

THE BIRD AND THE SHADOW.

After the Persian.

THROUGH the blue heaven, with sunlight on its wings,
The free bird flies and sings ;
Beneath upon the ground its shadow plays
In endless, aimless maze.

O fool, who only seest the shadow blurred,
And not the bright-winged bird !
And all the years, thine arrows, squanderest
On such insensate quest !

O lift, though it be late, thine earth-dimmed eyes,
Where on the darkening skies
Still flash the white wings!—If one shaft remain,
With *that* thou mayst attain !

—Spectator.

A RECENT inquiry shows the character of the reading of the Swedes. The sales of the modern realistic authors do not exceed a thousand copies. The great middle class still buys thousands of books of Emilie Carlén, Herman Bjursten, Crusenstolpe, and excellent August Blanche, no longer those of Marie Sophie Schwartz. The upper class takes the poems of C. D. af Wirsén and Snoilski, and the books of Victor Rydberg, and an astonishing number of French novels ; also several German, such as Marlitt and Samgron, and of English-American, Hugh Conway. The taste in Sweden has always been cosmopolitan and sensational.—*Scandinavia.*

THE London *Spectator* makes this point upon Mr. Alexander Nicolson's "Memoirs of Adam Black," just published at Edinburgh:—"Mr. Nicolson's modesty as a biographer is so great as to suggest the suspicion that it is not altogether unalloyed with indolence. It is fully eleven years since Mr. Adam Black, the friend of Macaulay and his successor in the representation of Edinburgh, died at the great age of ninety. Mr. Nicolson devotes the most important portion of his preface to an emphatic protest against that 'brutal realism' which is the besetting sin of modern biography. We fail, therefore, to see why it should have taken a decade to produce a thin little volume of 260 pages, composed, to no inconsiderable extent, of autobiographical reminiscences—a book which it is safe to say such a biographer as Mr. Froude could have prepared in three months. 'The lapse of time,' says Mr. Nicolson, 'between Mr. Black's death and the appearance of this memoir is not in accordance with modern practice, which allows as little delay as possible from the death of the deceased to the publication of his biography. The sentiments that influence that practice are not those of the publishers of this volume, or of its compiler.' Mr. Nicolson's calmness in stating a fact, by way of excusing it, is on a par with that of the clergyman who took his congregation into his confidence over an exegetical problem, by saying: 'There is a difficulty in this passage, a great difficulty, my brethren ; but let us look the difficulty boldly in the face—and pass on.' Besides, there is surely a happy medium between Mr. Froude's hot haste and Mr. Nicolson's reluctant delay."

THE comparative importance of English statesmen, from the news-vendors' point of view, may be seen in the fact that, according to the London Central News it reports all speeches of Lord Salisbury, Lord R. Churchill, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain *verbatim*; Lord Spencer, Lord Hartington, Lord Granville and Sir Charles Dilke to the extent of one column each ; and Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Sir R. A. Cross, Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Childers half a column each.

A WELL-AUTHENTICATED case of petrification is reported by the Springfield *Republican* from the town of Topsfield. The sexton has been engaged in removing bodies from the old part of the cemetery to the new, and in doing so the body of Israel Gallup was removed in the ordinary way. It was found impossible to raise the body of his wife, which lay by his side, and a plank was put down as an inclined plane and the coffin in this way drawn to the surface. A hasty examination showed that the body, which had been buried thirty years, had become petrified, the eyes and a portion of the nose only showing signs of decay. The rest, even to the folds of her robe, was changed to solid stone.

ENGLISH papers relate that a lady who used dead canaries as a trimming for her ball-dress was snubbed, and left partnerless, by every man in the room at a recent dance. Instead of being the belle of the ball, she became a conspicuous wall-flower. Her punishment appears to have been greater than she could bear, for we are told that by supper-time she had disappeared. We cannot proffer any sympathy for the devotee of effect, and would greatly rejoice if the fashion of wearing the carcasses of birds were to be frowned down as unworthy the "gentler" sex. Had ladies who thus adorn themselves any conception of the cruelty and torture inflicted upon their feathered victims, in order that their beauty may be preserved in death, hats and bonnets would soon be otherwise trimmed.

A ROMANTIC story appears from Holbrook, U. S. Leonard Poole, a young man, thirty-two years ago bid his wife and infant daughter good-bye and started West for gold. He determined not to return until he had gained a competence. He had worked and wandered about ever since, and two months ago he hid his money, a considerable amount, about himself, and started home. His train was raided by robbers in crossing the plains, and his own treasures taken. He was knocked from the cars, picked up

badly hurt by wood-choppers and cared for till he recovered. He then proceeded to Boston and wandered over the city in a dazed manner that led to his arrest, and he was sent to the State workhouse at Bridgewater, where he was found the other day by his son-in-law who had married the daughter he had left an infant. His wife died some time ago.

