

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 did not trouble himself in the least about his soldiers; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or the chase, except for the opportunities then afforded him for displaying his new clothes. He had a different suit for each hour of the day; and as of any other king or emperor, one is accustomed to say, "he is sitting in council," it was always said of him, "The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."

Time passed merrily in the large town which was his capital; strangers arrived every day at the court. One day, two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to

weave stuffs of 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.

THE REAL PRINCESS

There was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess; but then she must be a real Princess. He travelled all over the world in hopes of finding such a lady; but there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty; but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide, for now one thing, now another, seemed to him not quite right about the ladies. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful tempest arose, it thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents: besides, it was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it. It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition; the water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah! we shall soon see that!" thought the old Queen-mother; however, she said not a word of what she was going to do; but went quietly into the bedroom, took all the bed-clothes off the bed, and put three little peas on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the three peas, and put twenty feather beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly indeed!" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had something hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It has hurt me so much!"

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the three little peas through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds. None but a real Princess could have had such

delicate sense of feeling.

The Prince accordingly made her his wife; being now convinced that he had found a real Princess. The three peas were however put into the cabinet of curiosities, where they are still to be seen, provided they are not lost.

Wasn't this a lady of real delicacy?

THE SHOES OF FORTUNE

I. A Beginning

Every author has some peculiarity in his descriptions or in his style of writing. Those who do not like him, magnify it, shrug up their shoulders, and exclaim--there he is again! I, for my part, know very well how I can bring about this movement and this exclamation. It would happen immediately if I were to begin here, as I intended to do, with: "Rome has its Corso, Naples its Toledo"--"Ah! that Andersen; there he is again!" they would cry; yet I must, to please my fancy, continue quite quietly, and add: "But Copenhagen has its East Street."

Here, then, we will stay for the present. In one of the houses not far from the new market a party was invited--a very large party, in order, as is often the case, to get a return invitation from the others. One half of the company was already seated at the card-table, the other half awaited the result of the stereotype preliminary observation of the lady of the house:

"Now let us see what we can do to amuse ourselves."

They had got just so far, and the conversation began to crystallise, as it could but do with the scanty stream which the commonplace world supplied. Amongst other things they spoke of the middle ages: some praised that period as far more interesting, far more poetical than our own too sober present; indeed Councillor Knap defended this opinion so warmly, that the hostess declared immediately on his side, and both exerted themselves with unwearied eloquence. The Councillor boldly declared the time of King Hans to be the noblest and the most happy period.*

* A.D. 1482-1513

While the conversation turned on this subject, and was only for a

moment interrupted by the arrival of a journal that contained nothing worth reading, we will just step out into the antechamber, where cloaks, mackintoshes, sticks, umbrellas, and shoes, were deposited. Here sat two female figures, a young and an old one. One might have thought at first they were servants come to accompany their mistresses home; but on looking nearer, one soon saw they could scarcely be mere servants; their forms were too noble for that, their skin too fine, the cut of their dress too striking. Two fairies were they; the younger, it is true, was not Dame Fortune herself, but one of the waiting-maids of her handmaidens who carry about the lesser good things that she distributes; the other looked extremely gloomy--it was Care. She always attends to her own serious business herself, as then she is sure of having it done properly.

They were telling each other, with a confidential interchange of ideas, where they had been during the day. The messenger of Fortune had only executed a few unimportant commissions, such as saving a new bonnet from a shower of rain, etc.; but what she had yet to perform was something quite unusual.

"I must tell you," said she, "that to-day is my birthday; and in honor of it, a pair of walking-shoes or galoshes has been entrusted to me, which I am to carry to mankind. These shoes possess the property of instantly transporting him who has them on to the place or the period in which he most wishes to be; every wish, as regards time or place, or state of being, will be immediately fulfilled, and so at last man will be happy, here below."

"Do you seriously believe it?" replied Care, in a severe tone of reproach. "No; he will be very unhappy, and will assuredly bless the moment when he feels that he has freed himself from the fatal shoes."

"Stupid nonsense!" said the other angrily. "I will put them here by the door. Some one will make a mistake for certain and take the wrong ones--he will be a happy man."

Such was their conversation.

II. What Happened to the Councillor

It was late; Councillor Knap, deeply occupied with the times of King Hans, intended to go home, and malicious Fate managed matters so that his feet, instead of finding their way to his own galoshes, slipped into those of Fortune. Thus caparisoned the good man walked out of the well-lighted rooms into East Street. By the magic power of the shoes he was carried back to the times of King Hans; on which account his foot very naturally sank in the mud and puddles of the street, there having been in those days no pavement in Copenhagen.

"Well! This is too bad! How dirty it is here!" sighed the Councillor. "As to a pavement, I can find no traces of one, and all the lamps, it seems, have gone to sleep."

