

THE  
PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

A Tale For Young People of all Ages

By MARK TWAIN

ILLUSTRATED



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TO  
THOSE GOOD-MANNERED AND AGREEABLE  
CHILDREN, SUSY AND CLARA CLEMENS, THIS BOOK  
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THEIR FATHER

The quality of mercy . . .

is twice bless'd ;

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;  
'Tis mightiest in the realm to feed the weak;

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes

The thronèd monarch better than his crown.

*Merchant of Venice.*

## PREFACE

I WILL set down a tale as it was told to me by one who had it of his father, which latter had it of *his* father, this last having in like manner had it of *his* father—and so on, back and still back, three hundred years and more, the fathers transmitting it to the sons and so preserving it. It may be history, it may be only legend, a tradition. It may have happened, it may not have happened: but it *could* have happened. It may be that the wise and the learned believed it in the old days; it may be that only the unlearned and the simple loved it and credited it.

HUGH LATIMER, Bishop of Worcester, to LORD CROMWELL, on the  
birth of the PRINCE OF WALES (afterward EDWARD VI.).

FROM THE NATIONAL MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED BY THE BRITISH  
GOVERNMENT.

Right honorable Sal-<sup>u</sup> in x. p. Iul. 1547  
 I have no less joye & ioyfullnes in this  
 for the birth of a prince, being in his grace for things  
 above the world. (I. now, when we are all the  
 Bishop of S. J. baptize. To this our magnificence  
 in well you. But yet we all yearn to give the  
 than of. to our Lord god god of england, his wily  
 by his hand shew by his gift god of england as rather  
 an england god. Th we with & provide with  
 all his providence what thing you to him  
 by his hand and all our grace in his providence  
 goodness. So if we are now more than ready to  
 him by his grace. promote his work, of the  
 depth of all things to us for us, we have now  
 the power of reason and the power of reason  
 operations, but we all pray for his grace  
 And I for my part willingly. It has been  
 always been a sign of our grace and the grace of  
 God. Justification. of things of right justice  
 in every generation in every generation  
 but what a great power are we! So. what  
 devotion should many of us be. So. what  
 devotion. And thus the god of england  
 is and we are. In all his providence.

And thus the god of england  
 is and we are. In all his providence.

And thus the god of england  
 is and we are. In all his providence.

If you will receive this letter to a more happy  
 and of which of grace and more fortunate to possess  
 the grace you might see god. that is the reason  
 of this. But the grace of god.

HUGH LATIMER, *Bishop of Worcester*, to LORD CROMWELL, on the  
birth of the PRINCE OF WALES (afterward EDWARD VI.)

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GOVERNMENT

Ryght honorable, *Salutem in Christo Jesu*, and Syr here ys no lesse joynge and rejossynge in thes partees for the byrth of our prynce, hoom we hungurde for so longe, then ther was (I trow), *inter vicinos* att the byrth of S. I. Baptyste, as thys berer, Master Erance, can telle you. Gode gyffe us alle grace, to yelde dew thankes to our Lorde Gode, Gode of Inglonde, for verely He hathe shoyd Hym selff Gode of Inglonde, or rather an Inglyssh Gode, yf we consydyr and pondyr welle alle Hys procedynges with us from tyme to tyme. He hath overcumme alle our yllnesse with Hys excedyng goodnesse, so that we ar now moor then oompellyd to serve Hym, seke Hys glory, promott Hys wurde, yf the Devylle of alle Devylles be natt in us. We have now the stooppe of vayne trustes ande the steý of vayne expectations; lett us alle pray for hys preservatione. And I for my partt wylle wyssh that hys Grace allways have, and evyn now from the begynnyng, Governares, Instructores and offyceres of ryght jugmente, *ne optimum ingenium non optimâ educatione depravelur*.

Butt whatt a grett fowlle am I! So, whatt devotione shoyth many tymys butt lytelle dyscretione! Ande thus the Gode of Inglonde be ever with you in alle your procedynges.

The 19 of October.

Yours, H. L. B. of Wurcestere, now att Hartlebury.

