Glue.

A correspondent to our smart American contemporary gives the following interesting particulars concerning the various glues in use by bookbinders:—

Granulated Glue.—This brand has its good and bad qualities. It is often eulogized by glue men for its handiness in cooking up quickly. This is where an error in judgment is made, from the fact that many workmen, when having such a glue at their command, would too frequently replenish their glue pots direct from the barrel, and thus be the means of introducing a false practice. Independent of this it is possible for the purchaser to be imposed upon by an admixture of various other grades of glue, but it is usually guaranteed to be otherwise. Glue requires peculiar treatment to secure the best results. It should always be allowed to take up water previous to the application of heat, and when moderately cooked should be laid aside for a day. This method of treating glue has been in vogue for many decades in the Old World and is the very best. At the first boiling it is turned into shallow earthen dishes, and, after cooling, it is free to the workmen to help themselves by slicing off such quantities as they may require. This arrangement, if it were for no other purpose than to prevent decomposition after soaking, may be considered as being of the highest value; but it does more than this, for it is always ready for the workman and in the very best condition to secure strength and permanent satisfaction. The least that should be expected from everyone using glue is that it shall be so arranged after absorbing water that every fresh supply shall be attended to early enough before quitting time, so that it may be sufficiently heated and dissolved to gelatinize preparatory to its use on the following morning.

Noodle Glue.—This title probably originated from an apparent similitude in the treatment of dough in its preparation for one of our well-known culinary relishes. A special form of glue, however, cannot be expected to influence its quality except in the process of curing the stock, a feature which is of no small importance. The drying surface of this make is at least double that of the sheet glues, and therefore a corresponding gain is made toward purity of manufacture, for the quick formation of a film in curing glue lessens the danger of its becoming decomposed. Another consideration is that it is readily prepared for the glue pot, and therefore can be recommended when built up with such a quality of stock as the binder needs.

Sinew Glue.—This is about equal to the best hide stock, but is sometimes mixed with inferior grades to give them elasticity and strength. Bone and sinew stock in equal proportions make a fair glue, but enough has been said to caution binders against experimenting with such glues as are not suitable to the business. A true sinew glue, however, is often highly lauded by the salesman as one of the best grades.

Bleached Glue.—Here is a contrast with the opaque, and it may be sufficiently attractive to induce some buyers to be led astray. Bleached glue is the work of acids which remove an element of colour and strength which belongs to glue, and its tenacity is thus proportionately and detrimentally acted upon.

Opaque Glue.—This is a somewhat novel appellation for glue, but in reality it is nothing more than a glue adulterated with colouring. Its opacity is mostly caused by the free use
of whiting. This glue should not be recommended to binders. Whiting in glue is nothing more nor less than an adulteration, accompanied by a quick drying property, which is extremely objectionable in any branch of the bookbinder's art. When we consider the fact that it takes 1 pound of whiting to colour 4 pounds of glue, no further comment need be made to open the eyes of the inexperienced. Some makes of glue contain chloride or oxide of zinc, and manufacturers will inform you that a pound is sufficient to colour a ton of glue stock; but as there is nothing known which can be added to the best glue to advance its natural strength, a change of colour is of no benefit to the binder.

*Frothy Glue.*—A glue which froths under the action of heat, and doubly so from the friction of a brush is extremely objectionable. The cause of this trouble is not usually well understood by those who purchase glue; therefore it may be well to enlighten those who may not have given any attention to it. Frothy glue originates in various ways, and should not be sold as a sound production. Technically speaking, a glue that froths is termed a "live" glue, while one that is free from a frothy tendency is known as a "dead" glue. This may seem contradictory, and yet it can be made to harmonise from the fact that frothy glue is noted for its bubbling activity, while the so-called dead glue remains unaffected by any such motion. As a general thing, frothy glue is caused by the stock not being well cured. By the old process of drying glue this is sometimes uncontrollable, for it rests with the weather to allow of its drying quickly enough to prevent decay. Another cause for frothing is when a certain superfluity of lime or fat is retained in glue at the time of its manufacture. All glues are of necessity acted upon by acid, and this is followed by a process of liming as a neutralizing agent, and if the lime in turn is not completely removed the frothing naturally follows. Glue makers, however, claim that they now have a true test for froth, acid and fat. They also assert that they carry out this test upon all lots where any doubts are concerned, and dis-pose of defective makes when detected to such trades as do not object to frothing, and yet frothy glue is too often found in the bookbinder's glue pot. Importers of glue sometimes attribute the frothing of glue to the penetration of salt air, or, at any rate, they make this excuse if glue proves frothy.

*Frozen Glue.*—Glue which has been frozen should never be offered to bookbinders, and yet sometimes it is. A frozen glue can never regain its original condition even if made from the highest grade of stock. It is always liable to froth and loss of strength. As a fact glue cannot be made in any other weather than cold, and as it takes from twelve to eighteen days to accomplish it, there is a liability to its being detrimentally affected by a very low temperature. In certain districts glue making is rarely ever attempted from May to October. The object of this is to prevent fermentation and scouring of stock, which is of as much importance to uphold the fame of the glue maker as it is to the bookbinder. But to return to frozen glue; let it be understood that it should be absolutely avoided as a protection against casualties in the manufacture of books.

*Grading Glues.*—This varies with different manufacturers. A glue known as Br by one maker and made from the best hide stock is symbolised by another manufacturer by figures as high as 4,000, and so on by others; but at the present time an attempt is being made to conform with a general standard of comparison by all makers, and if accomplished would give better satisfaction and be more easily understood by all interested in this very important question of glue.