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Repairing Old Plastered Work.

LAST month we made some quotations from Millar's new work on "Plaster and Plastering," of a practical kind. We follow up these with more of the same nature: "When repairing or making additions to old plaster work, care should be observed in cutting the joints, so that the key of the existing work is not injured or broken. The joints one way should be cut on the studing or joists, and in a line with the laths the other way. A joint at the edge of a lath is stronger than at the centre. If the lath work is weak, the joints should be cut diagonally. Never use a hammer to cut joints on lath work, for the repeated impacts will weaken and crack the old work. If the old plaster is hard, cut the joint with a saw, or with a hammer and chisel, and finish with a strong knife. Avoid acute angles in patches; square, round or oval patches not only look better, but are much stronger than zig-zag ones. Having cut the joints neat and square on edge, and then repaired the old lath work, brush the joints and the laths with a dry broom, and then wet the joints, but only damp the lath work, as excessive water tends to warp the laths. The joints are sometimes painted to prevent damp from extending to the old work, or causing injury to any surface decoration. Gauged coarse stuff is generally used for weighing out, and gauged putty for finishing ordinary work. The coarse stuff is generally gauged with coarse plaster. For small patches, the whole thickness is generally brought out in one coat, but for large patches it is best to lay a first coat and then scratch it in the usual way. If time permits, this should stand for one day, or even two, to allow the lath work to settle. The stronger and stiffer the gauge, the less power the lath will have to warp. The floating coat is gauged moderately stiff with coarse plaster, or with fine plaster and coarse in equal proportions. When laid the surface is ruled in with a straight-edge, keeping it within the line of the old work to allow for plaster swelling, and a thickness of 1-16th inch for the finishing coat. It is often necessary to drag the surface down to allow the finishing coat to be ruled fair and flush with the old work. The surface should be left fair but rough. Gauged work should never be scoured, as it only kills the plaster, and therefore weakens the body of the material. The putty for the final coat should be gauged with fine plaster and a little size water. After being laid, the surface is ruled flush with the old work, and when firm it should be smartly trowelled off, and finally finished with a semi-wet brush. The joints should be trowelled flush and smooth, and the old part brushed to free it from any gauged stuff. All rubbish should be damped as it falls and removed as soon as possible, to prevent further dust and dirt. Parian or

other white cements are used for best work, or where time is a consideration. All white cements having plaster for their basis are manufactured to be non-effervescent, non-porous, durable, free from liability to unequal shrinkage (which causes cracks), and free in working. They form admirable materials for repairs or additions. When making good old or broken lime plaster work with any of these cements, the joints and lath nails must be painted with red-lead, quick-drying paint or with shellac. Galvanized nails ought to be used for the lath work where these cements are used. Small holes and cracks are usually stopped with fine plaster gauged with putty, or better still, putty water. Parian cement is also used for a similar purpose. The holes and cracks should be brushed with Parian solution before the stiff Parian is applied. This solution is simply fine Parisian gauged to a thin creamy consistency with water. New or damp lime-plastered walls can be painted or papered much sooner, and with greater safety, if brushed with a thin Parian solution. It is also useful for stopping the suction on dry floating and fibrous slabs before laying the final coat. Several new patent plaster and white cements are well adapted for repairs or where time is limited." Canadian plasterers will find much in the foregoing that is useful, instructive and money-making.

Cracked Plaster Work.

QUOTING again, we get the following: "Cracks in plaster work are due to various causes. They may act individually or in combination. Cracks are often caused by settlement in the building. These cracks may be easily discerned by their breadth, depth and length. They also arise from the shrinkage of bad or unseasoned timber used in construction or framing of the building, which may cause displacement in the joists or the laths. Other causes are the too sudden drying of the work; strong winds, or heat; the laying of one coat of mortar on another coat, or on walls that have a strong suction, which absorbs the moisture or 'life' of the coat being laid, when it becomes short or crumbly, scaly, and apt to peel or fall off. In this last case it does not set, but only dries and shrinks, which gives rise to cracks, and eventually falls or crumbles away. The use of bad materials, insufficient use of lime and hair, or scamping of labor is often followed by cracks. Insufficient labor and unskilled workmanship in the application of the materials is a great source of trouble, but it will be understood that the best quality of labor will not make bad materials good and strong; and, on the other hand, the best materials will not compensate for bad labor. It is only by judicious selection of materials, and their skilful manipulation, that a high and enduring class of work can be obtained."