MISS MARY ANDERSON announces that she is going to retire from the stage for two years, partly to rest and partly to study for her future career. It is alleged that her success has made her ambitious. She is hurt at the suggestion that she has not reached the highest mark of genius, and she imagines that study will widen her range and increase her power. But that is not what most of us would predict. Public speaking is like fiddle-playing, said Mr. Disraeli. It can be kept at its highest mark only by constant practice. Acting also, one would imagine, is like fiddle-playing: it can be kept at its highest mark only by constant practice. To retire from the stage for two years' study is to surrender the only means of discipline. When Miss Mary Anderson comes to think it over, her temporary retirement from the footlights is likely to have as much foundation in fact as the constant announcement that she is going to get married.

A FLOOD of Christmas books and cards is forthcoming. As usual, the bulk and the best of them will appear a long way in advance of Christmas, so that when the Yule-tide comes we shall be ready for next year's summer numbers. This is not a serious drawback. Christmas literature often bears about as much relation to Christmas as to Midsummer, and there is no reason why it should be otherwise. The book market brightens as the year draws to a close, and we presume the long nights and dark days are responsible for this periodical return of the reading passion. Christmas cards are prettier than ever, and of those submitted to us prominent place must be given to the productions of Messrs. Prang, of Boston, and of Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner, of London. The Toronto News Company are Canadian publishers of the last named. Merely as specimens of the perfection of modern colour-printing these cards are wonderfully interesting, and their "artistic merit" is unquestionable. Many of the miniature landscapes and figures are exquisite, and all are marked by refined taste.

APROPOS of the turn in the Scott Act tide, of the crushing defeats inflicted upon its advocates of late, and of the cumulative evidence in favour of its impotence where adopted, the following remarks from a dispassionate and independent American paper may commend themselves to those Scott Act supporters who have been inveigled by perferlid advocates into supporting Prohibition: "The advocates of Prohibition are too apt to forget that the capacity of municipal government to enforce law is limited. We may have mayor, aldermen, police, and so forth, all right. The final test, after all, is the superior court and the jury-box, and such is human nature at present in Massachusetts that Prohibition cannot be enforced but a few months at a time without an utter blockade of business and total miscarriage of justice in the courts of the Commonwealth. This has been shown again and again. The advocates of both policies are too apt, after the contest is over and the result decided, each to let the other alone—the defeated to stand back and throw the administration of the law wholly upon the other. This is not the way to make progress in the suppression of illegitimate dealing in liquor."

WE are reminded by a contemporary that Leopold von Ranke, the greatest of living historians, and the creator of the modern historical method, was ninety years of age last week. He is busily engaged on the crowning work of his life, the wonderful "Weltgeschichte," which has already come down from the earliest authentic records of ancient Egypt to the death of Charlemagne. A sixth volume, according to the Berlin correspondent of the *Times*, is about to appear, and the venerable student hopes to complete his vast undertaking in three more years. In vigour of handling, fulness of detail, and breadth of treatment, the "Universal History" is admittedly worthy of the author of "The Popes of Rome." "The style is as fresh, the statement as clear and accurate, the reasoning as just, original and profound, as in the book that moved Macaulay's admiration some forty years ago. Still the grand old scholar plods on with his task, and year by year gives the world a lesson of what industry and genius may accomplish in despite of time. Von Ranke's friends are many in every land where history is loved and studied. All of them will join in congratulating him on his great age, and in hearty wishes that he may live to bring his last design to a successful end."

WE understand that a proposal is about to be made by the German Government which must be of great interest and importance to all the commercial nations of the world, and especially to those that have a large carrying-trade by sea. Many of the perils of the deep arise when vessels are approaching land and the coast-line is unfamiliar to those in charge, or when it affords no indication of the precise locality. Most shores have sunken reefs or sandbanks lying at some little distance from the land, which are a constant source of danger to passing vessels. In civilized countries these are generally marked in some way by lighthouses or other means, but there are vast stretches of coast where no such warnings exist. The German Government propose that a conference be held in Berlin, attended by representatives from all countries interested in the matter, to prepare the way for dealing with the subject internationally. There are few coast-lines in the world where, collectively, the maritime powers could not bring sufficient pressure to induce the inhabitants, if any, to consent to the erection of beacons or signal stations. By the same means it is also hoped that wreckage might be stopped, and protection for shipwrecked crews be obtained. It is recognized that considerable outlay and an expenditure reaching over many years are involved in the proposal ; but the anticipated benefits are great and enduring, amply sufficient, it is thought, to justify the necessary outlay.