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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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EXEUNT WEATHER-KITES

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The recent exit of the kite as an adjunct of weather observing is explained in the last annual report of the U.S. Weather Bureau. The routine use of this vehicle as a means of observing conditions in the air overhead began toward the end of the last century. The report states:

"As the value of the data thus secured became more and more apparent, the work was extended and for some years the Bureau had six stations in operation. This method, although it yielded results of genuine importance, nevertheless had decided defects since it was dependent on the wind conditions. That is to say, kite flights were not possible if the wind was very light or very strong. While using the kites, therefore, the Weather Bureau, in common with meteorological services of other countries, was constantly seeking some more satisfactory method.

"The advent of the airplane provided this and in addition was a compelling cause for the abandonment of kite flying, owing to the hazards that the latter offered to aerial navigation. Accordingly, two years ago the Weather Bureau changed from kites to airplanes, although one of the kite stations was retained for a while in order to be certain that, before that method was finally given up, the newer method would prove a success. This was amply demonstrated during the two years just completed, and, accordingly, the last kite station has now been discontinued and this phase of meteorological observation and investigation passes into history.

"The record of the last two years with airplanes has shown that daily observations, almost without interruption, even during seasons of the worst weather, can be made up to a height of 15,000 feet. The data thus secured are of great value, both in the forecasting work of the Bureau and also for studies of the characteristics of the upper atmosphere. Studies of this type already made have provided aids in forecasting, and it is certain that very much more of value along this line will be realized by further studies of the data, particularly if a more complete network of stations can be established."

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