilise and co-ordinate the work of the existing organisations already employed in this field. The Board will also recommend to the Government what specific problems should be assigned for investiga-

tion to the staff directly under the Board on the one hand and to the various scientific and research institutions in the country including universities' laboratories on the other.

The first Board will consist of the following gentlemen who have accepted membership of the Board:—Dr. J. C. Ghosh, Dr. Nasir Ahmad, Dr. Meghnad Saha, Dr. S. S. Bhatnagar, Mr. H. P. Mody, Sir Syed Sultan Ahmad, Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Lala Shri Ram, Mr. P. P. C. Warren and Dr. N. N. Law.

The Commerce Member of the Government of India will be the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Controller of Stores, India Stores Department, will be its first Vice-Chairman. The Government have been able to secure the services of Dr. Bhatnagar, Head of the Punjab University Chemical Laboratories, as Director of Scientific and Industrial Research.