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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ARCTIC FOG

In the recent tragic events connected with the Nobile arctic expedition no other weather element has played so prominent a part as fog. The prevalence of this element in summer in high latitudes will, apparently, always be a hindrance to travel in those regions whether by sea or by air.

Apart from the relation of fog to visibility, it has effects upon the minds of those exposed to it that must be reckoned with in plans for the exploitation of the polar regions. Dr. Nansen has written feelingly on this subject:

"Ugh! that endless, stubborn fog of the Arctic Sea! When it lowers its curtain and shuts out the blue above and the blue below, and everything becomes a damp, gray mist, day in and day out, then all the vigor and elasticity of the soul are needed to save one from being stifled in its clammy embrace. Fog, and nothing but fog, wherever we turn our eyes. It condenses on the rigging and drips down on every tiniest spot on deck. It lodges on your clothes, and finally wets you through and through. It settles down on the mind and spirits, and everything becomes one uniform gray."

Of its weird optical effects Dr. Ludwig Mecking writes:

"In the coastal belt the scene may change abruptly; behind thick walls of fog high masses of piled-up ice may suddenly appear, then again in clear air a vista of open lanes or of jagged rock walls and glacier masses is disclosed to the explorer. Deception as to distance is great. Mountains are taken for ice hills, walrus tusks for glaciers, and many an arctic report of land has proved to be false."

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