

the matter of folding becomes rather difficult. Upon this depends much of the beauty of the book. In these days of machinery, it has, of course, been tried to arrive at accuracy in folding by this means. But, strange to say, folding is one of the few things in which mechanical accuracy is surpassed by that of the human hand. Most of the folding is done by women.

The sheets are then "collated," or gathered together in distinct books, in quires of twenty-four sheets at a time. You may have noticed, as I have done, letters printed on the lower margin of pages in books, A, B, C, etc. And you may have wondered, as I too have done, what these were for. That is the "signature," and in collating, or gathering together the sheets, they are kept in their order, by the alphabet, A, B, C, and so on, so that the order is preserved till the end of each volume. The books in this form are now pressed to the desired solidity. Small cuts are next sawed as marks for stitching. The sheets thus "collated," or gathered in their proper order, and "sawed" and marked for stitching, are then carried to the sewing bench. They are laid in a frame and sewed, sheet on to sheet, until a whole volume is done. This is a very neat and important process, and is also confided to women. The kind of thread and the kind of sewing depends upon the destination of the book, and upon the quality of the binding to be done. You may easily imagine, for instance, that the huge books you see on bank and office desks require a treatment quite different from what is needed for a lady's boudoir table. And for school alms, we have not yet discovered anything strong enough. The sewing is the last stage in the "preparation" of the book.

The next stage is the "forwarding." The "fly leaves" are put on, pasted to the back on each side. It is then trimmed,—placed in a machine with a broad strong knife above it. The knife is brought down with slow, but sure and ruthless pace, just like a guillotine, and cuts everything that comes in its way. It made me shiver to look at it. Glue is next applied to the back, to strengthen the sewing. The books are then "backed." This is a very pretty process, and is done by machinery. A lining of paper, or cloth, or leather is put round the back, and the shape is at the same time given to the back itself, the round shape that gives such a nice comfortable feeling to the book when we open it.

Meantime in another department of the trade "cases" are being prepared, and the book now passes into the hands of the "finisher." Boards have been cut in large quantities by machinery. Two are taken for each book, each pair of boards being, of course, identical in size. Cloth is pasted on to the boards, and the space left between the two corresponds to the thickness of the book that is to be placed within their strong protection. The



GLUING THE BACKS OF BOOKS.

back of the book and the cloth or leather between the boards are then glued together. When the cover is merely of paper, this is all that is necessary, and the thing is ready for the market. Our cheap twenty-five, fifty, or seventy-five cent books are of this kind. But cloth binding, and other more expensive sorts require much further care.

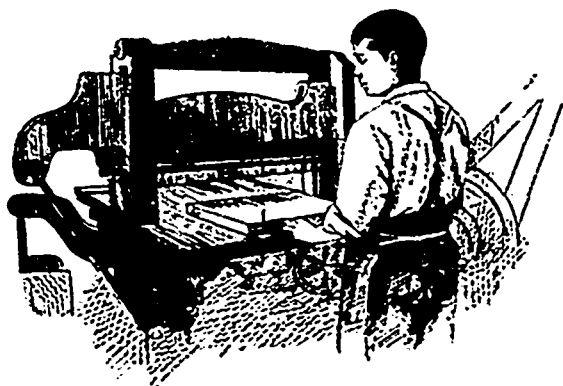
In olden times the fine work on the outside of books was done by hand. Now we have machines that do it, and do it better, and that get through as many books in half a minute as a man used to produce in a week. Look at any book you are fond of and see how it is decorated. Perhaps a ship, or a lion, or a landscape is stamped on the cover. There may be a boy perched away up on a mast head in a man of war, or a girl reading delightfully in a shady nook. How is all this done? We can not only see the decoration, but we can feel it with our hands standing out from the level board.

An artist first draws the design on paper. The design is then cut in steel or brass, and made into a strong metal block. The board of the book receives the impression of this block at one very quick and decided stroke, and the title on the back may be done in the same way. Sometimes the block is heated to give a very clear and distinct impression. This kind of stamping is called "blind,"—that is, the form, the impression, is made, but only in the colour of the board itself. When the letters, or scenes, or devices, are done in gold, silver, or in colours, these are added before the stamping, and the stamping fixes and finishes the effect. Rare and costly books have generally rich and expensive designs. Our common books are decorated by the thousand from one pattern, which is one reason of their cheapness. In one of our book-binderies I saw designs that had been prepared for allums and special books for our Governor-Generals, and one that was being beautifully and carefully executed for Her Majesty. It was a beauty, and you should have seen the face of the binder as he stroked it with the corner of his apron. I wish Her Majesty could have seen that. It would certainly have given her as much happiness as the beautiful binding could have given, for our good Queen is more pleased with a smile from an honest face than by all the pomp and style with which she is surrounded.

"All sorts of bindings you have" I ventured to remark to the honest face.

"Oh! yes, indeed: paper, straw-board, mill-board, leather, half-leather, calf, half-calf, Morocco, Russian; light and flexible, heavy and ponderous; for school, home, office, bank, library, presentation, *de luxe*."

We might have gone on till this time, if my attention had not been arrested by a workman who was gilding the edges. When the book was "trimmed," after having passed through the guillotine, it looked like a mass of solid marble, instead of a clump of paper sheets. To my surprise he took a sharp knife and scraped the



TRIMMING PAPER.