

There was once an officer who had plenty of money and always bought beautiful clothes, but he was prouder of his boots than of anything else that he wore.

This officer had a very good servant, who always kept his clothes very clean and tidy and made his boots shine more brightly than those of any of the other officers, but this servant was old, and one day he had to retire and let another soldier take his place.

The officer's new servant was young and clever, but lazy. One morning, when it had rained a lot during the night before, and the roads were very muddy, the officer saw that his boots had not been cleaned, so he called his new servant and said to him, 'I am going to go for a ride this morning, and my boots have not been cleaned.'

'Sir,' answered the new servant very politely, 'it rained a lot last night, and there is a lot of mud on the roads this morning.'

'Yes,' answered the officer, 'I agree, but what has that got to do with my boots?'

'Well, sir,' explained the servant, 'if I clean your boots now, they will soon get dirty again, so it is a waste of time to clean them.'

The officer said nothing, but after he had returned from his ride and had eaten his lunch, he did not leave any food for his servant as he usually did.

The servant waited and waited, and then at last, when he was feeling very hungry, said, 'Please, sir, you have not given me any food for my lunch yet.'

'Oh,' answered the officer calmly, 'it would be a waste of time to give you any food now, because you would only be hungry again in a few hours' time.'