DEFECTS IN VARNISHES AND THEIR REMEDIES.

In applying oil varnishes to different objects various defects often make their appearance; these are, in many cases, very obscure in their origin, although painfully obvious in their effects. The defects may arise through faults in making the varnishes, through defects in the surfaces of the objects which have been varnished, through faulty methods of application, or through climatic changes. Seeing, therefore, that there are so many factors which produce defects in varnished surfaces, it is no wonder that the causes of such defects are obscure, especially as the varnisher may be of an unobservant character and fail to notice faults at the time the varnish is being applied.

Cracks and pinholes: These are often due to climatic changes, especially liable to occur in winter time, when a cold day will follow a hot or warm one. Keeping the object in a warm place for some time will tend to cure this fault, and take care that the varnish cannot get chilled while drying.

Peeling, blistering, spots and crawlings are defects which may be traced to a greasy nature of the surface on which the varnish is applied. This may be due to the use of bad priming paint, or rubbing the work down with oily rags, or to drops of oil on the surface and not properly removed in the preparing operations. The remedy consists in preventing the application of oily matters to the surface, and to see that they are thoroughly removed.

Sagging: This defect arises from two causes, a very greasy nature of the surface or from applying the varnish too quickly. The varnisher is tempted to take up too much on his brush, and unless he takes care to spread this well he will leave it too thick, and then sagging or running down may occur. If in the preparatory processes too thick a coat of paint is put on, the varnish may tend to soften this, and then this defect is liable to occur.

Sweating and blooming may be due to defects in the manufacture of varnish; the gums used have not been properly melted, and too much of their volatile constituents left in, or the varnish may have been sent out before it is properly material. Varnishing on a damp surface will also develop these defects.

Deadening may be due to faulty preparation of the varnish, but more often it is due to climatic conditions—varnishing in too damp an atmosphere, damp surfaces, on the presence of deleterious gases and vapours, too porous a subject, too large a proportion of driers used in making it, all of which tend to cause loss of lustre in a varnish, either immediate or after a time. It is difficult, under these circumstances, to point out a remedy, for one will scarcely know the exact cause in any particular case, and, of course, it is obvious that the remedy will vary with the cause, and what will suit one case won't do for another.

The varnisher should, if he wants to produce a good job, take every precaution to prevent defects arising—for, in this case, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. He should see that his varnish is of good quality, that his cans and brushes are in good condition and clean, that the surface he has to varnish is in proper condition, free from grease, dry, and has a smooth surface. He should never attempt a job in wet or damp weather, and he should take care that, after varnishing, his work is not exposed to any bad influences which will retard the drying and hardening of the varnish. —Oil and Colourman's Journal.

HOW TO SEASON TIMBER.

How to season timber so as to prevent the ravages of dry rot is something in which builders generally are interested. According to R. F. Francius to preserve oak timber from dry rot it should be laid in large piles in salt water for a whole year, and so as to be completely covered with the water. By this means the salt penetrates the wood and the consequence is that it remains always free from dry rot and lasts twice as long as it would do without this preparation. If the wood can be put into sea water perfectly pure and free from all earthy deposits it is so much better, and on the coast it may be best kept in basins dug for the purpose. Care must be taken to lay it so that it cannot drift away. Where salt is very abundant, wood may be seasoned by covering it with a thick layer of that material, when the air is damp and foggy, without heavy rain.

USEFUL HINTS.

Always strip off solid beams where they are to be plastered; the lath may then be put on so that the mortar may have a clinch and cracks are avoided.

A good mixture for coating roofs may be made as follows. Thirty-five parts clay slate, thirty parts mica slate and about thirty-five parts resin, all finely powdered and heated with fifty parts of tar.

When a ceiling is simply tinted, the tint should be one that softens into the wall or paper color, not one that contrasts. Thus if the tone of the room is that of a soft gray blue, the ceiling should be of a clear fresh pink; or should a gray-green be picked out with black, a lemon color will be appropriate for the ceiling.

ESTIMATING FOR SHINGLES.—If you wish to make an off-hand estimate of the number of shingles required for a roof at one-quarter pitch, multiply the ground surface of the house in square feet by 10. Example: A house 20 x 20 on the ground has 400 square feet; multiplied by 10, gives 4,000 shingles.