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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed May 3, 1932

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MORE KITE TROUBLES

We wrote in these notes the other day of the trials and tribulations that harass the weatherman when a string of kites, sent aloft for scientific purposes, breaks its steel tether and goes rampaging over the country. A graphic account of one of these misadventures has just come to hand in a history of the Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory, written by its director, Prof. C. F. Brooks, of Harvard University. One evening, we are told, the kite-wire broke when five miles of it was out, with a string of five kites at the end of it.

"A few minutes later," says Prof. Brooks, "vivid blue-green flashes were visible where the steel kite-wire was dragging across and short-circuiting the power lines of the Bay State Street Railway. So unusual was the cause of this trouble that it was some time before service could be restored. One or more of the kites continued to fly in the darkness, and when the wind increased a few hours later another short-circuit occurred. Part of the wire came to rest across the New Haven Railroad track at the East Braintree station, where the first train in the morning became caught in it. So thoroughly was the wire wound around the wheels that the train was delayed three-quarters of an hour."

About a mile of wire was recovered at one spot, but it was so hopelessly tangled that the whole mass was dumped into a swamp.

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