

**Mark Twain's children.**  
**Focus on *The Prince and The Pauper***

Mark Twain is mostly famous for his children's novels *The adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), that both represent a world where youngsters live on their own, where family and domesticity are in some way put aside, lost somewhere, dramatically missing. As he puts it in the preface to the first work cited, his books are, on the one hand, intended for the entertainment of boys and girls, while at the same time they act as a reminder for adults of what they once were themselves, what they felt and thought.<sup>1</sup> Though the tone adopted is most of the time clearly ironic, all the episodes collected in his children's novels make us smile slightly bitterly, leaving us with an increasing dark vision about childhood. Anyway, Twain's young life seems to have been far luckier than his characters', but possibly less adventurous and picaresque.

**Who was Mark Twain**

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born into a middle-class family – his father was a judge and attorney – in 1835 in Missouri. He was the sixth of seven children. In four years time the family moved to Hannibal, a growing port city that lies along the banks of the Mississippi. Due to his weak health conditions, until the age of nine Samuel could not go out and play with the other children. As most youngsters of the time, he left school early for work: at thirteen he became a

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain, *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Hartford, Conn: The American Publishing Company, 1976.

printer's apprentice; at fifteen he joined his brother's newspaper as a printer and editorial assistant, where he was to find out his passion for writing; at seventeen he moved to St. Louis and worked, at first, as printer, then became a licensed river pilot. His life on the river was to leave him many good memories and impressions, that would serve him good in his future writings. Moreover, his pseudonym comes directly from these days: "Mark Twain" is a river term, which means two fathoms or 12-feet when the depth of water for a boat is being sounded; pilots say it communicating that it is safe to navigate. Because of the Civil War, the river trade was brought to a stand still in 1861, and Clemens began working as a newspaper reporter.

It was in 1865 that Twain started to gain fame: in November his story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* appeared in the New York Saturday Press. After this first success, he wrote and published several books – 28 throughout his life – and short stories.

In 1870, Clemens married Olivia Langdon, and they had four children, one of whom died in infancy and two who died in their twenties.

He passed away in 1910.

### **A self-educated man, a champion for children's education**

It seems quite paradoxical that his own lack of an education after the age of thirteen and the cultivation of his public persona as an anti-intellectual, the "American Vandal"<sup>2</sup> (91), went along with his tireless advocacy of education and education causes. His characters' as well – Huck and Tom's hatred of the classroom, or little Prince Edward's indolence for forced study – show no hurry for learning and schooling. The "pauper" Tom Canty, who cannot afford any, is maybe the only one willing to study really zealously. Samuel Clemens's own attitude towards learning was possibly closer to this one character's, though. They both shared a voracious curiosity for everything that surrounded them, be they

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2 Joseph Csicsila, "The Child Learns by Doing': Mark Twain and Turn-of-the-Century Education Reform", *The Mark Twain Annual*, VI.1 (2008), 91-100.

books, theoretical notions, or plain real life. In this sense, as a matter of fact, all Twain's fictional children have something in common: even though many do not show much interest for classroom learning, they are ready for life to come and teach them. Twain seems to suggest that the child learns primarily by doing.<sup>3</sup>

Education, learning, understanding are some of the major key themes in Twain's writing. More than once he satirized the soupy lessons of childhood primers; his characters get educated and grow up while proceeding in the awareness of the world around them; Clemens himself after 1900 began devoting time and energy supporting progressive education reform. He was particularly satisfied with the help he provided with to the Children's Theater of the Jewish Educational Alliance in New York in 1907 and 1908: here he could serve an educational mission while giving young people access to the world of dramatic theater. In a letter to Amelia Hookway, whose Howland School Theater in Chicago had just performed Twain's *The Prince and The Pauper*, he affirms his belief in children's "learning by doing":

I have been reading the eloquent account in the Record-Herald and am pleurably stirred, to my deepest deeps. The reading brings vividly back to me my pet and pride: The Children's Theater of the East side, New York. And it supports and re-affirms what I have so often and strenuously said in public that a children's theatre is easily the most valuable adjunct that any educational institution for the young can have, and that no otherwise good school is complete without it.

It is much the most effective teacher of morals and promoter of good conduct that the ingenuity of man has yet devised, for the reason that its lessons are not taught wearily by book and by dreary homily, but by the visible and enthusing action; and they go straight to the heart which is the rightest of right places for them. Book morals often get no further than the intellect, if they even get that far on their spectral and shadowy passage: but when they travel from a Children's Theatre they do not stop permanently at that halfway house, but go on home. . . . Our young folks do everything that is needed by the theatre, with their own hands; scene-designing, scene-painting, gas fitting, electric work, costume-designing—costume making,

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3 Joseph Csicsila, "The Child Learns by Doing': Mark Twain and Turn-of-the-Century Education Reform", *The Mark Twain Annual*, VI.1 (2008), 91-100.

everything all things indeed. (72-3)<sup>4</sup>

The story of progressive education reform in the United States does not start with Mark Twain, but it begins early in the nineteenth century when thinkers, such as Bronson Alcott, Francis W. Parker or John Dewey, influenced mainly by Rousseau's ideas, developed the first innovative, subversive pedagogical theories. Key point for these new approaches was the importance of individual, direct experience for learning children, rather than conventional classroom teaching. The progressive education reform gain particular success towards the end of the nineteenth century, anyway. As a matter of fact, after the Civil War the population of the United States experienced a moment of massive urbanization: migration of people from rural centers to cities brought along their particular attitude towards life, experience and learning. Young people living on farms learned things by actively doing them, just like these innovative thinkers were promoting, and therefore the movement became rapidly the great topic for social discussion.

### **Twain's "students" values**

Since learning has to come through experience, values and ethics should be inspired by it as well. «Twain's students forge their way through» (86)<sup>5</sup> and learn how to live according to their own justice. Since this idea of justice does not correspond to the one shared by society, his characters eventually choose to be outcasts of the community like Huckleberry Finn, or literally to perish like the English boys in *A Connecticut Yankee*. Sometimes they succeed to rule the world according to their own values, such as the newly coronated King Edward in *The Prince and The Pauper*, but their reign does not last long:

Yes, King Edward VI lived only a few years, poor boy, but he lived them worthily.

Twain seeked to trasform children – some critics say boys in particular, since

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4 John S. Tuckey, *Mark Twain and Little Satan: The Writing of "The Mysterious Stranger"*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1963.

5 Takuya Kubo, "Turn Us into Real Men: Mark Twain and His Incomplete Masculine Education", *The Mark Twain Annual*, VIII.1 (2010), 86-96.

they lived in civilized male-dominated societies (87)<sup>6</sup> – into reasonable, active “gentlemen”, ready to help and be just. The traditional definition of American masculinity linked primarily to physical strength seems no longer to indicate effectiveness. Anyway, Twain's attempt at proposing this new type of education and values has not much success, since it rather creates male characters unfit for the society they live in, be it contemporary or the fictional one set in the past. Maybe Tom Sawyer represents the only successful exception: he stands still, coherently attached to his own ideas and ethics, in a sort of Quixotean way. Allowing the idea of this alternative, «Twain can be thought of as the American Cervantes.» (viii)<sup>7</sup>.

If we analyze closer the text of *The Prince and The Pauper*, we will be able to delineate a scheme of the qualities, attitudes, ethical disposition, that Twain aims at inspiring into children reading this fable. On the one hand, Tom Canty is a champion of modesty, humbleness, restraint. He never needs too much (in Chapter III, the Prince asks: «Their garment! Have they but one?», and Tom answers honestly: «Ah, good your worship, what would they do with more? Truly they have not two bodies each.»); he knows his place in the world (in Chapter III, he says: «Ah, good your worship, require me not to answer. It is not meet that one of my degree should utter the thing.»); he is not accustomed to the royal uses, which to his humble eyes seem quite unnecessary (such as the figure of the Taster in Chapter VII, the “weighty business of dressing” in Chapter XIV, or the existence of the Whipping-Boy in the same chapter). He feels royalty as a state of captivity and prays God to free him (from Chapter V: «he recognised that he was indeed a captive now, and might remain for ever shut up in this gilded cage, a forlorn and friendless prince, except God in his mercy take pity on him and set him free.»). To him learning is a grace and he is ready to zealously study new things. Tom is generous and wants no money for himself, if he but had them for real, and not just in his fading dreams (in Chapter XIV he utters while dreaming: «Every night will I give my father a penny; he will think I begged it, it will glad his heart, and I

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6 Takuya Kubo, “Turn Us into Real Men: Mark Twain and His Incomplete Masculine Education”, *The Mark Twain Annual*, VIII.1 (2010), 86-96.