Yf you wolde excytt thys berere to be moore hartye ayen the abuse of ymagry or mor forward to promotte the veryte, ytt myght doo goode. Natt that ytt came of me, butt of your selffe, &c.

(Addressed) To the Ryght Honorable Lorde P. Sealle hys synguler gode Lorde.

# THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

## GENERAL NOTE

ONE hears much about the "hideous Blue-Laws of Connecticut," and is accustomed to shudder piously when they are mentioned. There are people in America—and even in England!—who imagine that they were a very monument of malignity, pitilessness, and inhumanity; whereas, in reality they were about the first SWEEPING DEPARTURE FROM JUDICIAL ATROCITY which the "civilized" world had seen. This humane and kindly Blue-Law code, of two hundred and forty years ago, stands all by itself, with ages of bloody law on the further side of it, and a century and three-quarters of bloody English law on THIS side of it.

There has never been a time—under the Blue-Laws or any other—when above FOURTEEN crimes were punishable by death in Connecticut. But in England, within the memory of men who are still hale in body and mind, TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE crimes were punishable by death!<sup>1</sup> These facts are worth knowing—and worth thinking about, too.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. J. Hammond Trumbull's *Blue Laws, True and False*, p. II.

THE END

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# THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

IN the ancient city of London, on a certain autumn day in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, a boy was born to a poor family of the name of Canty, who did not want him. On the same day another English child was born to a rich family of the name of Tudor, who did want him. All England wanted him too. England had so longed for him, and hoped for him, and prayed God for him, that, now that he was really come, the people went nearly mad for joy. Mere acquaintances hugged and kissed each other and cried. Everybody took a holiday, and high and low, rich and poor, feasted and danced and sang, and got very mellow; and they kept this up for days and nights together. By day, London was a sight to see, with gay banners waving from every balcony and housetop, and splendid pageants marching along. By night, it was again a sight to see, with its great bonfires at

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every corner, and its troops of revelers making merry around them. There was no talk in all England but of the new baby, Edward Tudor, Prince of Wales, who lay lapped in silks and satins, unconscious of all this fuss, and not knowing that great lords and ladies were tending him and watching over him—and not caring, either. But there was no talk about the other baby, Tom Canty, lapped in his poor rags, except among the family of paupers whom he had just come to trouble with his presence.

## CHAPTER II

### TOM'S EARLY LIFE

LET us skip a number of years.

London was fifteen hundred years old, and was a great town—for that day. It had a hundred thousand inhabitants—some think double as many. The streets were very narrow, and crooked, and dirty, especially in the part where Tom Canty lived, which was not far from London Bridge. The houses were of wood, with the second story projecting over the first, and the third sticking its elbows out beyond the second. The higher the houses grew, the broader they grew. They were skeletons of strong crisscross beams, with solid material between, coated with plaster. The beams were painted red or blue or black, according to the owner's taste, and this gave the houses a very picturesque look. The windows were small, glazed with little diamond-shaped panes, and they opened outward, on hinges, like doors.

The house which Tom's father lived in was up a foul little pocket called Offal Court, out of Pudding Lane. It was small, decayed, and rickety, but it was packed full of wretchedly poor families. Canty's tribe occupied a room on the third floor. The mother and father had a sort of bedstead in the

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corner; but Tom, his grandmother, and his two sisters, Bet and Nan, were not restricted—they had all the floor to themselves, and might sleep where they chose. There were the remains of a blanket or two, and some bundles of ancient and dirty straw, but these could not rightly be called beds, for they were not organized; they were kicked into a general pile mornings, and selections made from the mass at night, for service.

Bet and Nan were fifteen years old—twins. They were good-hearted girls, unclean, clothed in rags, and profoundly ignorant. Their mother was like them. But the father and the grandmother were a couple of fiends. They got drunk whenever they could; then they fought each other or anybody else who came in the way; they cursed and swore always, drunk or sober; John Canty was a thief, and his mother a beggar. They made beggars of the children, but failed to make thieves of them. Among, but not of, the dreadful rabble that inhabited the house, was a good old priest whom the king had turned out of house and home with a pension of a few farthings, and he used to get the children aside and teach them right ways secretly. Father Andrew also taught Tom a little Latin, and how to read and write; and would have done the same with the girls, but they were afraid of the jeers of their friends, who could not have endured such a queer accomplishment in them.