The moon was not yet very high; it was besides rather foggy, so that in the darkness all objects seemed mingled in chaotic confusion. At the next corner hung a votive lamp before a Madonna, but the light it gave was little better than none at all; indeed, he did not observe it before he was exactly under it, and his eyes fell upon the bright colors of the pictures which represented the well-known group of the Virgin and the infant Jesus.

"That is probably a wax-work show," thought he; "and the people delay taking down their sign in hopes of a late visitor or two."

A few persons in the costume of the time of King Hans passed quickly by him.

"How strange they look! The good folks come probably from a masquerade!"

Suddenly was heard the sound of drums and fifes; the bright blaze of a fire shot up from time to time, and its ruddy gleams seemed to contend with the bluish light of the torches. The Councillor stood still, and watched a most strange procession pass by. First came a dozen drummers, who understood pretty well how to handle their instruments; then came

halberdiers, and some armed with cross-bows. The principal person in the procession was a priest. Astonished at what he saw, the Councillor asked what was the meaning of all this mummery, and who that man was.

"That's the Bishop of Zealand," was the answer.

"Good Heavens! What has taken possession of the Bishop?" sighed the Councillor, shaking his head. It certainly could not be the Bishop; even though he was considered the most absent man in the whole kingdom, and people told the drollest anecdotes about him. Reflecting on the matter, and without looking right or left, the Councillor went through East Street and across the Habro-Platz. The bridge leading to Palace Square was not to be found; scarcely trusting his senses, the nocturnal wanderer discovered a shallow piece of water, and here fell in with two men who very comfortably were rocking to and fro in a boat.

"Does your honor want to cross the ferry to the Holme?" asked they.

"Across to the Holme!" said the Councillor, who knew nothing of the age in which he at that moment was. "No, I am going to Christianshafen, to Little Market Street."

Both men stared at him in astonishment.

"Only just tell me where the bridge is," said he. "It is really unpardonable that there are no lamps here; and it is as dirty as if one had to wade through a morass."

The longer he spoke with the boatmen, the more unintelligible did their language become to him.

"I don't understand your Bornholmish dialect," said he at last, angrily, and turning his back upon them. He was unable to find the bridge: there was no railway either. "It is really disgraceful what a state this place is in," muttered he to himself. Never had his age, with which, however, he was always grumbling, seemed so miserable as on this evening. "I'll take a hackney-coach!" thought he. But where were the hackneycoaches? Not one was to be seen.

"I must go back to the New Market; there, it is to be hoped, I shall find some coaches; for if I don't, I shall never get safe to Christianshafen."

So off he went in the direction of East Street, and had nearly got to the end of it when the moon shone forth.

"God bless me! What wooden scaffolding is that which they have set up there?" cried he involuntarily, as he looked at East Gate, which, in those days, was at the end of East Street.

He found, however, a little side-door open, and through this he went, and stepped into our New Market of the present time. It was a huge desolate plain; some wild bushes stood up here and there, while across the field flowed a broad canal or river. Some wretched hovels for the Dutch sailors, resembling great boxes, and after which the place was named, lay about in confused disorder on the opposite bank.

"I either behold a *fata morgana*, or I am regularly tipsy," whimpered out the Councillor. "But what's this?"

He turned round anew, firmly convinced that he was seriously ill. He gazed at the street formerly so well known to him, and now so strange in appearance, and looked at the houses more attentively: most of them were of wood, slightly put together; and many had a thatched roof.

"No--I am far from well," sighed he; "and yet I drank only one glass of punch; but I cannot suppose it--it was, too, really very wrong to give us punch and hot salmon for supper. I shall speak about it at the first opportunity. I have half a mind to go back again, and say what I suffer. But no, that would be too silly; and Heaven only knows if they are up still."

He looked for the house, but it had vanished.

"It is really dreadful," groaned he with increasing anxiety; "I cannot recognise East Street again; there is not a single decent shop from one end to the other! Nothing but wretched huts can I see anywhere; just as if I were at Ringstead. Oh! I am ill! I can scarcely bear myself any longer. Where the deuce can the house be? It must be here on this very spot; yet there is not the slightest idea of resemblance, to such a degree has everything changed this night! At all events here are some people up and stirring. Oh! oh! I am certainly very ill."

He now hit upon a half-open door, through a chink of which a faint

light shone. It was a sort of hostelry of those times; a kind of public-house. The room had some resemblance to the clay-floored halls in Holstein; a pretty numerous company, consisting of seamen, Copenhagen burghers, and a few scholars, sat here in deep converse over their pewter cans, and gave little heed to the person who entered.

"By your leave!" said the Councillor to the Hostess, who came bustling towards him. "I've felt so queer all of a sudden; would you have the goodness to send for a hackney-coach to take me to Christianshafen?"

