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THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

(FROM H.C. ANDERSEN'S DANISH FAIRY TALES.)



LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON.



THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

(From H. C. ANDERSEN'S DANISH FAIRY TALES by H. L. BRÆKSTAD.)

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor, who was so fond of fine new clothes, that he spent all his money in finery and dresses. He did not care anything about his soldiers, nor did he care about going to the play, or driving in the park, except when he wanted to show off his new clothes. He had a dress for every hour of the day ; and just as we would say about a king, that he is in the council-room, so they always used to say, the Emperor is in his dressing-room.

In the great city, where he lived, there was always great merriment going on ; every day there arrived a number of strangers. One day two vagabonds came to the city ; they called themselves weavers, and said they knew how to weave the most splendid cloth one could imagine. Not only were the colours and the patterns something out of the common, but the clothes which were made from these materials possessed the wonderful property that they became invisible to every one that was not fit for his office, or was hopelessly stupid.

"They must be fine clothes indeed," thought the Emperor ; "by wearing them I could find out what men in my empire are not fit for their places. I should be able to know the wise from the stupid ! Yes ; I must have that cloth made for me at once !" And he gave the two vagabonds a lot of money in hand, that they should commence with their work at once. They put up two looms, and pretended that they were working ; but they had really nothing at all on the looms. They kept on ordering the finest silk and the costliest gold ; this they put in their own bags, and worked away at the empty looms till late at night.

"I should like to know how much of the cloth they have ready now," thought the Emperor ; but he felt a little uneasy at the thought that whoever was stupid or not suited for his place could not see the cloth. He thought, of course, that he need not be afraid for his own part ; but he would send somebody first to see how they were getting on. Everybody in the city knew about the

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The Emperor's New Clothes.

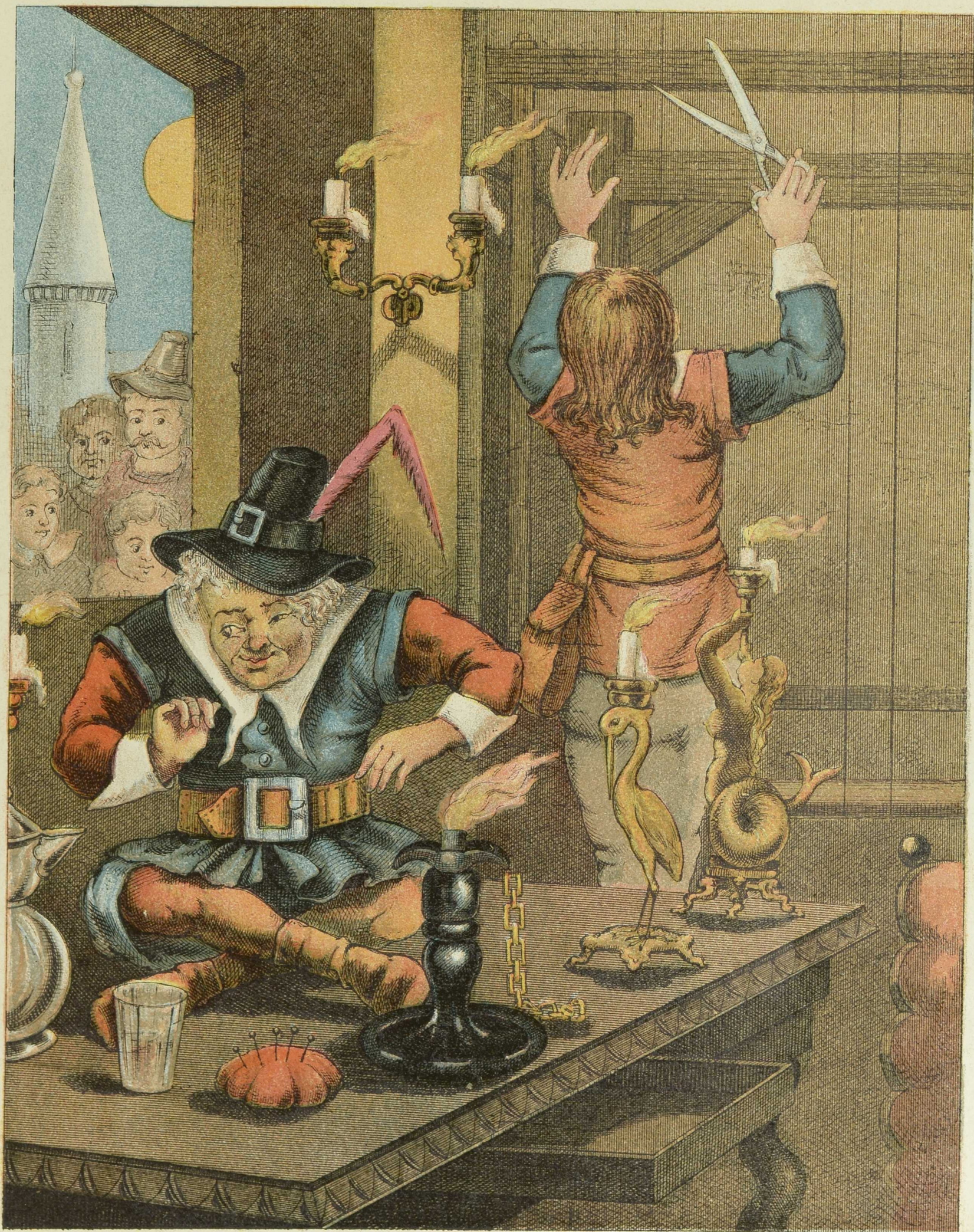
wonderful property which the cloth possessed, and all were anxious to find out how bad or stupid their neighbours were.

