

HOME AND SCHOOL

Do unto others
As ye would
That they
Should
Do unto
You.

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Ascent of the Peak of Teneriffe.

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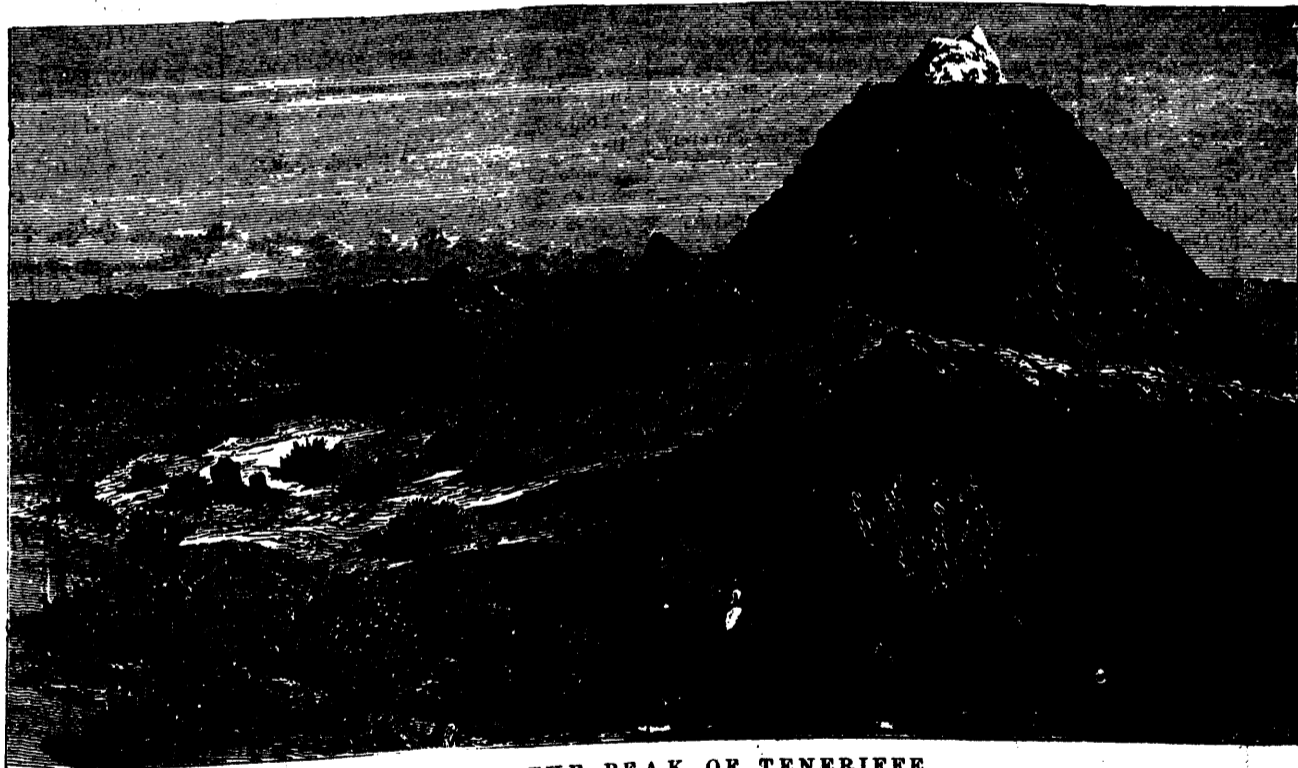
WE all rose early, and were full of excitement to catch the first glimpse of the famous Peak of Teneriffe. The morning being rather hazy, it was quite ten o'clock before we saw the Peak, towering above the clouds, right ahead, about fifty-nine miles off. As we approached, it appeared less perpendicular than we had expected, or than it is generally represented in pictures.

our rugs and endeavoured to sleep, as we knew we should require all our strength for the expedition before us. By two o'clock all our steeds, twelve in number, had assembled, and in another quarter of an hour we were leaving the town by a steep stony path, bordered by low walls. There was no moon, and for the first two hours it was very dark. Soon we climbed above the clouds, which presented a most curious appearance as we looked down upon them. The

mouth of the volcano. As we proceeded, we left all traces of vegetation behind us. It was like the Great Sahara. By half-past ten we had reached the 'Estancia de los Ingleses,' 9,639 feet above the level of the sea, where the baggage and some of the horses had to be left behind, the saddles being transferred to mules for the very steep climb before us. After a drink of water all round, we started again, and commenced the ascent of the almost perpendicular stream of

slides and tumbles, but no important casualties; and in about an hour and a half we had reached the 'Alta Vista,' a tiny plateau where the horses were to be left.

The expedition so far had been such a fatiguing one, and the heat was so great, that the children and I decided to remain here, and to let the gentlemen proceed alone to the summit of the Peak. We tried to find some shade, but the sun was so immediately above us that this was almost an im-



ASCENT OF THE PEAK OF TENERIFFE.

The other mountains too, in the centre of the island, from the midst of which it rises, are so very lofty that, in spite of its conical sugar-loaf top, it is difficult at first to realise that the Peak is 12,180 feet high.

We dropped anchor under its shadow in the harbour of Orotava in preference to the capital, Santa Cruz, both on account of its being a healthier place, and also in order to be nearer to the Peak, which we wished to ascend. After supper, we landed and went to the Vice-Consul's, arriving there exactly at midnight. But no horses were forthcoming, so we lay down on

stratum through which we had passed was so dense and so white, that it looked exactly like an enormous glacier, covered with fresh fallen snow, extending for miles and miles; while the projecting tops of the other Canary Islands appeared only like great solitary rocks.

The sun had already become very oppressive, and at half-past seven we stopped to breakfast and to water the horses. Half-past eight found us in the saddle again, and we commenced to traverse a dreary plain of yellowish white pumice-stone, interspersed with huge blocks of obsidian, thrown from

lava and stone, which forms the only practicable route to the top. Our poor beasts were only able to go a few paces at a time without stopping to regain their breath. The loose ashes and lava fortunately gave them a good foothold, or it would have been quite impossible for them to get along at all. One was only encouraged to proceed by the sight of one's friends above, looking like flies clinging to the face of a wall. The road, if such it can be called, ran in zigzags, each of which was about the length of two horses, so that we were in turns one above another. There were a few alips and

possibility. However, we managed to squeeze ourselves under some slightly overhanging rocks, and I took some photographs while the children slept. But those who reached the top were rewarded for their exertions by a glorious view, and by the wonderful appearance of the summit of the Peak. The ground beneath their feet was hot, while sulphurous vapours and smoke issued from various small fissures around them, though there has been no actual eruption from this crater of the volcano since 1704.

It was impossible to ride down to the spot where we had left the baggage