The woman examined him with eyes of astonishment, and shook her head; she then addressed him in German. The Councillor thought she did not understand Danish, and therefore repeated his wish in German. This, in connection with his costume, strengthened the good woman in the belief that he was a foreigner. That he was ill, she comprehended directly; so she brought him a pitcher of water, which tasted certainly pretty strong of the sea, although it had been fetched from the well.

The Councillor supported his head on his hand, drew a long breath, and thought over all the wondrous things he saw around him.

"Is this the Daily News of this evening?" he asked mechanically, as he saw the Hostess push aside a large sheet of paper.

The meaning of this councillorship query remained, of course, a riddle to her, yet she handed him the paper without replying. It was a coarse wood-cut, representing a splendid meteor "as seen in the town of Cologne," which was to be read below in bright letters.

"That is very old!" said the Councillor, whom this piece of antiquity began to make considerably more cheerful. "Pray how did you come into possession of this rare print? It is extremely interesting, although the whole is a mere fable. Such meteorous appearances are to be explained in this way--that they are the reflections of the Aurora Borealis, and it is highly probable they are caused principally by electricity."

Those persons who were sitting nearest him and heard his speech, stared at him in wonderment; and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said with a serious countenance, "You are no doubt a

very learned man, Monsieur."

"Oh no," answered the Councillor, "I can only join in conversation on this topic and on that, as indeed one must do according to the demands of the world at present."

"Modestia is a fine virtue," continued the gentleman; "however, as to your speech, I must say mihi secus videtur: yet I am willing to suspend my judicium."

"May I ask with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" asked the Councillor.

"I am a Bachelor in Theologia," answered the gentleman with a stiff reverence.

This reply fully satisfied the Councillor; the title suited the dress. "He is certainly," thought he, "some village schoolmaster-some queer old fellow, such as one still often meets with in Jutland."

"This is no locus docendi, it is true," began the clerical gentleman; "yet I beg you earnestly to let us profit by your learning. Your reading in the ancients is, sine dubio, of vast extent?"

"Oh yes, I've read a something, to be sure," replied the Councillor. "I like reading all useful works; but I do not on that account despise the modern ones; 'tis only the unfortunate 'Tales of Every-day Life' that I cannot bear--we have enough and more than enough such in reality."

"'Tales of Every-day Life?'" said our Bachelor inquiringly.

"I mean those new fangled novels, twisting and writhing themselves in the dust of commonplace, which also expect to find a reading public."

"Oh," exclaimed the clerical gentleman smiling, "there is much wit in them; besides they are read at court. The King likes the history of Sir Iffven and Sir Gaudian particularly, which treats of King Arthur, and his Knights of the Round Table; he has more than once joked about it with his high vassals."

"I have not read that novel," said the Councillor; "it must be quite a new one, that Heiberg has published lately."

"No," answered the theologian of the time of King Hans: "that book is

not written by a Heiberg, but was imprinted by Godfrey von Gehmen."

"Oh, is that the author's name?" said the Councillor. "It is a very old name, and, as well as I recollect, he was the first printer that appeared in Denmark."

"Yes, he is our first printer," replied the clerical gentleman hastily.

So far all went on well. Some one of the worthy burghers now spoke of the dreadful pestilence that had raged in the country a few years back, meaning that of 1484. The Councillor imagined it was the cholera that was meant, which people made so much fuss about; and the discourse passed off satisfactorily enough. The war of the buccaneers of 1490 was so recent that it could not fail being alluded to; the English pirates had, they said, most shamefully taken their ships while in the roadstead; and the Councillor, before whose eyes the Herostratic* event of 1801 still floated vividly, agreed entirely with the others in abusing the rascally English. With other topics he was not so fortunate; every moment brought about some new confusion, and threatened to become a perfect Babel; for the worthy Bachelor was really too ignorant, and the simplest observations of the Councillor sounded to him too daring and phantastical. They looked at one another from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet; and when matters grew to too high a pitch, then the Bachelor talked Latin, in the hope of being better understood--but it was of no use after all.

* Herostratus, or Eratostratus--an Ephesian, who wantonly set fire to the famous temple of Diana, in order to commemorate his name by so uncommon an action.

"What's the matter?" asked the Hostess, plucking the Councillor by the sleeve; and now his recollection returned, for in the course of the conversation he had entirely forgotten all that had preceded it.

"Merciful God, where am I!" exclaimed he in agony; and while he so thought, all his ideas and feelings of overpowering dizziness, against which he struggled with the utmost power of desperation, encompassed him with renewed force. "Let us drink claret and mead, and Bremen beer," shouted one of the guests--"and you shall drink with us!"

Two maidens approached. One wore a cap of two staring colors, denoting the class of persons to which she belonged. They poured out the liquor, and made the most friendly gesticulations; while a cold perspiration trickled down the back of the poor Councillor.