"I will send my old and honest minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor; "he can best see what the cloth looks like, for he has sense, and no one knows his business better than he!" Well, the old and trusty minister went into the room, where the two vagabonds sat working at the empty looms. "Dear me," thought the old minister, and opened his eyes; "I can't see anything!" But he did not say this aloud. The two vagabonds asked him to be so kind as to come nearer; and asked him if he did not like the fine pattern and the beautiful colours? They pointed to the empty loom; and the poor old minister opened his eyes still more, but he could not see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Dear, dear," he thought; "am I really so stupid? I should never have thought it! Nobody must know it, however! Should I not be fit for my place? No; it would never do to say I cannot see the cloth!" "Well, you don't say anything about it," said one of the weavers. "Oh, it is really fine—quite charming!" said the old minister, and looked through his eye-glasses; "what a pattern, and what colours! Yes; I shall tell the Emperor that I am very much pleased with it." "Well, we are pleased to hear that," said the weavers; and they then called the colours by their names, and spoke about the wonderful pattern. The old minister listened to them very attentively, so that he could repeat what they said, when he came back to the Emperor, and this he did.

The vagabonds asked now for more money, and silk and gold, which they said they wanted to complete the work with. They put, however, everything in their bags; not a thread came on the looms, but they kept on weaving as before at the empty looms. The Emperor sent soon again another trusty councillor, to see how the weaving was going on, and if the cloth would soon be ready. It fared, however, with him as with the minister; he looked and looked, but there was nothing but the empty looms. He could see nothing at all.

"Well, is not this a fine piece of cloth?" said the two vagabonds; and they pretended to show him the cloth, and described to him the fine pattern, which did not exist at all. "I am not stupid," thought the councillor; "it is my good office I am not fit for. It is very provoking, but I must not let it out!" So he praised the cloth, which he did not see, and expressed his delight at the beautiful





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colours and the splendid pattern. "Yes; it is very charming," he said to the Emperor.

All the people in the town were talking about the splendid cloth. At last the Emperor wished to see it himself, while it still was on the loom. With a whole company of chosen men, amongst whom were the two honest councillors, who had been there before, he proceeded to the two cunning vagabonds, who were now working away with all their might, but without any thread or materials whatever.

"Is it not magnificent!" said the two honest councillors. "Does your Majesty see what a pattern, and what colours!" and then they pointed to the empty looms, because they believed that the others were sure to see the cloth. "What can this be?" thought the Emperor. "I see nothing! This is really dreadful! Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? This is the most terrible thing that could have happened to me!" "Oh, yes; it is very fine," said the Emperor; "it has my entire approbation," and he nodded approvingly, and looked at the empty looms. He would not say that he could not see anything. The whole of his suite looked and looked, but could not see anything; they said, however, just like the Emperor, "It is very fine!" and they advised him to wear the new clothes, made from the splendid stuff, for the first time at the great procession, which was to take place soon. "It is magnificent, splendid, excellent!" was echoed from mouth to mouth, and everybody seemed to be greatly delighted. The Emperor gave each of the vagabonds a cross of a knightly order to wear, and gave them also the title of "Weavers to the Emperor."

The whole night before the day the procession was to take place, the vagabonds were sitting up working, and had more than sixteen candles lighted. The people could see they were busy getting the Emperor's new clothes ready. They pretended to be taking the cloth off the looms; they were cutting in the air with large scissors: and were sewing with needles without any thread; and said at last; "See, there are the clothes ready!"

The Emperor, with his most distinguished courtiers, came himself to their place; and the vagabonds would lift one arm, as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cloak!" and so on. "It is as light as a cobweb!" they said, "One would think one had nothing on at all; but that's just the beauty of it." "Yes," said all the courtiers; but they could not see anything, because there was nothing. "Will



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your Imperial Majesty please to take off your clothes?" said the vagabonds; "and we will put the new clothes on your Majesty, here in front of the large looking-glass!"

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the vagabonds pretended to give him piece by piece of the new clothes, which they were supposed to have ready. They appeared to be fastening something round his waist; that was the train to the cloak, and the Emperor turned round to all sides before the looking-glass. "How well they look; how splendidly they fit!" said all. "What pattern! what colours! That is a costly dress!"

"They are waiting outside with the canopy, which is to be borne over your Majesty in the procession," said the master of the ceremonies.

"Yes; I am quite ready," said the Emperor. "Does it not fit me well?" And then he turned round once more before the looking-glass, to make the people believe that he was really admiring his finery. The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, were fumbling along the floor with their hands, as if they were gathering up the train of the cloak; they walked as if they were carrying something in their hands, because they were afraid that the people should think they could not see anything.

And thus the Emperor went in the procession, under the splendid canopy; and all the people in the streets and in the windows said, "Dear me, what magnificent new clothes the Emperor has! What a splendid train he has to his cloak! How beautifully they fit him!" Nobody would let out that they saw nothing, because in that case they had not been fit for their office, or they must be very stupid. No other clothes of the Emperor had been such a success.

"But he hasn't got anything on," cried a little child. "Dear me, just listen to what the little innocent says," said the father; and the people whispered to each other what the child had said. "He hasn't got anything on!" shouted all the people at last. This made the Emperor's flesh creep, because he thought that they were right; but he thought, "I must keep up through the procession, anyhow." And he walked on still more majestically, and the chamberlains walked behind and carried the train, which did not exist at all.



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