Know that there are many subscribers of the "B.B." who will be pleased to see the above heading.

In this busy age, when competition is so keen, it behoves a workman, if he has a modicum of common sense, to be ever on the look out for opportunities of adding to his store of knowledge. Knowledge is a very useful commodity, and once acquired is easily carried from place to place. He would, indeed, be a very foolish man who, having learned one branch of the trade, is therewith content; fancying that he has gained sufficient knowledge to provide for his wants and carry him safely through life. I have met with such men, but happily they are rare. If we want to succeed in this world we must learn all we can. We ought never to lose an opportunity to add to that knowledge by which we earn our daily bread. We see and hear a good deal about the division of labour in our trade, and in most large shops it is often carried to an extreme, not only are the two branches—letterpress and stationery—kept separate, but all the various processes are individualised, so to speak, and each set apart to one man or a set of men. These things are no doubt necessary under certain circumstances. I have no inclination at present to discuss the pros and cons of the case; enough for us to know that such a state of things does exist. But when a man has to shift from one place to another, as we all have to do some time in our life, he will have a double chance if he has an "all-round knowledge."

In the course of conversation with a good stationery binder not long ago, while admiring his work I asked him whether he had had any experience in letterpress work, he answered "Well, I have done a little but I would like to have a few years in a good letterpress shop." I trust he will get his wish gratified, as he had the right spirit. But enough. It is to help those who are willing to help themselves that I have undertaken the task of bringing this subject before the readers of this magazine.

One word more: I shall confine myself as closely as possible to workshop practice. I will use the technical language of the trade and will write as a binder to binders. I also invite criticism, and if anyone knows of a better method than the one expressed by which to arrive at a certain result, I trust he will send it for publication in the correspondence column.

The term "stationery binding" is a very wide one, and may be roughly stated to include everything in the shape of a book that is not actually readable matter. The 1/4d, tally book and the banker's ledger are alike included in the terms.

Account book, or writing papers, as they are called, are made in different sizes and qualities. With the qualities we have but little to do, although it is not unusual for a binder to be able to tell good paper from bad when he sees it. Under ordinary circumstances it is imperative that we should know the sizes. I subjoin a table of the most useful, giving dimensions in inches and the usual weight per ream.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>15 × 12½</td>
<td>10 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolscap</td>
<td>17 × 13½</td>
<td>15 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>19 × 15½</td>
<td>20 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Post</td>
<td>20½ × 16½</td>
<td>23 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demy</td>
<td>20 × 15½</td>
<td>25 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22 × 17½</td>
<td>34 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal</td>
<td>24 × 19</td>
<td>44 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-Royal</td>
<td>27 × 19</td>
<td>54 &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these sizes for convenience' sake are somewhat modified, as, for instance, we have "foolscap" made twice the usual size, and we call it "double foolscap." One half is added to the sheet and is called "sheet and half," in like manner we have "sheet and third," etc., etc.

All papers are capable of being cut and folded in a variety of forms, hence we have the terms "broad folio," "long folio," 4to, 8vo, 16mo, 9mo, 6to, 12mo, and many others. There are many other terms applied to paper, such as "hand-made," "machine-made," "cream laid," "blue laid," "cream wove," "yellow wove," but I do not feel justified in doing any more than merely mentioning them. Every man in a binding shop, whatever be his position, ought to make himself thoroughly conversant with these things. It is like the A B C of the trade and should be learned, for without such knowledge many a serious mistake is made. I have seen a cutter for instance, who, although a fair workman, if he had been given a ream of paper with the instructions to cut it up oblong 4to, could not really do it unless a sheet had been folded or marked up for him.

The first operation of any importance is that of ruling the paper. Of course, strictly speaking, "paper ruling" has nothing to do with "binding," but it is very closely allied thereto, both are often going on at the same time under the same roof, and many a time a rular is asked to fill in his time at binding, and if a binder is a bit slack it will be to his advantage if he can do a little ruling, even although it is only "feint lines." However, I have decided to begin with ruling. The first thing that a rular should do when he has opened his ream of paper is to look it over. I don't mean that he is to lift it sheet by sheet and examine it closely, but just to turn it up at the sides and let it fall again gradually, keeping his eyes upon it at the same time and thus satisfy himself that it is all right. If the job is worth it, that is if it is good paper, I would advise him to keep the "watermark" all lying in the one direction, and when he comes to rule it make
the top of the "watermark" the head of the paper. Although it may not be generally known, there is an outside and inside and top and bottom to a sheet of paper, and in ruling "bill-heads" or "memo forms" I would rule the side on which the "watermark" appeared when held up to the light.

