Kites Have To Labor Now.

Why doesn't some Canadian with sporting blood and leisure organize a kite club? Of course, the mass of his fellow citizens would be too busy to follow his lead, but the progressive elect who are in the convalescent stage of golf mania might welcome the innovation.

The kite has never been properly appreciated by Occidental grown-ups. Only the Canadian small boy has understood the joy to be won from a few sticks, a sheet of paper, a pot of glue, a ball of twine and the miscellany incident to a tail. It is different in the Orient.

Tradition says that the kite was born in Malaysia and was at first a part of religious rites, being used as a messenger to the gods. There is nothing devotional about Oriental kite flying in this later day. On the contrary, kite flying, particularly in Java, beats fan tan as a gambling game and frequently gives rise to life-long feuds.

January and March are the great month for kite contests. District arrays itself against district, kite club against kite club. It is not unusual to see thousands of spectators watching a kite duel and betting furiously upon the outcome. Peaceful kite flying is an art, but the war kite is the real thing in the Far East.

A man selects the kites which out of the hundreds in his possession, are the most trustworthy and yet the most 'nervous.' A tailless kite is the favorite with the Oriental sports, even in the case of kite battles; but the war kite has a tail. The tail is gummed liberally and sprinkled with pulverized glass; or else four sickle shaped pieces of glass are attached to the tail at intervals of two or three feet.

The two opponents send their kites up about 200 feet and then the battle is on. The aim of each fighter is to force his kite to cut the string of the other kite and set it free. The exhibition of skill in the management of the darting, swaying combatants is a thing to make an ordinary kite flyer open his eyes. The kites respond to handling with almost human intelligence. The Japanese who owns a famous war kite is the peer of the Englishman who owns a Derby winner, and Tod Sloan himself is not more famous in Western sporting circles than certain champion kite handlers.

The Chinese are kite flyers of another sort. They don't see the fun in direct combat and simple sport. They go in for complexity. The Chinaman flies tandems, and the more kites he can keep going at one time the better satisfied he is. Invariably the strings get tangled and the experiment ends in a hopeless snarl; but the kite flyer patiently unwinds and unties and disentangles. Then he begins all over again.

The Chinese, like the Japanese, Javanese and Siamese, are famous at kite making. Bird kites, fish kites, butterfly kites, boat kites, flower kites, all originated in the Orient. Musical kites, made by the substitution of fine metal bowstrings for the ordinary string, have always been popular in Japan.

The tailless darting kite, much used in modern science, is the ordinary war kite. The experiments of Capt. Baden Powell in England, Hargrave in Australia, and other modern kite enthusiasts, by which men swung in sling seats were carried into the air by kite tandems, are not particularly new, for the same results were accomplished long before the Christian era.

Japanese records tell that in year 600 B. C. a war kite was used for military purposes and carried a man in a bos'n's chair high over the enemy's camp. Another case is recorded in the sixteenth century, when robbers at Nagaya, Japan, by the use of kites, reached the minarets of a famous castle and attempted to carry off the golden ornaments valued at $80,000.

But general utilitarianism in kite flying was left for nineteenth century America. There's a distressing side to modern scientific kite flying. Pegasus harnessed isn't more pathetic than a kite condemned to hard labor, but the modern American hasn't time for sentiment. He overworks his kites as relentlessly as his steam engines, and he wounds them in their most sensitive feelings. What self respecting kite, whose ancesters fought, bled and died above the blossoming cherry groves of of Japan, can hold a patent medicine advertisement banner 200 feet above Broadway for eight hours a day, and not lose its buoyancy. How can a well-bred kite dart around all day like a kodak fiend, with a camera tucked under its wing, and not feel itself degraded?

Kites, as advertising mediums, have had a tremendous boom in the last year. The political campaign exploited the kite suspended banners. Now advertisements of wares other than political take the place of the camdaign banners, and the very heavens shriek the praises of certain soaps and cereals and medicines.

The entire practicability of kite photography was demonstrated some years ago, and the process has been developed to great perfection by a number of men. A camera of ordinary size is easily lifted by a kite tandem, and a cord for tripping the shutter is attached to the kite cord by aluminum clips and rings. Excellent birds-eye views have been taken in this fashion; and it is contended that the kite photograph may be of great use in war by furnishing accurate plans of an enemy's earthworks and fortifications.

For kite pictures at sea a circular camera is used. This is sent up, by kite, from the deck of a vessel and has an apparatus for snapping all the shutters simultaneously. The entire sea surface for miles around may be photographed by this method.

