

few land marks available. Structures near the air-station were visible for a long time, but it was necessary to consider the possibility of a sudden fog. When we approached the shore of the lake, progress was even slower because of the treacherous crevasses formed by the tide-crack of the sea ice. Both on land and ice the surface was swept almost bare of snow, but on the lake there were deep gaps in the ice into which soft snow had filtered. Unless one recognized the different textures of the surface, there was considerable risk of disappearing almost from view. Once we slipped down waist deep. It was an unnerving experience. Progress was further slowed by the necessity of frequent stops to look for animals which might lurk about the ice formations. To the veteran, all these precautions may come instinctively, but a newcomer is likely to find that a hike across the Arctic waste requires a good deal of concentration.

Hiking is a popular form of recreation for men on the Arctic weather-stations. To anyone who has preconceived notions about the emptiness of the North, it may seem a strange form of recreation, but up here hikers have their favourite objectives much as people in the south have their popular picnic place or bathing beaches. They may go to the top of a high hill, or to the shore of a fresh-water lake, or down to the edge of the sea where the wind has churned up great icefields of continuous fascination. The surface of the beach had erupted into twisted, ragged piles of ice, bold in their shapes, remarkable in the beauty of their colour. They emerged seemingly without reason, massive and yet delicate, cold-white and translucent green, solid but for the shrill whistle of wind caught in the reeds of slender icy towers.

To admire was easier than to photograph. The camera was protected from the worst of the wind by the flap of a jacket. It was not hard to get into position but unfortunately it was necessary to use the bare fingers to adjust the settings. By the time of the first picture, the focusing gear was frozen solid, the diaphragm and shutter could be moved only with the greatest difficulty. Only when the film was brought back to the south to be developed could we know what the exposure had been. Whatever the setting, the shutter would act entirely according to its own whims, sometimes opening and closing correctly, sometimes remaining sluggishly apart, too cold to move. Working the settings on the camera with bare hands on cold metal was the sheerest torture. After about ten seconds exposure, the fingers became useless for anything but brute force. After about thirty seconds, the pain was so intense that there was little point in trying to do anything. With five minutes of double mitts and violent exercise, life began to return.

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Some of the Arctic old-timers looked with a jaundiced eye on those "tourists" who come to the Arctic for a week or two, then return south with a slight shiver and a glow of self-satisfaction. It is true that it is as important to know the extent of our ignorance of the Arctic as it is to realize the limits of our experience. Time will increase our knowledge — time and the loyal efforts of the pioneers who man our Arctic outposts. Their work will benefit all the rest of us who have not been lured by the attractions of any life below 74 degrees. Degrees Fahrenheit, that is.