"What's to be the end of this! What's to become of me!" groaned he; but he was

forced, in spite of his opposition, to drink with the rest. They took hold of the worthy man; who, hearing on every side that he was intoxicated, did not in the least doubt the truth of this certainly not very polite assertion; but on the contrary, implored the ladies and gentlemen present to procure him a hackney-coach: they, however, imagined he was talking Russian.

Never before, he thought, had he been in such a coarse and ignorant company; one might almost fancy the people had turned heathens again. "It is the most dreadful moment of my life: the whole world is leagued against me!" But suddenly it occurred to him that he might stoop down under the table, and then creep unobserved out of the door. He did so; but just as he was going, the others remarked what he was about; they laid hold of him by the legs; and now, happily for him, off fell his fatal shoes--and with them the charm was at an end.

The Councillor saw quite distinctly before him a lantern burning, and behind this a large handsome house. All seemed to him in proper order as usual; it was East Street, splendid and elegant as we now see it. He lay with his feet towards a doorway, and exactly opposite sat the watchman asleep.

"Gracious Heaven!" said he. "Have I lain here in the street and dreamed? Yes; 'tis East Street! How splendid and light it is! But really it is terrible what an effect that one glass of punch must have had on me!"

Two minutes later, he was sitting in a hackney-coach and driving to Frederickshafen. He thought of the distress and agony he had endured, and praised from the very bottom of his heart the happy reality--our own time--which, with all its deficiencies, is yet much better than that in which, so much against his inclination, he had lately been.

III. The Watchman's Adventure

"Why, there is a pair of galoshes, as sure as I'm alive!" said the watchman, awaking from a gentle slumber. "They belong no doubt to the lieutenant who lives over the way. They lie close to the door."

The worthy man was inclined to ring and deliver them at the house, for there was still a light in the window; but he did not like disturbing the other people in their beds, and so very considerately he left the matter alone.

"Such a pair of shoes must be very warm and comfortable," said he; "the leather is so soft and supple." They fitted his feet as though they had been made for him. "'Tis a curious world we live in," continued he, soliloquizing. "There is the lieutenant, now, who might go quietly to bed if he chose, where no doubt he could stretch himself at his ease; but does he do it? No; he saunters up and down his room, because, probably, he has enjoyed too many of the good things of this world at his dinner. That's a happy fellow! He has neither an infirm mother, nor a whole troop of everlastingly hungry children to torment him. Every evening he goes to a party, where his nice supper costs him nothing: would to Heaven I could but change with him! How happy should I be!"

While expressing his wish, the charm of the shoes, which he had put on, began to work; the watchman entered into the being and nature of the lieutenant. He stood in the handsomely furnished apartment, and held between his fingers a small sheet of rose-colored paper, on which some verses were written--written indeed by the officer himself; for who has not, at least once in his life, had a lyrical moment? And if one then marks down one's thoughts, poetry is produced. But here was written:

OH, WERE I RICH!

"Oh, were I rich! Such was my wish, yea such When hardly three feet high, I longed for much. Oh, were I rich! an officer were I, With sword, and uniform, and plume so high. And the time came,

and officer was I! But yet I grew not rich. Alas, poor me! Have pity, Thou, who all man's wants dost see.

"I sat one evening sunk in dreams of bliss, A maid of seven years old gave me a kiss, I at that time was rich in poesy And tales of old, though poor as poor could be; But all she asked for was this poesy. Then was I rich, but not in gold, poor me! As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

"Oh, were I rich! Oft asked I for this boon. The child grew up to womanhood full soon. She is so pretty, clever, and so kind Oh, did she know what's hidden in my mind-- A tale of old. Would she to me were kind!. But I'm condemned to silence! oh, poor me! As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

"Oh, were I rich in calm and peace of mind, My grief you then would not here written find! O thou, to whom I do my heart devote, Oh read this page of glad days now remote, A dark, dark tale, which I tonight devote! Dark is the future now. Alas, poor me! Have pity Thou, who all men's pains dost see."

Such verses as these people write when they are in love! But no man in his senses ever thinks of printing them. Here one of the sorrows of life, in which there is real poetry, gave itself vent; not that barren grief which the poet may only hint at, but never depict in its detail--misery and want: that animal necessity, in short, to snatch at least at a fallen leaf of the bread-fruit tree, if not at the fruit itself. The higher the position in which one finds oneself transplanted, the greater is the suffering. Everyday necessity is the stagnant pool of life--no lovely picture reflects itself therein. Lieutenant, love, and lack of money--that is a symbolic triangle, or much the same as the half of the shattered die of Fortune. This the lieutenant felt most poignantly, and this was the reason he leant his head against the window, and sighed so deeply.

"The poor watchman out there in the street is far happier than I. He knows not what I term privation. He has a home, a wife, and children, who weep with him over his sorrows, who rejoice with him when he is glad.