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Studying the air! Many physical phenomena may be studied with great advantage in a laboratory under controlled conditions; but the atmosphere must be studied for the most part where it is. Mountains are a means of studying it up to about four miles; airplanes at present up to about 50,000 feet. (The present record airplane altitude flight, 53,638 feet, was attained by an Englishman in 1937). Manned balloons may be used up to 70,000 feet, and the limit is probably 125,000 feet. For a systematic survey of the air the best methods are free balloons for measuring upper air wind speed and directions, and, the radio-sonde (radio-meteorograph) for measuring temperature, pressure and humidity.
