

Annular eclipse of sun; 3:18 p. m., New moon. **Monday, April 8**, 4:02 a. m., Algol at minimum; 9:09 p. m., Moon passes Saturn. **Wednesday, April 10**, 7:00 p. m., Venus passes Mars. **Thursday, April 11**, 12:51 a. m., Algol at minimum; 1:38 p. m., Moon passes Mars; 2:14 p. m., Moon passes Venus; 5:00 p. m., Jupiter in line with sun. **Friday, April 12**, 4:00 a. m., Mercury farthest west of sun. **Saturday, April 13**, 9:40 p. m., Algol at minimum. **Monday, April 15**, 8:46 a. m., Moon at first quarter. **Tuesday, April 16**, 6:29 p. m., Algol at minimum. **Wednesday, April 17**, 7:00 a. m., Venus farthest east of sun. **Saturday, April 20**, 2:00 p. m., Moon nearest, 223,700 miles away. **Sunday, April 21**, 11:37 p. m., Full moon. **Wednesday, April 24**, 1:00 p. m., Saturn in line with sun. **Monday, April 29**, 2:49 a. m., Moon in last quarter.

Eastern Standard Time throughout.

*Science News Letter, March 30, 1940*

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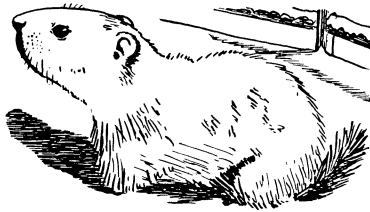
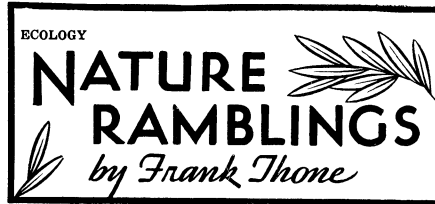
minishes, as the exposure to open-air life during active service supersedes the childhood influences. And this exposure is of course identical for northerners and southerners.

The average case fatality rate of cancer for white persons born in the south is substantially lower than for northerners. Army officers have a cancer mortality 48.5% lower than the civil population of New York City or of other big cities.

Under the same environmental conditions, the skin of colored persons is less likely to develop cancer than the skin of white persons, Dr. Peller and Col. Souder report.

Of 100 white cancer patients in the U. S. Army, 35% suffer from lip or skin cancer, of 100 colored patients only 6.5%. The higher resistance of the colored skin to the sun rays is, however, of no avail to the colored people. On the contrary, due to their higher percentage of the much more malignant internal tumors, the average case fatality rate is much higher for colored than for white cancer patients.

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### Desert Night Life

**D**ESERTS are not so devoid of animal life as they seem to the motorist driving rapidly through them, or even to the casual observer who gets out for a stroll through the cactus and mesquite, Prof. Charles T. Vorhies of the University of Arizona pointed out.

The animals are there, but mostly invisible. Some of the rodents burrow deep, to find coolness and conserve their body moisture. Other animals—rodents, birds, reptiles and insects alike—rest in the shade of the tough desert plants or hide in cracks in the rocks. Very few of them brave the sun: "There are no 'cactus animals,'" said Prof. Vorhies. At dawn and dusk, and during the dark hours of night, is when the desert is really alive.

Another point developed by Prof. Vorhies is a reversal of the commonly held belief that rabbits and smaller rodents hasten the disappearance of good range grasses from overgrazed land and encourage the appearance of economically worthless weeds. Recent evidence seems to indicate that the coming of huge rodent populations to harmed rangelands is a consequence, not a cause, of their ruin. They are themselves "weed animals".

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### PHYSICS

## Communication Disruption Blamed on Sun Disturbance

**A** TERRIFIC disturbance on the sun was the cause of the worst magnetic disturbance since 1921 which blacked-out telegraph lines, disturbed radio communication, and interfered with long distance telephony on Easter.

Unusual radiation from the sun swept down upon the earth, setting up vast currents of electricity in the upper atmospheric layers, 60 to 90 miles above

the earth, and shooting electrical currents through the earth to mix up or make inoperable communication lines, especially those that use the earth as one side of the circuit.

Preliminary indications are that the storm was even more severe, especially on communication by wire, than the famous Easter storm of 1938, which occurred on Easter Saturday, April 16. In that storm a telegraph station in Oslo was set on fire by the current created and telephone bells rang without anyone calling.

In this Easter's storm, earth currents on communication wires as high as 250 volts were reported and it is believed likely that as much as several million amperes of current was generated in the ionosphere high above the earth.

The horizontal intensity of the earth's magnetic force had a range of over 1,000 gammas, compared with a range of 50 for an ordinary day. A range of 200 gammas is considered a magnetic storm. Gamma is a unit of magnetic intensity.

A large sunspot group visible to the naked eye properly protected by smoked glass, was in its best observing position on Sunday, but three previous appearances of the same group had brought no such extreme magnetic effects. Evidently the solar disturbance was a gigantic flare-up rather than just a sunspot.

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