

of withies ; a needle is " threaded " with the twine, the latter is pulled tightly over the straw, passed round a batten and withdrawn to complete the stitch ; an assistant or under-thatcher often assists in this operation. Each bed is raked or combed down to remove loose reeds or straw. Beds are formed in this manner until the slope has been covered. Additional security is provided at verges by placing short horizontal withies (called *scallops*) on top of the thatch at about 2-ft. intervals and securing them with wood *staples* (pieces of withies bent to a U-shape) which are driven into the thatch at about 1-ft. apart. The eaves project from 18 to 24-in. and a horizontal soffit is formed by cutting to a line with a sharp knife.

Ridges are formed of straw. One of several methods of thatching a ridge is as follows : The bundles, about 1½ to 2-ft. long, are stretched over the apex and caused

to overlap the thatch on both sides until a 4-ft. long section has been covered to the required thickness. This is secured with either one or two scallops and staples (or twine) at each wing. The ridge is completed in sections in this manner, and the edges are then cut and trimmed with shears or a long-handled knife. Sometimes additional withies are arranged diagonally to pattern from wing to wing and attached to the horizontal scallops. If a chimney stack intercepts a ridge, it is usual to begin at each side of it and work towards the hips or gables. As a precaution against fire, chimney stacks should be constructed of walls which are at least 9-in. thick.

Scallops, as described in the preceding column, are provided at hips at about 2-ft. apart and bent to form a sweep. The thickness of thatch is increased at valleys in order to give a swept appearance.