

moisture. This is a reason why a house can with advantage be examined during, or soon after, a spell of wet. The action of roof, gutters, rain-water shooting and stack-pipes, and the general dryness of rooms within and freedom from damp places or moist parts without, may then be seen. There should be damp-courses in all walls just above the ground, and special precautions wherever earth or bank outside rises higher than the floor level within. The walls should be of proper thickness, whether they are solid or built with a hollow space. If in exposed positions they should be furnished with a guard against driving rain, such as cemented or battened surface, or pointing between the courses of brick or stone. Roofs should have sufficient steepness of pitch, and be constructed with tiles or slates which lie close and overlap, so that neither rain nor snow will be driven below the surface. Roof valleys and flat parts of the roof, whether of lead, zinc, asphalt, or other material, being a frequent source of trouble, should be of best materials and well-maintained; and here there may be need for special precautions, such as snow rafts, for lead flats. The foundations of walls, chimney-stacks and those portions where the weight and thrust of the building are greatest, should show no signs of subsidence, crack, or damp. The ridges and verges of the roof should be straight and the surface of each side of the roof in a true plane; the walls and ceilings inside should show no sign of damp, especially of no continued or recurrent discoloration. In this last connexion the chill feel of a damp wall when the palm of the hand is placed upon it sometimes tells more than the eye can detect.

*Chimneys.*—Chimneys are a frequent source of trouble, even in houses otherwise excellent. The rain finds an easy ingress where they and the roof meet. In a windy wet country they become soaked, and if built of absorbent material and without damp-courses the damp creeps down into the plaster of the rooms below. Then, there are all the troubles connected with