

The Prince and The Pauper, Complete

By

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

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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.

Ryght honorable, Saludem in Christo Jesu, and Syr here ys no lesse joynge and rejoyssynge 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. J. 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 over cumme alle our yllnesse with Hys excedynge goodnesse, so that we are now moor then compellyd 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 stey of

vayne expectations; lett us alle pray for hys preservatione. Ande 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 optima educatione deprevetur.

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

The 19 of October.

Youres, 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, etc.

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

To those good-mannered and agreeable children Susie and Clara Clemens this book is affectionately inscribed by their father.

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 a 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.

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'The quality of mercy . . . is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The thron-ed monarch better than his crown'.

Merchant of Venice.

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 every corner, and its troops of revellers 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.

