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Total Solar Eclipse, January 24, 1925

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Jan 23, 1925

Daddy, Muddy & Mary Horn, with Mrs E. Bruce
Merriman and Barbara, went to Molokai
this afternoon, to spend the night at the Hotel
Rhoads Island, & see the eclipse (Total Solar)
tomorrow, if only the weather is good. Very clear
& cold (5°) tonight - Dr. Johnson called at
the Hotel - where a dance was going on. Mr.
Thomas A. Edison was expected, but is
represented by his son. Many Boston people
here (Minors, Triggler & others) & some from
New York. It appears to be the only Princeton
party -

Jan 24, 1925

The great day! Cold (2°). Still sun rose clear,
but light clouds (fleecey) all round the horizon
& up 25°. Breakfast. 7 am. - drive out to
Watch Hill at 7:45 am. First contact expected
at 8:03 am. We are warm in our Marmon
Lincolns with its heater, but are armed with
plenty of rugs, & clad in fur coats, goggles & woollen,
for it looks bitter cold outside. As we drive up to
Watch Hill (the peak itself) we see already (8 am.)
several people on top, silhouetted against the sky,
& beyond, a mile in the air & perhaps five to ten
Southward, over the Sound, the Los Angeles, giant

dingette, built last year for the U.S. by the Germans.
As we climb, over the snow to the summit, the sun
is partially obscured by fleecy clouds. (Oh! that they
may be only "morning mist") We find about a
dozen people on top. The sea, two thirds surrounding
us, is blue & beautiful. The air crisp & clear, the
sky fast coming in with light clouds.

803. Our first sight of "contact" (on time, as figured
by the astronomers for years back):
Looking through our dark photo-films (overexposed)
we see a tiny white out of the rt. upper surface (or
circumference of the sun).

Mary Horn shows much interest, climbs to the
top of the rock, apparently thinking the nearer
she gets to the sky, the better she will see. Asks
intelligent questions, & understands clearly that
it is the moon, which is crossing the sun. Is a
bit hazy as to the relative distances of the two,
since her arithmetic is still a trifle weak.

815 The shadow is eating deeper into the sun, & our feet
growing rapidly colder.

830 Fleecy clouds have increased, so that most of the
sky is covered. The Los Angeles sailed out further,
beyond Black Island. Question in my mind if we see
corona.

845 About 2/3 of the sun is covered. Sky clearing
directly overhead. People have come in large
numbers - over 100 here on top of this little hill.
Not much talking - An amateur astronomer
from Boston giving occasional valuable
information.

855 Sky rapidly clearing, unobscuredly blue, & sun
1/8 covered by the moon.

905 A rather eerie look on faces, sky like a little
dark: 1 to see a bit livid, yet with a certain
iridescence.

910 Up the Sound, distinctly darker. a queer, queer
feeling comes over me.

913 Only a faint rim of the sun left. 1 to see the sky,
land & water in luminous shadow. a feeling
like, "When a fellow needs a friend", draws me
closer to my family

914 "The dark will come in 1 minute", says the astronomer,
looking at his watch. Mary Horn slips her hand
into Muddies & leans against her. Suddenly we
see a lovely star (Mercury or Venus) to the west
near the sun. and

915 "The corona in 1 minute", says Mr. Astronomer.

916 Done - darkness, like a full moon - there
big stars - (Mercury, Venus & Jupiter) - a great
round black ball; in the heavens there,
suddenly, a glorious radiance around it;
with color, reddish at the top, and more,
like a halo or little aurora. (The Corona; at
last, what we had come to see, what we
had travelled around the world & never seen.
"Oh! oh", then almost silence; "and Nature
showing thy handiwork", is in my mind.
The whole horizon is gold & boominous red.

9-18-54. Just 114 seconds and "Snap": a sharp
William, at the upper rt. quadrant edge,
the corona is gone; the greatest sight of all
our life-time is over. Amen!