Another nautical service performed by the modern kite consists in carrying messages, ropes and buoys to wrecked vessels, and consequently comes under the head of coast service apparatus. Prof. J. Woodbridge Davis's mention of a dirigible kite, easily steered, helped this work along, and Mr. Eddy has made valuable experiments with kite life buoys.

It was Mr Eddy who in 1891 sent up the first thermometer attached to a kite for scientific purposes. Since then the Blue Hill Observatory staff and other meteorological experiments. Many problems with regard to temperature, cloud velocity, static pressure and storm indications have been cleared up by the use of kites.

The record for high kite flying rests with the Blue Hill Observatory, where recording instruments have been carried by tandem kites to a height of 12,057 feet above sea level.

The U S. Weather Bureau has long recognized the possibility of obtaining from self recording meteorological instruments carried by kites synoptic charts of upper air strata, which may be compared with surface conditions and aid astonishingly in weather forecasting. Electrical experiments of great value have also been conducted through the medium of kites.

The value of kites, as signals, was demonstrated in the Spanish-American war; and certain authorities have advanced the proposition that kites may be used to carry explosives into an enemy's camp. Experiments have been made showing that kites 6x18 feet may be made to carry fifty pounds of dynamite one-fourth of a mile in the air, and to drop it into a fort one half mile distant. The uncertainty of air currents and the difficulty in controlling kite direction tend to make this use of kites dangerous and impracticable.

Innumerable devices have been adapted to the modern kite. Patent trolley parachute holders run up and down kite stringe and discharge kites, at stated intervals. Windlass reels and spools hold the cord, and tighten or slacken it, without strain upon the operator's hands. Adjusted scales measure the force of the kite's pull. This strain is no small matter when one is flying a tandem of large kites. Scientists have devoted a great deal of attention to determining the kind of kite string needed for kites in proportion to their size. Silk cord was tried for a time, but has been abandoned.

China silk is the kite covering best adapted for rough weather and high wind. It is more expensive and heavier than paper. The ordinary kite is covered with Manila rope fibre paper, and scientists make the paper serviceable in damp weather, by giving it a coating of paraffin.

White pine is unquestionably the best wood for kite frames, although spruce is stronger and is often used. One of the puzzling problems of kite making is provided by the difference in the velocity of lower and the upper air currents. It is difficult to make a kite rigid enough to stand the increasing velocity of the higher currents and yet light enough to be easily started and fly well in the lower air strata. This difficulty is greatly intensified by the use of a kite tail, and, in fact a tail kite is practicable only in light winds. The box kites will stand higher wind than any scientific kite in the market, but both the Eddy kite and the keel kite, which has a keel or fin down the middle stick will respond more quickly than box kites to handling in light wind.

Kites have as much individuality as though they were living creatures. Each smallest difference in their construction, even if only the grain of the wood or the fibre of the paper, tends to give the kite a character of its own. A man who owns many kites knows exactly what to expect from each and does not require from one a task for which it is unfitted. Gilbert Woglum, well known among scientific kite flyers, has hundreds of kites, but has a name for each and insists that they differ from one another as radically as though they were children.

All of the problems of kite making are solved by scientific formulae and the toy shops are full of kits warranted to be mathematically above reproach, and sold for a song. American kites are being exported to all parts of the world, invading even those countries where kite flying is not only a science, but a fine art as well.

Only the Canadian boy is conservative and, in his heart, hates the modern scientific kite. He sees no use in spoiling a good thing by making it useful. If his kite can outfly his chum's he doesn't care a button what temperature or wind velocity it finds in its flight, and he would rather make a kite according to boy tradition and wrestle with the tall problem by the light of experience and advice from other boys, than fly all of the ready made tailless kites in the market.

Cheering.

Among the people who revel in the lugubrious things of this world and mourn with exceeding pleasure, may safely be counted Mrs. Hankey, a character in 'The Farringdons.'

Mrs. Hankey is telling about the recent wedding of her niece Susan, and prophesying the probable end of the bridegroom with considerable unction.

'How is your sister herself?' inquired Mrs. Bateson. 'I expect she's a bit upset now that the fuss is all over, and she hasn't a daughter left to bless herself with.'

Mrs. Hankey sighed cheerfully. 'Well, she did seem rather low spirited when all the mess was cleared up, and Susan had gone off to her own home; but I says to her, 'Never mind, Sarah, and don't you worry yourself. Now that the weddings are over, the funerals will soon begin.' You see you must cheer folks up a bit, Mrs. Bateson, when they're feeling out of sorts.'