After having looked over the paper the ruler goes to the cutting machine to "trim it round," or cut it to size as the case may be. When cutting for bookwork take care that there is left a trimming for the binder. A good method by which it is always possible to get your paper square, which is a sine qua non, is to cut first one of the long edges: take only sufficient to trim it, turn round the paper and place this cut edge even, taking care to keep the paper from shifting or twisting in any way, along one of the lines upon the back table of the machine. I am speaking of the ordinary guillotine; leaving below the knife one of the narrow edges, take a trimming off this. You can now use the guide or back-guage of the machine for the other two edges. It requires a good deal of care to cut a job at the machine. The great point is to have your paper well "knocked up," and while handling take care to keep it square and well pressed up to the guide. If the paper has a thick edge, which is often the case, fold up a piece of wrapper or take a few narrow cuttings and lay it upon the paper past the edge before bringing down the platen, this will obviate the bulging of the paper outwards when the pressure is applied.

[To be continued.]

**Xylonite for Bookbinding.**

XYLONITE is a material but little known in the bookbinding trade, yet it has points that need but to be explained to bring it into much more general use than it has hitherto been. It is not exactly new, though binders have used it for little else than tablets, but a firm in Ireland has executed some large orders for Catholic work in this material, much of which has gone to America. What it is composed of I am not prepared to say, further than that it has a base of paper, and is made in sheets of any thickness, from the 1/10th of an inch up to one inch, the usual size being 35-inches by 20. It is sold by weight at 4/- per pound, or for the best "grained ivory 5/-, and its cheapness may be easily calculated by saying that 18-inches (superficial) by 1-inch thick weighs as nearly as possible one pound.

In texture xylonite is close and compact, without any grain, except the best variety which is veined rather than grained. It may be flexible or stiff, with a highly polished surface, or rough, and though highly inflammable when brought into direct contact with fire, will stand a moderate heat in the blocking press without shrivelling. It is hard enough to retain form, yet it cuts easily and cleanly with no tendency to tear, either in the board machine or shears, and it can be carved with ordinary carving tools.

The forms best suited for bookbinding are the following:—

A thin unpolished kind mainly used for tablets, can also be used as end papers for many books in which it is desirable to have some material for note taking, and is very convenient, as the pencil marks can be easily obliterated.

Another kind, known as one-line flexible xylonite, is in imitation of ivory, with a beautifully polished surface, and is so thin and pliable that it may be used for covering, and turned in like leather, yet without cracking up the joint. Of course the joint goes in time, but it wears fairly well. It is better to bind with a white leather back, using the xylonite for the sides only, but as it may be turned in no rim is necessary.

The "grained ivory" is the most beautiful imitation of the real material, both in the creamy white colour and the veins, and would deceive any but good judges. This can be bought in sheets of similar thickness to ordinary ivory as used on sides of books, and should be especially useful now that ivory has reached an almost prohibitive price.

Besides these forms xylonite is worked up into book sides and backs already for binders. The bevelled sides however differ in this respect: being moulded rather than bevelled, to secure lightness, the under side is hollowed out in proportion to the bevel. We have some very fine samples before us with sunk oval centres, having a raised one line or dotted line inside the oval, and in the centre a Latin cross, with a delicate spray of ivy leaves in the closest imitation of carving ivory work. Others have a cross and lilies, or a cross with the sacred heart, and other catholic emblems, but the cross with the ivy leaves is the prettiest, and the design is repeated in several sizes, from diamond 48mos upward. The front side in this style, back plainly bevelled, and a rounded back for the smaller size, cost but 8/- per dozen sets, while a real carved ivory would probably cost about 10/- for the one set.

The difficulty of moulding the xylonite is too great for binders to attempt that work for themselves as the material has to be softened by steam, and special machinery used into which steam is forced during the moulding, the dies being very costly, but the manufacturers would have special designs worked up if the orders were large enough to repay the cost.

With the plain material no difficulty exists, while the quality and general appearance is so good that it may benefit some of our readers to know of this substitute for the dearer animal product.

The tortoise-shell, either of the red or dark shell, almost defies detection, and are imitations of many other substances, but it is with these two that the trade is particularly interested, and on both we have seen some excellent gold blocking for pocket calendars and note tablets, so we hope these hints may be useful.

There is probably more than a grain of truth in the joke in a recent number of New York Life, as to the "glories of literature." A lean, seedy-looking individual applies to a portly well-fed publisher for a position as canvasser for a new book just coming out by subscription, and is met with an enquiry whether he knows anything about the book. "Yes," is the reply, "I'm the author; and I thought if I could get a position as canvasser I might be able to make a little money out of the book!"