

the owner as now, for labor only, and this amount should be exempt from all other claims until labor is satisfied or the amount exhausted.

Australian  
Architecture.

MANY people have an idea that our brethren of Australia are far in the rear of us in the way of building. This, however, is a mistaken idea, for Melbourne and Sydney contain as fine buildings, public and private, as can be found anywhere on this continent. The Eastern Market Building in the city of Melbourne is said to be without a rival anywhere for beauty of exterior, adaptability and general convenience. For several years the municipal authorities of the rival city of Sydney have been collecting data for use in designing and building a new market for that city that would excel the famous market of Melbourne. The result is that an immense Renaissance structure is to be built, on which a central dome will rise to a height of 150 feet above the sidewalk. The contract to complete the building has been let for the sum of \$1,250,000. The designs for this mammoth building were prepared by Geo. McRae, city architect, Sydney, N.S.W.

Building Timber. THE gradual disappearance of good building timber from Ontario, and the substitution of hemlock, soft elm and

basswood for white pine and the better class of woods, is the cause of much wrong-doing in the building trades, and the creation of a class of buildings whose lives will be short by comparison. The high price of white or red pine joists is made an excuse by country builders, to substitute hemlock instead, where the use of such uncertain lumber should be carefully eschewed. Fancy hemlock joists in the lower floor of a country farm house, where perhaps only a few inches of space exists between the damp earth and the lower edge of the joists. What is the result? A rotten floor in a few years, and a miasmatic one from the moment it is laid. Where it can be avoided, hemlock should never be employed in a situation subject to alternations of dryness and dampness. It does very well if kept constantly dry, though it has the quality of becoming very brittle if made very dry, and is not by any means a reliable wood if subject to sudden strains. Hemlock may be used with profit in the upper floors of small or medium-sized buildings, that are not likely to be subject to heavy work, and when once in place and properly secured, do satisfactory service. For inside studding, scantlings and light roofing timbers, it will do fairly good service if skilfully arranged and properly secured. It must not be supposed that we decry hemlock as a building material. We do not. Like everything else it has its uses, and it is its improper use we object to. For rough boarding, sheeting and roof covering hemlock has no equal. It is superior to pine in nail-holding qualities, and when dry and properly machined makes a firm and solid base to "side" or shingle over, and each nail may be driven home with a certainty that it will stay where put. When covered, as under shingles, hemlock is not so likely to "swell" or "warp" in a damp atmosphere, as pine would under like circumstances. Hemlock timber, though frequently used in heavy constructions, is rarely satisfactory, owing to the unequal direction of the grain, and the difficulty of working it to correct and proper shape. While it may do passably well for temporary structures, such as bridge centres, platforms, scaffold-

ing, etc., it should never be employed for outside purposes where permanency is an important factor. The scarcity of good lumber, or rather its high price, is working favorably in the interests of permanent buildings. Few country people in the well settled districts of Ontario now ever think of building their houses of wood altogether. The old-fashioned frame house gave way to the lighter and more compact scantling or "balloon" house, and this is fast giving way to the "cased" or "veneered" house, or the solid brick house. It is beginning to be known that a house built of bricks costs but little more than a house built altogether of wood, while the life of the former is three times longer than that of the latter, and the former needs no paint on the walls to preserve it, or to prevent the "poverty stricken" appearance which is sure to attack the latter once every four or five years. The advent of the brick house in the country should be encouraged, and whenever the designing of these is placed in the hands of an architect, he should employ every possible means to give his work a "truly rural" but effective appearance.

An Uniform Size for  
Brick. THE variation in the sizes of bricks made by different firms often leads to

a great deal of inconvenience and useless labor and expense. The introduction of pressed bricks or terra-cotta bricks, among common moulded bricks, is often prevented because of the inequality of sizes—the pressed brick generally being much smaller than the moulded ones—and this militates against the interests of pressed brick makers, for, if moulded and pressed bricks were of one uniform size throughout the country, the use of pressed bricks for trimming windows, doors and other openings, would soon become a fixed practice in the smaller towns, villages and country, and the practise has much to commend it from more points of view than the artistic one. It seems to us that it would be as much within the scope of parliamentary limits, to legislate on the question of "uniformity of size in bricks," as it is to legislate on "weights and measures," and the rights of the community are nearly as much concerned in one as in the other. If one brick differeth from another one-twentieth of its size—and there are greater differences than this—it means a difference of five brick in each hundred, an item that becomes formidable in buildings requiring five or six hundred thousand bricks. Even in a much smaller building the difference may make or unmake the contractor. True, architects frequently specify certain makes of bricks, but this custom is not to be recommended as it may lead to abuses, therefore it is better for everyone concerned that the contractor have a free hand in purchasing all his material, providing always the standard of quality is maintained. A practice, quite common with our neighbors to the south, is to specify certain "makes," not only of bricks, but of hardware, paints, plumbing fitments, heating apparatus, and other building requirements, in all specifications; in fact, in many of the printed forms of specifications, certain goods are specifically named, and the contractor is not permitted to use any other. It will readily be seen to what this method may lead, and does lead—and how the owner may have to pay for goods of an inferior sort when the quality might have been obtained for less money. It is well enough for an architect to specify certain brands at a given price, and to see that the price is paid; then the owner gets value, and the contractor "knows where he is at."