

**ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE.**

**Important Discoveries at Cambridge College, England.**

**Great Interest Aroused by the Unearthing of Remnants of Walls Erected in the Thirteenth Century.**

Nowadays, in England, if old buildings are touched at all, it is too often with a view to their restoration—a word which in this case is a synonym for destruction. Therefore, when deliberate effort is made, not to give a new version of old work, but to free that old work from every modern encroachment, the event is one of no small interest to all who are concerned with the history of the past, of no small importance to all who have made a study of architecture. And this is exactly what is happening just now at Jesus college, Cambridge, says the New York Nation.

The college, it will be remembered, was not an independent foundation, but sprang from the old nunnery of St. Radegunde. The chief portion of the earlier buildings still remaining is the chapel. Its attraction to the modern tourist, no doubt, is found in the Burne-Jones windows, which, it may be noted in passing, are quite the finest examples of stained glass that artist has yet given us. But, to the architect and archaeologist, it is the church itself, with its nave and triangle and its beautiful early English piers and arches and arcades. Of course, King's stands alone as the great architectural marvel of Cambridge; but Jesus chapel, in its own way, is only less fine if at first glance it must seem less imposing, while in historical associations and significance it is supreme.

Recently an aged fellow of the college, remembering that when masons were putting a new coat of plaster on the inner cloister forty years ago he had fancied he distinguished the spring of an arch partially concealed in the old stone work, determined to have the plaster pulled off. What he has found proves to be one of the most important architectural discoveries made in England for many years. The arch, which had been just indicated in the stonework, has turned out to be just one of three, and these have been almost entirely set free from the wall during long centuries gradually built up about them. They belong to the purest period of the thirteenth century, good authorities affirming that they date back to 1230, or thereabouts. The reasons for this belief are the capitals, which still show some suggestion of Norman influence, and the beautiful detached shafts, which later architects never introduced, having learned that greater strength, if less charm, was secured by connecting them to the central shaft with bands.

The moldings and the carved foliage of the capitals are in the most wonderful state of preservation, and the stone is of almost dazzling whiteness—a whiteness to be attributed, perhaps, partly to whitewash and destined not long to survive exposure to the foggy English atmosphere and the smoke of Cambridge. Thanks to their chance burial, the arches have escaped the restorer; indeed, they have been brought to light at the best moment, now that a few men, at least, begin to understand the folly of tampering with the none too many relics and monuments of the past still left. Not so far removed is the time when the old piscina was discovered in the chapel; then the one idea was to restore it; now college authorities are of another way of thinking. The arches form the doorway and near windows of the nuns' chapter house. Its floor evidently was much below the level of the present cloister, but the necessary excavations have been made to the very base of the central door, so as to show the proportions of shafts and arches in their original grace and parity.

Nor will the floor be filled in again. The cloister here is, in term time, one of the very busy thoroughfares of Jesus; but for a little space it will be narrowed, in order that the effect of this beautiful bit of the old monastic building may be seen in all its loveliness and perfection. In the course of digging, the workmen came upon a fine stone coffin with sculptured top—the coffin of an early prioress—and this probably will be left lying exactly where it was found, turned to east and west, even though a part of it must remain hidden under so much of the pavement as utility refuses to sacrifice to archaeology. This discovery rightly has aroused great interest in Cambridge.

**A LESSON FROM LIFE.**

**A Magnetized Cane Used by a Frugal Old Man of Pittsburgh.**

Sometimes the simple action of a man will indicate his character. One of Pittsburgh's wealthiest old gentlemen, according to the Dispatch, was seen walking along the street the other day pointing his cane upon some object upon the pavement every now and then. What "caught on" he raised and placed in his hand. He was collecting tiny nails that had fallen from merchandise boxes. He continued until he had gotten a handful. Then, picking up a piece of paper from the pavement, he wrapped up the nails carefully and pocketed the package. A bystander asked him what sort of a cane he had. "Oh," he said, "it's nothing but a steel rod covered with leather." "It must be magnetized, for it attracts nails and saves you from stooping." "Not that I know of, unless the placing of leather over the steel has done it," he replied. "I saw you picking up some nails a short time ago." "Yes," interrupted the old man, "I need some of them." Then looking downward, he exclaimed: "There's one I missed!" and picked it up with his magnetic servant. Taking the package of nails from his pocket he placed this last in with the rest. An instance of frugality this incident is interesting, and as a key to the man's success in life it is perhaps likewise.

