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AIR-SOUNDINGS OVER THE OCEAN

Exploring the air over the oceans above the level of the surface winds has become one of the urgent tasks of science, in view of the new requirements of aeronautics, though it has other important aims than that of aiding the airman and was undertaken before the advent of the aeroplane and the airship.

As far back as 1901 the late Prof. A.L. Rotch sent up meteorological instruments attached to kites from a moving vessel in Massachusetts Bay, and also from a steamship while crossing the Atlantic. During the next two years similar enterprises were carried out by others over the Mediterranean and elsewhere. In 1904 Prof. Hergesell, on board a yacht belonging to the Prince of Monaco, made important studies of the upper atmosphere in the trade wind region of the North Atlantic by means of kites, and in the following year both kites and balloons were sent up from a vessel in the same region under the direction of Rotch and Teisserenc de Bort.

Within the last few years work of this character has been taken up on a more extensive scale than ever before. Thus during the oceanographic cruises of the German gunboat "Meteor" in the North and South Atlantic, in 1925-27, more than 1,000 flights of kites and pilot-balloons were carried out. More recently the British Navy has made the taking of pilot-balloon observations a part of the regular duties of several naval vessels in different parts of the world.

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