A Modern Seer.

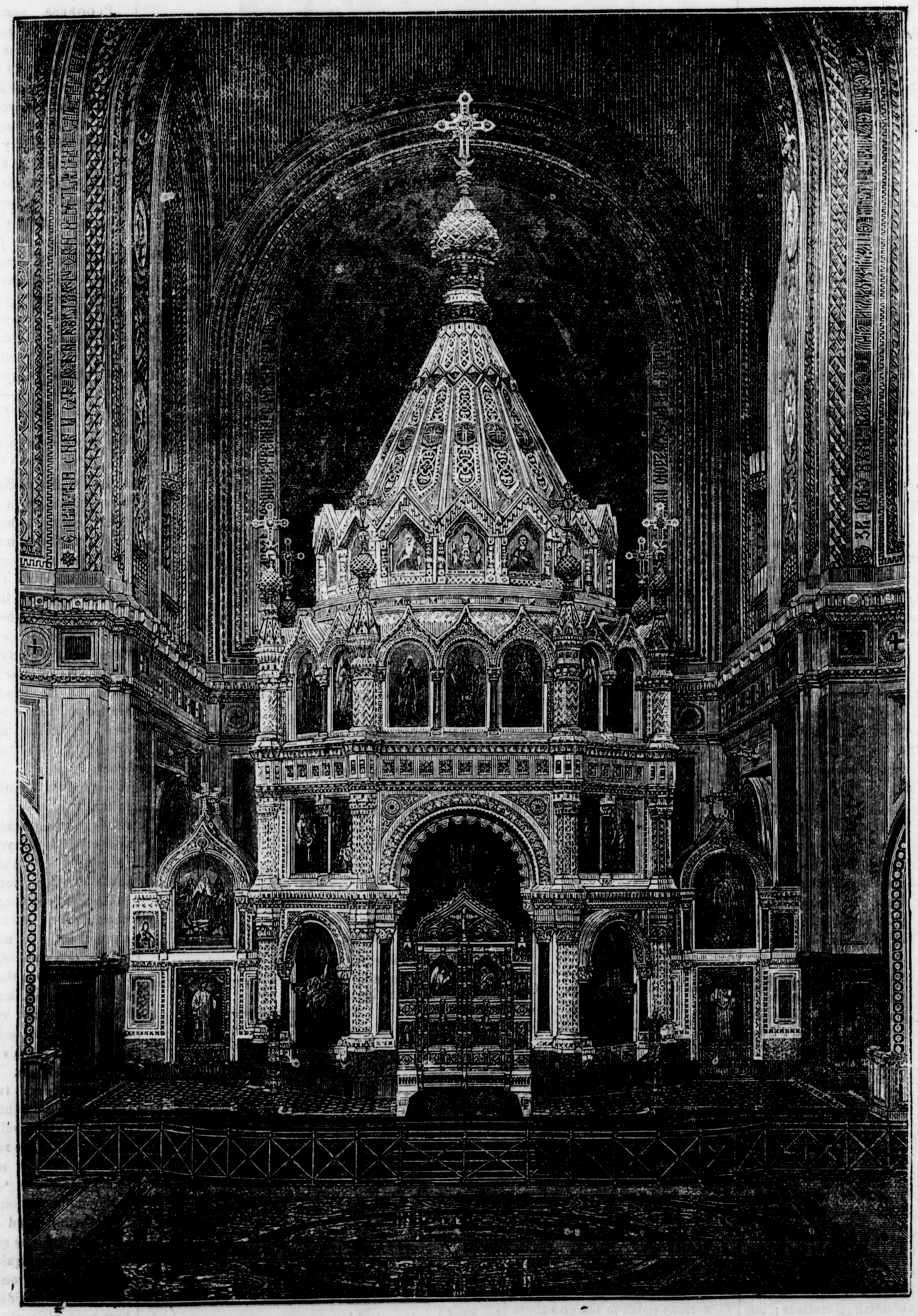
'Why, Mrs. Parkinson, whatever in the world induced you to buy that dead black dress, pattern? Surely you don't think of giving up bright colors at your age?'

'No, but it was a bargain, and I got to thinking it might come in handy too. My husband's going deer hunting in the Adirondacks.'

The Author's Ambition.

Reuben—I suppose Ritem's ambition is to write the great American novel.

Tellem—Oh, no. He is trying to get the great American dollar.



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