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**PYTHON EGGS.**

**A Big Snake in Connecticut Lays Half Bushel of Eggs.**

Perhaps about as curious a thing as Dr. Knox ever had in the line of curiosities, says the Danbury (Conn.) News, is his African python snake Eve, as she lies coiled about a half bushel of eggs laid a few days ago. It is an event that ophiologists will be interested in.

The discovery was made one morning. For some time Adam and Eve, two big African pythons, have been domiciled in the big snake cage in the doctor's back office. The bottom of the cage is covered by a deep layer of dirt and gravel. Both these snakes have been in Dr. Knox's possession a year, and have sometimes been on exhibition.

One evening Dr. Knox passed the cage several times, going to and from his front office. Every time he passed the cage the python snake hissed at him. He paid no attention to the snake, and was more amused than otherwise at the incident. Later in the evening he locked up his office and drove over to Brewster, where his family is now stopping. When the doctor opened his office the next day the first thing he remembers doing was to examine his snake collection. He looked in the cage and saw what he supposed were several new potatoes lying under the python snake, Eve. He opened the cage to remove them. Going close to the snake, it hissed at him. This made him pause. Then he took a second look and was surprised to see about one hundred snake eggs under her.

Two of the eggs are on the writer's desk as samples. They vary in size and are rather heavy. They are soft to the touch, oval in form, and ashy gray color. The smaller of the eggs is the size and shape of a duck's. The larger one is no thicker, but about six inches long. They were slightly speckled. It is said that the shell will be hard.

Perhaps a snake laying eggs in captivity is not unusual, but the only one called to the writer's attention was when a python did a similar thing at the Paris zoological garden in 1875. This serpent laid three dozen eggs. She brooded on her eggs and hatched young ones. She deposited her eggs on the 5th of May, and the first young one made its appearance on the 21st of July.

Whether Dr. Knox's collection pythons will be augmented or not, the eggs is a matter to be seen.

**PLANT LIFE IN CALIFORNIA**

**The Paradise of the Hybridizer and Nurseryman.**

California has become the paradise of the rosarian, the seed-grower, hybridizer and the nurseryman. Wild grape is used as a stock for wine and raising grapes and in some cases that I know of men have grafted Italian chestnuts upon one species of the native oaks, says a writer in the Century. All the hillsides of the region, when not too steep to plow, too far above the sea level, will grow the fruits and varied horticultural products of Spain, Portugal, Italy, southern France. The pomegranate is a garden shrub in many districts; the almond is a roadside tree; the drooping, acacia-like leaves of the scarlet-fruited pepper tree grow with magnolias, palms and cedars of Lebanon. Oranges and lemons stand in many an orchard with apples, peaches. Among the notable plants of the state are many adopted species such as the acacias and eucalyptus of Australia and the bamboos and simmons of Japan.

When Americans came to California they were surprised at the variety that they observed in familiar plants. The elderberry, which is only slightly different from the elderberry bush of the Atlantic slope, often becomes a tree of from two to four feet in diameter and thirty or forty feet high. This is merely a matter of local environment, rich soil and shelter; same species is a mere shrub on rocky hillsides of the coast range. The bronze-leaved ricinus, which makes a semi-tropic summer garden front of many an Atlantic coast cottage, grows for year after year in California, until a section of its stem foot and a half in diameter can be obtained by any collector of vegetable curiosities. Geraniums, nasturtium, tomatoes and many other plants, if full and otherwise, escape from cultivation, modify their habits of growth soon become wild again. Many plants of Mexico, Peru, Chili, the Hawaiian islands, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Mediterranean sea have already become dangerous weeds. The loquat, a choice fruit of Japan, already growing wild in some canyons where picnic parties have left seeds. Apricots, peaches, cherries, English walnuts have been found in the forests—chance seedlings, grown with the madroñas and manzanitas.

**Gold in Africa.**

An experimental boring 2,500 feet deep was recently made in the Witwatersrand gold field of South Africa with a view of testing the lie of the auriferous deposits. The result was the most satisfactory character. The "strike" has led to calculation of the hidden wealth of these fields. It is possibly the following by Alexander may be interesting as showing the rich possibilities of the future. Circumference of basin, 400 miles; diameter, 127 miles; area, 12,580 square miles, or 300,710,372,000 square feet. Taking average thickness of ore as a series of blanket beds of 6 feet (or to 48 feet), equals 18,874,000,000 cubic feet of reef or at 15 cubic feet the ton, 19,321,433,160,000 tons of shillings per ton (very low) value gold equal to \$1,578,196,224,000, or billion five hundred and seventy thousand one hundred and ninety millions, two hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling. Taking population of Witwatersrand at 200,000, this allows each 230,000 lbs. of gold.