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THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

A Humorous Reading

by
Hans Christian Anderson



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Hans Christian Anderson
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An old story told anew.

Many years ago there lived an Emperor, who was so excessively fond of fine clothes that he spent all his money upon them. He did not care about his soldiers, nor about the theatre; he only liked to drive out and show his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, "He is in council," so they always said of him, "The Emperor is in the wardrobe."

In the city in which he lived it was always very merry; every day came many strangers. One day two rogues came; they professed to be weavers, and declared they could weave the finest stuff any one could imagine. Not only were their colors and patterns, they said, uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes made of the stuff possessed the wonderful quality that they became invisible to any one who was unfit for the office he held--or--was incorrigibly stupid.

The Emperor said to himself, "Those would be capital clothes! If I wore those, I should be able to find out what men in my empire are not fit for the places they have; I could tell the clever from the dunces. Yes, the stuff must be woven for me directly!"

And he gave the two rogues a great deal of cash in hand, that they might begin their work at once.

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