

explorers of Central Asia are agreed as to the fact of climatic change. Thus Dr. Stein, the anthropologist, writing from Kiria to the *Geographical Journal* (January, 1907), reports concerning the desert east of Khotan that cultivation in the fertile Hanguya tract is steadily advancing towards areas previously abandoned to the desert, so that much of this desolate Tati is likely to be recovered by man from the desert at no distant time. Dr. Stein was much struck by the considerable extension of cultivated ground during the past six years. Extended areas lying waste or drift-covered in 1900-1, have again been brought under cultivation. The great advance in prosperity which is taking place in the western oasis of Chinese Turkestan seems to have had a marked effect in Khotan on the extent of the cultivated area and the numbers of the population.

#### FRANKLIN, THE KITE AND THE LIGHTNING ROD

'Did Benjamin Franklin fly his Electrical Kite before he invented the Lightning Rod' is the title of a paper read by Professor A. L. Rotch before the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass., October 24, 1906. Professor Rotch believes: (1) that the kite experiment was probably performed later than has been supposed; (2) that even before this experiment certain buildings in Philadelphia were provided with 'points,' probably as lightning conductors; (3) that prior to Franklin's first account of the kite experiment he had drawn up precise directions for placing lightning rods upon all kinds of buildings.

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#### A MONUMENT TO LAMARCK

THE professors of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, have undertaken to erect a monument in the Jardin des Plantes to their illustrious predecessor, the philosopher and naturalist Lamarck. To this end they have secured subscriptions in Paris and have formed a committee to enlist the support of botanists and zoologists throughout the world.

The proposed monument, designed by M.

Fagel, gives a bronze bust of Lamarck, surmounting, after the fashion of recent French sculpture, a large granite pedestal with figures in relief. These portray the philosopher aged and blind, seated at the base of his monument, and close by, reading to him, his devoted daughter—a pathetic picture of Lamarck's last days when in poverty and in disfavor, on account of his evolutionary writings, he was living as a recluse in the ancient house of Buffon, near which, probably on the very spot which he crossed in his daily walk, the monument is to stand.

It is only within recent years that the position of Lamarck among the pioneers of evolution has come to be understood. Darwin himself was distinctly unjust in his treatment of him. But from the work of the modern paleontologist on the one hand and the experimentalist on the other, tribute is coming to be paid to Lamarck's wonderful insight, imperfect though the materials of his inductions were, into the processes and factors of organic evolution. The 'American school of evolutionists,' headed by Cope, Osborn, Hyatt, Ryder, Packard, has indeed touched so closely the lines of his philosophy that it has often merited the title of 'Neo-Lamarckian.' And it is to our countryman, Packard, that we are indebted for the only work upon the life and teachings of Lamarck which has hitherto appeared.

The present project in memory of Lamarck is one, in short, which may justly enlist the cooperation and support of the botanists and zoologists throughout the United States—to give by this means tangible recognition of his services to science. The American zoologists who have been designated to receive subscriptions in behalf of the Committee in Paris are Professors Alexander Agassiz, Henry Fairfield Osborn and Bashford Dean.

#### THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL CONGRESS

THE revised program of the Seventh International Zoological Congress, to be held at Boston, August 19-23, under the presidency of Mr. Alexander Agassiz, is as follows: