

THE PRINCE
AND THE PAUPER

by Mark Twain



PRESTWICK HOUSE LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS



UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER



M a r k T w a i n



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NOTES

What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was born in Hannibal, Missouri, on November 30, 1835. He had two brothers and a sister. A slave named Jenny worked for the family, and it is thought that her storytelling had a strong influence on the young Twain. He traveled extensively, working in various jobs, including a stint on a newspaper and one as a riverboat pilot. He supposedly took his pseudonym from the way a river's depth was measured: a piece of line was dropped into the river, and when the rope hit bottom, the depth was called out to the pilot. Therefore, "Mark Twain" or "two fathoms" literally means "twelve feet."

In 1864, Twain left for San Francisco where he worked as a reporter. After a trip to Hawaii for *The Sacramento Union*, he began giving lectures. Later, in 1869, he wrote *The Innocents Abroad* based on his experiences traveling in France and Italy. The book was immensely popular, and Twain's sharp, humorous barbs set him apart from most other writers of the time.

Twain married Olivia Langdon in 1870, and between 1876 and 1884, he wrote *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and The Pauper*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Twain also became a very popular lecturer, drawing huge crowds to hear him read his own works.

Family tragedies, including the death of his favorite daughter, and a series of bad financial investments left him bitter and depressed in his old age. His later writings, most of which were published posthumously, reflect his disappointment at what he saw were grave weaknesses and flaws in human nature.

POINTERS

READING POINTERS

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insight

Genre

The Prince and the Pauper is both a historical novel and a work of satire. A historical novel is a fictional story which takes place against a backdrop of actual historical events, sometimes with actual historical figures as characters. Much research is usually involved, in order to create a realistic and factually correct historical context. Look to the glossary for identification and explanation of all major historical figures, places and events.

A satire is an artistic work which mocks or ridicules human folly, vices or shortcomings. Sometimes a satire serves to illuminate social problems or political abuses with the goal of improving the social or political situation. In *The Prince and the Pauper*, Mark Twain satirizes the British monarchy of the Middle Ages as well as medieval European society in general. But although Twain sets *The Prince and the Pauper* in the 16th century, he is also poking fun at the Europe of his own time as well. Twain believed that Europe was still backward in many ways, as opposed to America, which he believed was more progressive. Twain also fervently believed that democracy as a form of government was far superior to monarchy.

Historical Context

In order to better appreciate *The Prince and the Pauper*, it is important to know some historical background regarding the time and place in which the story takes place. The following historical events are directly related to many of the themes in the story:

- King Henry VIII has just died and his son, nine-year-old Prince Edward VI ascends to the crown.
- The Protestant Reformation continues to sweep Europe and England, resulting in major religious, political and social upheavals.
 - › Henry VIII has precipitated England's break from the Catholic Church and now the king of England is also the head of the Church in England
 - › Many Catholic monasteries in England have since been dissolved by Henry VIII
 - › Religious intolerance among Catholics, Protestants and other sects is ongoing.

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.



C H A P T E R 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 house-top, 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.

[†]Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

Glossary

Note to Reader: Some of the Glossary Notes that follow were written by Twain himself and appear in the original edition of *The Prince and the Pauper*. These are followed by an asterisk (*) to differentiate them from the other, modern explanations.

Dedication

Clemens – Mark Twain's (1835-1910) real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He decided on his pseudonym when he worked as a Mississippi riverboat pilot. Workers on the boats would need to call out depths after lowering a rope with spaced knots on it into the water. The call of "mark twain" meant, "The mark indicates the river is two fathoms deep" in riverboat jargon. A fathom is equal to six feet.

Introductory Quote

"The quality of mercy...crown." – This quote from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* stresses that mercy should be given freely and never forced, and that mercy shown by the powerful is the greatest kind of mercy. The quote emphasizes one essential theme in *The Prince and the Pauper*: It is crucial for the powerful to extend mercy to the weak.

Manuscript

Hugh Latimer – (1485-1555) a Protestant bishop during the reign of Henry VIII, who later was burned at the stake for heresy under Mary I for refusing to renounce Protestantism

Lord Cromwell – Thomas Cromwell (1485-1540), an English earl who lived during the rule of Henry VIII, helped to launch the separation of England from the Catholic Church, thus establishing the Protestant Reformation in England. He was later beheaded for treason and heresy.

Edward VI – (1537-1553) Prince Edward VI, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, was king of England from 1547 to 1553. Because he was only nine years old when he ascended to the throne, Edward's reign was carried out by a council of noblemen, who did the actual governing and decision-making. Edward's uncle, the Earl of Hertford, was the council's main executor and held the title of "Lord Protector," an extremely powerful role. Edward died of tuberculosis at the age of fifteen. Twain gives his King Edward much more power than the actual Edward had, a necessary literary license in order for the novel to work.

"Ryght honorable...procedynges." – The manuscript is written in a language somewhat resembling 16th century English and proclaims the long-awaited birth of Prince Edward VI, later to be King Edward VI. Twain is obviously poking fun at both the language and scholars who study it.

“*Salutem in Christo Jesu*” –[Latin] loosely translated as “Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ”

“*ne optimum...educatione depravetur*” – [Latin] loosely translated as “to engender the best education but not an education in depravity”; the interpretation is that Edward should have the best education possible and not be corrupted or led astray.

Chapter I

Tudor – the name of the members of the powerful dynastic family that ruled England from 1485 to 1603

Chapter II

London Bridge – The London Bridge in the novel is now known as Old London Bridge. Built in 1176, it was the only bridge spanning the River Thames (and remained the only one until 1750). As Twain suggests, in some ways it was like a city in and of itself because it had houses, places for conducting business, and even a chapel on it.

Offal Court – The squalor of Tom Canty’s neighborhood is emphasized in this street name. *Offal* is the term for the waste parts of slaughtered animals.

farthings – old British coins worth about one quarter of a penny

“**laws against mendicancy...penalties heavy**” – In 16th century England, begging was illegal unless a person had a license, and only the sick or elderly could get such a license. Unlicensed beggars could face several punishments, including: public whipping, confinement in the stocks, or even death by hanging.

Thames – a river in southern England that flows through London

Maypole in Cheapside – The maypole is a pole decorated with ribbons and flowers; people dance around it in celebration of May Day, the holiday marking the coming of spring. Cheapside is a district in London, which was the market center during the time of *The Prince and the Pauper*.

the Tower – the Tower of London, a fortress on the northern bank of the River Thames, which was used as a prison and a place for executions

Anne Askew – (1521-1546) a young Protestant woman who was arrested for heresy and then tortured in the Tower of London before being burned to death at the stake

Chapter III

Temple Bar – the archway that acts as a boundary between the city of London and the borough of Westminster

The Strand – a street in west central London; it runs parallel to the River Thames

Westminster – a palace in London; Westminster served as the residence of England’s kings and queens until the 16th century and remains the seat of English government today.

placard – a poster or sign
proffered – offered, gave
reviling – insulting
rue – to regret
sanctify – to bless or make holy
scourgings – severe punishments; whippings
sentiment – feeling, emotion
slatternly – slovenly, messy
sovereignty – royal authority
stalwart – muscular, brawny
starveling – a starved person or animal
truculent – defiant, hostile
unstinted – continuous, unstopped
villainous – wicked
wench – a young woman
whence – from where

Chapter XVIII

abate – to subside or decrease
benevolent – kind
chaff – to tease or mock
epithets – derogatory or abusive terms used to characterize people
inscrutable – difficult to make out or understand
kine – [archaic] *cattle*
levy – to impose a tax; confiscate property
petulant – irritable, bad-tempered
pungent – strong, sharp in taste or odor
ribald – vulgar, lewd
spectral – ghostly
uncanny – eerie, strange
waive – to give up rights; pass

Chapter XIX

atone – to make amends
dissertation – an essay or critique
eloquent – articulate, well-spoken
magnanimous – generous, fair
menial – unskilled, basic
ostensible – supposed, apparent
sagacity – wisdom
sidling – edging toward, creeping
toothsome – edible, tasty