

CORRESPONDENCE.

Tidings from Britain.

Our own correspondent.

9 CURZON ST., MURRAY ST., }
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Signs of revival are everywhere apparent, and we are, as it seems to me, on the very edge of a busy time. The printing trade has had one or two good "wind-falls" lately; and, although the "out-of-work" books of the London Society of Compositors has shown an uncomfortably large total, week by week, several firms have been desperately beset with big orders. As I anticipated some time since, the stationery section is just now getting very lively, more particularly in the fancy card and small article branches. The crop of Christmas cards is truly magnificent. Indeed, I do not remember so prolific a season. The designs can be numbered by thousands; and it is only justice to say that, on the whole, they are very creditably got up. Some good lines have been shipped by the paper-merchants here, and everything tends to show that we are opening out a capital connection, in this matter, with various foreign ports. The book trade has not been marked with any special "hits" of late, although the Revised Version of the New Testament has created some stir, and given work for the binders. Mr. Henry Frowde, the London representative of the Clarendon Press, Oxford, has made special efforts for the introduction of the new book, with the result that orders are pouring in upon him in an overwhelming manner. The American edition numbers twenty thousand copies, and it is said the "first-day" orders are more than sufficient to cover this large consignment.

It appropriately happens that, just at this time, Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, (the Queen's Bible Printers) are issuing their "Variorum Edition" of the New Testament, which is one of the most learned editions ever offered to the public. The character of this work is based upon the good old principles of the previous editions, upon which, however, it is a vast improvement. This fact alone will secure for it many patrons, the Authorised Revision being, in certain respects, a departure from all pre-existing lines. For instance, we have become accustomed to the Bible in its two-column form, and have grown familiar with the short-sentenced paragraphs. In the new edition all this is

changed. The exterior appearance of the book is that of a respectable novel; nor does the general body of the text belie the character. The chapters "run on" as paragraphs,—marginal figures being, it is true, vouchsafed in order to show what were previously separate paragraphs,—and the whole of the epistles are altogether without chapter divisions. It is difficult to realize the necessity for so extreme an alteration, and I am inclined to think that, in at least this one respect, the version of 1611 is superior to that now put forward by the gentlemen of the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster.

To-day being the first day of publication, I have not yet had time to go carefully through the copy which Mr. Henry Frowde has placed upon my table; but, from one or two passages I have glanced at, I should say the meaning had been somewhat Irished. For instance, at what would be the opening of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, I find the following:—"Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha." This passage is sufficiently vague in the old version, where it is stated that "a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha." The revisers seem to have taken great liberties, in other instances, with the first text; it is a pity, therefore, they did not take the proper steps towards rendering the work into good English. Lord Beaconsfield had a worthy horror of being handed down to posterity as "talking bad grammar;" but it would appear that, spite of all their prefatory preamble about the rules of grammar, the learned New Testament cooks themselves stand in greatest need of instruction upon that head. It is now too late for any suggestion to be of service, else I would advise that every copy of the new edition be called in and destroyed,—or, better still, retained for grammatical exercises in our public schools. If the revisers make no better headway than they have, thus far, done, the only good likely to result from their long toil will be the discontinuance of that fulsome verbiage about the Most High and Mighty Prince James with which the old version is prefaced. This, in itself, it is true, is something; but not the marvellous benefits we were led to expect when first the Council commenced its sittings. I, for one, am disappointed; and I doubt not there are others who will turn for comfort to the Variorum Edition