Messrs. Ward, Lock & Co.'s Bindery.

Some of our largest publishers have lately developed inclinations to do their own binding, and the tendency is hardly one that we can look upon pleasurably in the interests of the trade. However, it is useless protesting, it can only be left to the trade to show that the work can be done more efficiently and cheaply at the recognised establishments. Messrs. Ward, Lock & Co., of Salisbury Square, are now doing the bulk of their own work, and

have devoted the top floor of their fine premises to this purpose. Upon our representative making a call at this famous house he was readily granted the opportunity of rambling through the bindery, under the guidance of Mr. F. G. Mason, who has been with the firm twenty years, and has managed the binding department since it was first opened, twelve or thirteen years ago.

There is little doubt but that the binders have got the best part of the house, which is four or five floors in height. Along the centre of the roof is an excellent skylight which renders the top floor bright and cheerful and also guarantees ample ventilation. This advantage is greatly enhanced in the face of the fact that the majority of the workers are women.

"Of course, you know all about binding," said Mr. Mason, "but we will put you through the depart-

SEWING MACHINE.
ments in order. Our printing works are at Little Britain, and upon receiving the sheets they are placed upon a Martini folder, as you see.”

“Is it a good machine?”

“Yes, when in use at both ends it runs off about 2500 per hour.”

“What presses do you use?”

“A nipping machine, which answers our purpose well, and also hydraulic power.”

“Now, with regard to the sewing,” Mr. Mason, “to what extent do you use machinery?”

“We have four of Smyth’s sewing machines going, and they do very good work, especially in the matter of speed.”

“Have you found a good serviceable cotton for them? Some binders complain that there is not a good cotton in the market.”

“Yes, we can buy an English cotton that answers our purpose, and if that fails us we can fall back on the American cotton made especially for these machines.”

“You have some wire-stitchers, I see”? 

“Cheap novels, etc., we wire-stitch on a Brehmer’s wire-stitcher. It makes its own staples and has only to be supplied with a coil of wire; however, we continue to use some of the old hand machines.”

Mr. Mason then led the way into the hand-sewing room, which is a very large apartment and has sitting room for about fifty workers. The best books issued by Messrs. Ward & Lock are all hand-stitched in this room, but the machine work is making great strides. Mr. Mason remarked that the thick volume known as “Mrs. Beeton’s Household Management” was sewn on a machine with tapes.

“Then with regard to backing”? 

“As yet we only use a hand backing machine, which works satisfactorily, but the books have to be rounded a bit by hand before passing into the machine.”

“What size can you back in a machine?”

“The hand machine will take up to a royal octavo.”
A machine for separating books after sewing was also seen at work. The accompanying sketch gives a fair idea of it.

“We continue to cut our boards by hand for case-making,” remarked Mr. Mason, “but we are about to lay down some new steam machinery. For blocking we have six presses continually going, two working by steam.”

“Have you ever tried electros for block work?”

“Not often, it’s impossible to get a fine clear outline with electros, and they won’t stand long runs.”

**SEPARATING MACHINE.**

“Then you employ women for gold work?”

“Three of them are regularly at work at it. Here is our gas engine, six-horse power. It works two large lifts, a crane, and the rest of the machinery.”

In answer to a further question, our guide replied: “No, we don’t do any leather binding as yet, but we may. It’s room we want.”

At this point our representative found himself near the workmen’s entrance, through which he disappeared, with the usual adieus.