A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
February 10, 1930.

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 3, 1930.

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MOUNTAIN SHADOWS

In his guidebook to Mount Washington, N.H., Frank H. Burt says: "A wonderful feature of both sunset and sunrise is the projection of the shadow of the mountain itself upon the sky. At sunset it should be looked for from the Summit House platform a few minutes before the actual disappearance of the sun and at sunrise ... just after the sun comes into view. So sharp and well defined is the shadow under favorable conditions that it may easily be taken for a real mountain."

Several mountains besides Mount Washington are more or less celebrated for the shadows they cast at sunrise and sunset, not only against the sky but also over adjacent lowlands and sometimes over the surface of a low-lying fog or mist. The peak of Teneriffe sometimes casts a conspicuous shadow on the island below, while the shadow of Adam's Peak, in Ceylon, is probably the best known example of the phenomenon in the world. The British meteorologist Abercromby visited Ceylon for the special purpose of viewing this shadow, which, at sunrise, is described as seeming to rise from the ground and stand up in front of the spectator in the form of a gigantic pyramid, and then either to disappear altogether or to fall down suddenly to the earth. The apparent upstanding of the shadow, Abercromby says, "was simply the effect of passing mist, which caught the darkness at a higher level than the earth."

Antarctic explorers describe very striking shadows cast upon the ice-laden atmosphere by Mounts Erebus and Terror.

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