7 Harold Bloom, *How to write about Mark Twain*, New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2008.

shall no more be beaten. One penny every week the good priest that teacheth me shall have; mother, Nan, and Bet the other four. We be done with hunger and rags, now, done with fears and frets and savage usage.»). On the other hand, Prince Edward knows his place as well as Tom, and justly acts boldly when feeling offended (in Chapter III he says to the soldier: «I am the Prince of Wales, my person is sacred; and thou shalt hang for laying thy hand upon me!»). He has a strong sense of justice, but he also understands the meaning of culture, and he himself is made to learn from the experiences brought eventually to him in the story (from Chapter IV: «When I am king, they shall not have bread and shelter only, but also teachings out of books; for a full belly is little worth where the mind is starved, and the heart. I will keep this diligently in my remembrance, that this day's lesson be not lost upon me, and my people suffer thereby; for learning softeneth the heart and breedeth gentleness and charity.»). He has a “royal” sense of honor, and is therefore ready to sacrifice himself for the weak, such as Tom's mother (in Chapter X he says to her: «Thou shalt not suffer for me, madam. Let these swine do their will upon me alone.»). The character of Hendon as well mirrors this sense of honor, and fatherly protects the Prince. For this service, he will be princely, justly rewarded (Prince Edward tells him in Chapter XII: «Thou didst save me injury and shame, perchance my life, and so my crown. Such service demandeth rich reward. Name thy desire, and so it be within the compass of my royal power, it is thine.»). To sum up, the fable is a parable of injustices, where experience teaches the future king to act “justly”, with mercy, piety, comprehension, humanity. Laws permit various inhuman actions, because they are too far away from those who wrote them; royalty lives out of reputations, image, appearance. «The world is made wrong; kings should go to school to their own laws, at times, and so learn mercy», Prince Edward affirms in Chapter XXVII. If the fable is read by adults, it carries as well a second level of interpretation: Twain stresses the idea that children are far better than grown-ups, since they do not mistrust people, do not doubt, but are rather ready to help others and learn; in order to make of this world a better, more human place to be, we have to be as children and cut off our adult prejudices.

## Twain's social crusade

Though often regarded as a mere champion against racial injustices<sup>8</sup>, Twain was an exceedingly complex man who struggled against many another unjust beliefs. He was extremely concerned with the broader problematic world that his children, and all kids at large, would inherit. Racial justice was just part of this concern, among other issues. Being a father, he experienced the emotions of parenting, and he felt in some way responsible for the reality, in some ways nice, in many other cruel and violent, his daughters were going to grow up and live. Family was Samuel Clemens' most profound interest, and in this sense we can say that life affected his art: «father-work sparked his writing and sharpened his focus on the needs and experiences of children.» (66)<sup>9</sup>. That is why his books – especially the “trilogy” of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and The Pauper* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – are not mere children's novels, but are intended for adult readers as well: they should remind them of the plight of children, draw them to see the value in the lives of children, especially those at risk, and be moved to improve their condition.<sup>10</sup> These three works question the responsibility of family and community for the social and domestic abuse of the poor and the marginal. In this sense, they can be considered an extension of the literature of protest of the time, that asked readers to acknowledge voices from the margins, such as that of the Blacks, whether free or escaped slaves, of women, immigrants, workers, or the poor. Twain is therefore along the same lines as Charles Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, W.E.B. DuBois, Harriet Jacobs, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman.<sup>11</sup>

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8 This approach, by the way, cuts off Mark Twain's notable, life-long, unmovable prejudice toward Native American, for example.

9 Michael J. Kiskis, “*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Again!): Teaching for Social Justice or Sam Clemens' Children's Crusade”, *The Mark Twain Annual*, I.1(2003), 63-77.

10 *Ibid.*, 67.

11 *Ibid.*, 70.

