

## The Emperor's New Clothes

Many years ago, there was an Emperor, who was so excessively fond of new clothes that he spent all his money in dress. He had a different suit for each hour of the day.

One day, two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance at the court. They gave out that they knew how to weave the most beautiful colors and elaborate patterns, the clothes manufactured from which should have the wonderful property of remaining invisible to everyone who was unfit for the office he held, or who was extraordinarily simple in character.

"These must, indeed, be splendid clothes!" thought the Emperor. "Had I such a suit, I might at once find out what men in my realms are unfit for their office and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately." And he caused large sums of money to be given to both the weavers in order that they might begin their work directly.

So the two pretended weavers set up two looms and affected to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread, put both into their own knapsacks, and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.

"I should like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth," said the Emperor to himself, after some little time had elapsed; he was, however, rather embarrassed, when he remembered that a simpleton, or one unfit for his office, would be unable to see. All the people throughout the city had heard of the wonderful property the cloth was to possess; and all were anxious to learn how wise, or how ignorant, their neighbors might prove to be.

The Emperor now sent an officer of his court to see how the men were getting on, and to ascertain whether the cloth would

soon be ready. He surveyed the looms on all sides, but could see nothing at all but the empty frames.

The impostors requested him very courteously to be so good as to come nearer their looms and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colors were not very beautiful, at the same time pointing to the empty frames. The poor old minister looked and looked: There was nothing there. "What!" thought he. "Is it possible that I am a simpleton? I have never thought so myself; and no one must know it now if I am so. Can it be that I am unfit for my office? No, that must not be said either. I will never confess that I could not see the stuff."

"Well, Sir Minister!" said one of the knaves, still pretending to work. "You do not say whether the stuff pleases you."

"Oh, it is excellent!" replied the old minister, looking at the loom through his spectacles. "This pattern, and the colors, yes. I will tell the Emperor without delay how very beautiful I think them."

"We shall be much obliged to you," said the impostors.

The whole city was talking of the splendid cloth, and now the Emperor himself wished to see the costly manufacture. He went to the crafty impostors, who, as soon as they were aware of the Emperor's approach, went on working more diligently than ever, although they still did not pass a single thread through the looms.

"Is not the work absolutely magnificent?" said two officers of the crown. "If your Majesty will only be pleased to look at it! What a splendid design! What glorious colors!" and at the same time, they pointed to the empty frames; for they imagined that everyone else could see this exquisite piece of workmanship.

"How is this?" said the Emperor to himself. "I can see nothing! This is indeed a terrible

affair!” “Oh! The cloth is charming,” said he aloud. And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms. All his retinue now strained their eyes, but they could see no more than the others; nevertheless, they all exclaimed, “Oh, how beautiful!” and advised his majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material, for the approaching procession. “Magnificent! Charming! Excellent!” resounded on all sides.

The rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and had sixteen lights burning, so that everyone might see how anxious they were to finish the Emperor’s new suit. They pretended to roll the cloth off the looms, cut the air with their scissors, and sewed with needles without any thread in them. “See!” cried they, at last. “The Emperor’s new clothes are ready!”

And now the Emperor came to the weavers; and the rogues raised their arms, saying, “Here are your Majesty’s trousers! Here is the scarf! Here is the mantle! The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; that, however, is the great virtue of this delicate cloth.”

“Yes indeed!” said all the courtiers, although not one of them could see anything of this exquisite manufacture.

“If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to take off your clothes, we will fit on the new suit, in front of the looking glass.”

The Emperor was accordingly undressed, and the rogues pretended to array him in his new suit, the Emperor turning round, from side to side, before the looking glass.

“How splendid his Majesty looks in his new clothes, and how well they fit!” everyone cried out. “What a design! What colors! These are indeed royal robes!”

“I am quite ready,” answered the Emperor. “Do my new clothes fit well?” asked he, turning himself round again before the looking glass, in order that he might appear to be examining his handsome suit.

The lords of the bedchamber, who were to carry his Majesty’s train, pretended to be

carrying something, for they would by no means betray anything like simplicity or unfitness for their office.

So now the Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out, “Oh! How beautiful are our Emperor’s new clothes!” In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes; because, in doing so, he would have declared himself either a simpleton or unfit for his office.

“But the Emperor has nothing at all on!” said a little child.

“Listen to the voice of innocence!” exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

“But he has nothing at all on!” at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now! And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever, to appear holding up a train, although, in reality, there was no train to hold.