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### Fire-Resisting Mortar.

The discovery is reported that serpentine rock, when powdered and mixed with good lime, forms a mortar that will successfully withstand heat to 1,100° F., and will not crack if subjected when at this heat to contact with cold water. The new material, besides being in the highest degree fire-resisting, is also declared to be so elastic as not to crack when the building settles and permits of nails being driven into it. It is said to be one-third lighter than ordinary mortar, easy to handle, and capable of receiving decoration.

### The Palace Hotel Project.

It is gratifying to note that the project for the erection in Toronto of a first-class modern hotel appears to be making satisfactory progress. The promoters, among whom are many of the leading financiers of the city, have been granted incorporation under the name of the Toronto Hotel Company. A meeting for organization is being held as we go to press. The attempt to interest the two great railway companies has, it is understood, been successful, and the enterprise will be entered upon at an early date.

### Steel Stirrups Condemned.

PROF. J. B. Johnson, of the Engineering Department of Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., says: "The recent fire tests of steel stirrups and brick walls, which were made under my supervision in this city, show very conclusively that unprotected stirrups are extremely dangerous. These stirrups become red hot in a few minutes, and then rapidly char and burn away the end of the beam, and also bend down, so that, in from twenty to thirty minutes after the fire reaches the stirrups, the beam is dropped right out of the twisted steel by the straightening out of this bend or twist." Another side of this question is that where beams are so securely anchored as to resist the action of fire for up-