

VENEERING.

The softest woods should be chosen for veneering upon. Perhaps the best for the purpose are those of perfectly straight grain and without a knot; of course no one ever veneers over a knot. Hard wood can be veneered: boxwood with ivory, for instance: but wood that will warp and twist, such as cross grained mahogany, must be avoided. The veneer and wood on which it is to be laid, says a writer in a contemporary, must both be carefully prepared, the former by taking out all marks of the saw on both sides with a fine toothed plane, the latter with a coarser toothed plane. If the veneer happens to be doing this it may be repaired at once with a bit of stiff paper, glued upon it on the upper side. The veneer should be cut rather larger than the surface to be covered; if much twisted it may be damped and placed under a board and weight over night. This saves some trouble, but with veneers that are cheap it is not worth while taking much trouble about refractory pieces.

The wood to be veneered must now be sized with thin glue; the ordinary glue-pot will supply this by dipping the brush first into the glue, then into the boiling water in the outer vessel. This size must be allowed to dry before the veneer is laid. We will suppose, now, that the veneering process is about to commence. The glue in good condition, and boiling hot, the bench cleared, a basin of hot water with the veneering hammer and a sponge in it, a cloth or two, and everything in such position that one will not interfere with or be in the way of another. First, damp with hot water that side of the veneer which is not to be glued, then glue the other side. Second, go over as quickly as possible the wood itself, previously toothed and sized. Third, bring the veneer rapidly to it, pressing it down with the outspread hands, and taking care that the edges of the veneer overlap a little all round. Fourth, grasp the veneering hammer close to the pane (shaking off the hot water from it), and the handle pointing away from you; wriggle it about, pressing it down stoutly and squeezing the glue from the centre out at the edges. If it is a large piece of stuff which is to be veneered, the assistance of a hot iron will be wanted to make the glue liquid again after it has set; but do not let it dry the wood underneath it, or it will burn the glue and scorch the veneer, and ruin the work. Fifth, having got out all the glue possible, search the surface for blisters, which will at once be betrayed by the sound they give when tapped with the handle of the hammer. The hot iron (or the inner vessel of the glue-pot itself, which often answers the purpose) must be applied and the process with the hammer repeated, when the hammer is not in the

hand it should be in the hot water. The whole may now be sponged over with hot water and wiped as dry as can be. And observe throughout the above process never have any slop and wet about the work that you can avoid. Whenever you use the sponge, squeeze it well first. Damp and heat are wanted, not wet and heat. It is a good thing to have the sponge in the left hand nearly all the time, ready to take up any moisture or squeezed out glue from the front of the hammer.

So much for laying veneers with the hammer, which, though a valuable tool, is not much used in the best cabinet makers' shops—cauls are adopted instead. They are made of wood, the shape and size of the surface to be veneered, or, better still, of rolled zinc plate, and being made very hot before a good blaze of shavings, they are clamped down on the work when the veneer is got in its place; they must be previously soaped, to prevent them sticking to the veneer. The whole is then left to dry together. The hammer is quite sufficient, however, in small cabinet shops. Veneers can be laid with it 5 ft. long by 18 in. wide, without assistance and without a blister. Cauls, however, are very necessary if a double curved surface has to be

veneered, or a concave surface; they need not be used for a simple convex surface. By wetting well one side of the veneer it will curl up, and can easily be laid on such a surface; but it will be well to bind the whole round with some soft string to assist it in keeping down while drying.

The City Engineer of Toronto has reported that the brick sidewalks which were laid two years ago are in good condition, and in his opinion it would be economical and in the public interest if more brick walks were laid, instead of wooden walks, the cost being about double that of wood, but it is very much more durable.

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