RADIO ASTRONOMY

Radio Star's Noise Is Blocked by Sun

➤ ASTRONOMERS FOR the first time have actually recorded the dimming of the hisses of a noisy radio star as the sun passed between the star and the earth.

The volume of the star's static begins to decrease long before the sun actually passes in front of it, K. E. Machin and F. G. Smith of the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge University, report in *Nature* (Aug. 23).

The first reported "radio occultation," as it will probably be called, was of the radio star in the constellation of Taurus, the bull. This noisy star is believed to be the Crab nebula, the expanding remnants of a star which exploded almost a thousand years ago.

During June, the apparent intensity of microwave radiation from the noisy object was measured at noon on 17 days when the sun's southern limb passed close to it. Measurements of frequencies of 81.5 and 38 megacycles showed that the hisses became less loud as soon as the sun approached the radio star to within even ten times the sun's apparent radius. Refraction in the solar corona is responsible for this dimming of the star's hisses, the Cavendish astronomers believe.

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