

THE THREE WISHES.

The eastern origin of this tale seems evident; had it been originally composed in a northern land, it is probable that the king would have been represented as deithoused by means of bribes obtained from his own treasury.

There was once a wise emperor who made a law, that to every stranger who came to his court a fried fish should be served. The servants were directed to take notice, if, when the stranger had eaten the fish to the teeth on one side, he turned it over and began on the other side. If he did, he was to be immediately seized, and on the third day thereafter he was to be put to death. But, by a great stretch of imperial clemency, the culprit was permitted to utter one wish each day, which the emperor pledged himself to grant, provided it was not to spare his life. Many had already perished in consequence of this edict, when, one day, a count and his young

son, the Emperor of Morocco in these days, and on the second day of his imprisonment the young man demanded the king's treasures. If his first demand was a solid one, the second was not less so; still, an emperor's word is sacred, and having made the promise, he was forced to keep it; and the treasures of gold and silver and jewels were placed at the prisoner's disposal. On getting possession of them, he distributed them profusely among the courtiers, and soon he had made a host of friends by his liberality.

The emperor began now to feel exceedingly uncomfortable. Unable to sleep, he rose early on the third morning and went, with four in his hand, to the prison to hear what the third wish was to be.

"Now," said he to his prisoner, "tell me what your third demand is, that it may be granted at once, and you may be hung out of hand, for I am tired of your demands."

"Sir," answered his prisoner, "I have but one more favor to request of your majesty, which, when

mon. If nobody saw the offense committed, the count can not be guilty, and my husband is innocent."

The emperor frowned, and forthwith the courtiers began to murmur; then he smiled, and immediately their viages became radiant.

"Let it be so," said his majesty; "let him live, though I have put many a man to death for a lighter offense than his. But if he is not hung, he is married. Justice has been done."

son presented themselves at court. The fish was served as usual, and when the count had removed all the fish from one side, he turned it over, and was about to commence on the other, when he was suddenly seized and thrown into prison, and was told of his approaching doom. Sorrow-stricken, the count's young son besought the emperor to allow him to die in the room of his father; a favor which the monarch was pleased to accord him. The count was accordingly released from prison, and his son was thrown into his cell in his stead. As soon as this had been done, the young man said to his jailers: "You know I have the right to make three demands before I die; go and tell the emperor to send me his daughter, and a priest to marry us." This first demand was not much to the emperor's taste, nevertheless he felt bound to keep his word, and he therefore complied with the request, to which the princess had no kind of objection. This occurred in the times when kings kept their treasures in a cove, or in a tower set apart for the purpose, like

you have granted, I shall die content. It is merely that you will cease the eyes of those who saw my father turn the fish over to be put out."

"Very good," replied the emperor, "your demand is not solid, and springs from a good heart. Let the chamberlain be seized," he continued, turning to his guards.

"I, Sir!" cried the chamberlain; "I did not see any thing—it was the steward."

"Let the steward be seized then," said the king. But the steward protested with tears in his eyes, that he had not witnessed any thing of what had been reported, and said it was the butler. The butler declared that he had seen nothing of the matter, and that it must have been the valets. But they protested that they were utterly ignorant of what had been charged against the count; in short, it turned out that nobody could be found who had seen the count commit the offense, upon which the prisoner said:

"I appeal to you, my father, as to another Sol-