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January 7, 1929.

A Science Service Feature

! WHY THE WEATHER !

Mailed December 31, 1928.

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AN ICEBOUND LIGHTHOUSE

The lighthouse at Ashtabula, on Lake Erie, is located in an exposed position on the breakwater pierhead, about half a mile offshore. Last winter, after a mild spell, which had left the lighthouse surrounded by open water, a gale sprang up and the temperature fell to zero. The seas and spray soon encased the whole structure in heavy ice. The two keepers on duty were storm-bound and ice-bound. After the wind died down, two other men who came to relieve those at the lighthouse found the station a solid mass of ice, varying in thickness from 2 to 5 feet. In order to establish communication the men inside had to thaw open the door and dig a trench through the ice with pick and crowbar for a distance of nearly 40 feet to reach a place where a ladder could be used to descend from the breakwater.

It took the combined efforts of the four keepers to clear away the ice from the lantern, free the plugged exhaust pipes, etc. Photographs of the structure show it to have been so completely covered with ice as to be hardly recognizable as a lighthouse station. The lighthouse is more than 52 feet high above the water, and the icy casing extended to the top.

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