All Offal Court was just such another hive as Canty's house. Drunkenness, riot, and brawling were the order there, every night and nearly all

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night long. Broken heads were as common as hunger in that place. Yet little Tom was not unhappy. He had a hard time of it, but did not know it. It was the sort of time that all the Offal Court boys had, therefore he supposed it was the correct and comfortable thing. When he came home empty-handed at night, he knew his father would curse him and thrash him first, and that when he was done the awful grandmother would do it all over again and improve on it; and that away in the night his starving mother would slip to him stealthily with any miserable scrap or crust she had been able to save for him by going hungry herself, notwithstanding she was often caught in that sort of treason and soundly beaten for it by her husband.

No, Tom's life went along well enough, especially in summer. He only begged just enough to save himself, for the laws against mendicancy were stringent, and the penalties heavy; so he put in a good deal of his time listening to good Father Andrew's charming old tales and legends about giants and fairies, dwarfs and genii, and enchanted castles, and gorgeous kings and princes. His head grew to be full of these wonderful things, and many a night as he lay in the dark on his scant and offensive straw, tired, hungry, and smarting from a thrashing, he unleashed his imagination and soon forgot his aches and pains in delicious picturings to himself of the charmed life of a petted prince in a regal palace. One desire came in time to haunt him day and night; it was to see a real prince, with his own eyes. He spoke of it once to some of his Offal Court



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comrades; but they jeered him and scoffed him so unmercifully that he was glad to keep his dream to himself after that.

He often read the priest's old books and got him to explain and enlarge upon them. His dreamings and readings worked certain changes in him by and by. His dream-people were so fine that he grew to lament his shabby clothing and his dirt, and to wish to be clean and better clad. He went on playing in the mud just the same, and enjoying it, too; but instead of splashing around in the Thames solely for the fun of it, he began to find an added value in it because of the washings and cleansings it afforded.

Tom could always find something going on around the Maypole in Cheapside, and at the fairs; and now and then he and the rest of London had a chance to see a military parade when some famous unfortunate was carried prisoner to the Tower, by land or boat. One summer's day he saw poor Anne Askew and three men burned at the stake in Smithfield, and heard an ex-bishop preach a sermon to them which did not interest him. Yes, Tom's life was varied and pleasant enough, on the whole.

By and by Tom's reading and dreaming about princely life wrought such a strong effect upon him that he began to *act* the prince, unconsciously. His speech and manners became curiously ceremonious and courtly, to the vast admiration and amusement of his intimates. But Tom's influence among these young people began to grow now, day by day; and in time he came to be looked up to by them with a



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sort of wondering awe, as a superior being. He seemed to know so much! and he could do and say such marvelous things! and withal, he was so deep and wise! Tom's remarks and Tom's performances were reported by the boys to their elders; and these, also, presently began to discuss Tom Canty, and to regard him as a most gifted and extraordinary creature. Full-grown people brought their perplexities to Tom for solution, and were often astonished at the wit and wisdom of his decisions. In fact, he was become a hero to all who knew him except his own family—these only saw nothing in him.

Privately, after a while, Tom organized a royal court! He was the prince; his special comrades were guards, chamberlains, equerries, lords and ladies in waiting, and the royal family. Daily the mock prince was received with elaborate ceremonies borrowed by Tom from his romantic readings; daily the great affairs of the mimic kingdom were discussed in the royal council, and daily his mimic highness issued decrees to his imaginary armies, navies, and viceroalties.

After which he would go forth in his rags and beg a few farthings, eat his poor crust, take his customary cuffs and abuse, and then stretch himself upon his handful of foul straw, and resume his empty grandeurs in his dreams.

And still his desire to look just once upon a real prince, in the flesh, grew upon him, day by day, and week by week, until at last it absorbed all other desires, and became the one passion of his life.