

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

THE SHADOW OF A MOUNTAIN

Summer tempts to mountaineering, and the mountaineer has many opportunities to observe interesting phenomena of the atmosphere peculiar to high altitudes. One of these is the shadow of an isolated peak cast at sunrise or sunset upon the sky or upon the adjacent lowlands. Ralph Abercromby, the British meteorologist who traveled far and wide in search of weather experiences, thus describes the shadow of Teneriffe:

"I was fortunate enough to witness the shadow of the peak projected against the eastern sky at sunset from the Estancia, at a height of 10,500 feet. Every stage of the phenomenon could be followed. First the pointed shadow of the peak lay sharply defined on the rugged floor of the old crater; then the apex crossed the sea to the horizon, and then the highest point rose out of the ocean like another peak and just broke into the pink fringe that lined the horizon at sunset. The whole was now faint and gradually died out as the sun went down lower and the light became so dim from a slight haziness that the ordinary phenomenon of the shadow of the earth bounded by a pink fringe could not be seen rising out of the east.

"There could not, however, be the slightest doubt of the accuracy of the generally received explanation that the appearance of the shadow on or against the sky is simply part of the ordinary earth shadow, projected so clearly as to show well marked irregularities of the surface, such as isolated peaks."

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