

## THE DOVE.

RETOLD AFTER THE GERMAN OF ALBERT RODERICH.<sup>1</sup>

THERE was once upon a time a forest, and a youth was walking dreamily in the shade of its majestic trees. Suddenly he heard a wailing note, and, searching in the direction whence the sound came, he found a wood-dove caught in a snare. "Well, well," he said, "I should not wonder at all if that dove were a fairy who would grant me a wish if released."

With these thoughts, he cut the cord and let the dove go. His eyes followed her flight and he asked: "Supposing you are a fairy, shall I be allowed to make a wish?"

And really the dove was a fairy, whose delicate form hovered between the branches of the big oak tree; and she said: "Certainly I am a fairy, and I shall allow you three wishes."

"All right!" said the youth, "three wishes—such is the custom in fairy tales. But will they be fulfilled?"

"Yes," said the fairy, "they will be fulfilled."

What a delightful prospect for a young man! He thought: "First, I wish wealth; secondly, a palace to live in; and, thirdly, that I shall be granted three more wishes whenever I so desire."

"Your wishes are granted," said the fairy, and disappeared.

The youth went home, and there he saw a palace which he knew was his own. He entered and went right to the treasure-vault, for he was familiar with all the rooms of the mansion as if he had been living in it for ages. The treasure-vault contained as much money as he wanted. He spent his riches in pleasure and in charities just as he thought best. At any rate he enjoyed himself immensely until he became sick in body and in mind. While lying on his bed he thought of his chance of having new wishes granted. And he wished, first, for renewed health; secondly, wisdom, with

<sup>1</sup> From the *Fliegende Blätter*, Jan., 1897, by κρs.

all the learning which long years of studying would afford ; and, thirdly, another chance of three more wishes.

His wishes were again fulfilled.

When he became sick of his books he longed for a quiet home, and he wished first, for a beautiful wife, and, secondly, for well-behaved, amenable children, and, thirdly, that he could have another chance of three wishes.

Thus he continued, always asking for the fulfilment of two wishes and requesting another chance of wishes whenever he should desire it.

This kind of life was very pleasant, but he grew sick of it because he had wished for everything that he could think of, and he no longer knew what to wish for next.

One day, when he had in vain troubled himself with the invention of new wishes without being able to find one, he grew very wroth and shouted in his anger : "What pleasure can there be in obtaining anything if these confounded fairies always grant it for the mere asking ! I wish I had never wished anything."

As he uttered these words, he found himself standing at the very same spot, in the very same forest, under the very same conditions as before. The fulfilment of all his wishes was at once wiped out as though it had been a dream ; and in the boughs of the gnarly oak the liberated wood-dove cooed merrily.