Mark Twain's social critique hoped to influence readers to act for good and moral purpose in a world dominated by the conjunction of Might and Violence. This antagonistic place is directly mirrored through the plight of children in the novels. Samuel Clemens felt primarily this responsibility under his own skin, and could not help but express his concern and pain, but also his hopes.

### **Children's quest for domesticity**

The children's "trilogy" – *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and The Pauper*, and *Huckleberry Finn* – can be seen as one story, that follows a somewhat "orphan" child in his quest for comfort, peace and calm, both physical and existential. The setting of this pursuit is a completely unfriendly social context, that reminds of the traditional sentimental novels. Often Twain's works have been classified according to some generic scheme, such as the labels "Mississippi and rural setting", or "England of the past"; but if, instead of dividing them, we focus on the common elements, it becomes clear that the issue of home, the notion of filial relationship, the quest for comfort and family stands out primarily.<sup>12</sup> Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Jim, Tom Canty, Prince Edward are all shaped by their domestic situation, and each of them, «as a result of a broken family and the emotional constriction caused by that loss, suffers a lack of genuine attachment.» (29)<sup>13</sup>. As a matter of fact, these characters do not choose to leave home, just because they want to be alone; they run away because they have to, and once far from home, they are always considering paths that may lead them back. Twain had possibly much concern for the problematic issue of orphanhood and children abuse of his time. Poverty, epidemics, high mortality rates and the Civil War literally put children on the road, with no one to care for them. The loss of the father, in particular, almost inevitably thrust a family into difficulty. In such a context, a personality with a profound sensibility, that evaluated highly the notion

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12 Michael J. Kiskis, "Because He Had Daughters", *The Mark Twain Annual*, X.1(2012), 24-34.

13 *Ibid.*, 29.



of domesticity, such as Samuel Clemens, could not but consider his duty writing to denounce this social problem, hoping to make his contemporaries aware and responsible for the future society their children were to grow up into.

### **Twain's book for children: *The Prince and The Pauper***

Written and published in 1881, in between the famous *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Prince and Pauper* is the only novel Twain ever wrote specifically for children, especially his two young daughters. He addresses them in the introduction to the book:

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.

In this sense, it is a completely non-conventional novel: at the time, except for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), children's literature was very didactic, preaching children's obedience and sense of authority. Just like Carroll, Twain wanted children to read and find entertainment, since they had already a type of school and serious primers that aimed at teaching them.

The novel, since its very beginning, challenges any logical, plausible belief, stressing the awkward chain of events and coincidences that makes of Edward and

Tom too perfect, though “non-bloody”, twins. However, Twain is able to masterfully create such an intricately plotted novel that makes any adult reader willing to suspend disbelief. These two characters are compared and contrasted throughout the entire book. They both are young, good-hearted, smart children, even though their back families are completely the opposite: Twain doubts the presumption that believes poor children being just like their fathers, and suggests that they could even be apt to wisely reign a kingdom. It is, as a matter of fact, sufficient to switch clothes to make everybody convinced of this. Here lies maybe the critique of the book towards society, both in Tudor times and Twain's, that wrongly judges a person's true worth according to that person's outward appearance.

Innovative is the choice to describe a father as the principal villain of the story, instead of conventionally depicting him as the real head of the family deserving authority and respect. He is an alcoholic, a thief and a murderer, a violent, abusive and controlling father, defined by Edward as a «swine» (Chapter X), just like his mother, Tom's grandmother, that keeps his family as animals in captivity (from Chapter X: «Two frowsy girls and a middle-aged woman cowered against the wall in one corner, with the aspect of animals habituated to harsh usage, and expecting and dreading it now.»).

The character of Miles Hendon, in a more conventional novel, would have served perfect as the central hero. As a matter of fact, he has his own story, a romantic and heroic one, that resembles the chivalric, courtly love stories. He is the only fictional adult that appears as completely positive, and in some way he often seems more like a “big child” himself, rather than a real grown-up. Though life was not too gentle with him, he managed to preserve his sense of honor, justice, generosity, never giving them up for some individualistic, selfish accomplishment. Twain proposes with the characters of Hendon and Tom the idea that a good person is not deceived or destroyed by harsh, cruel life conditions or bad events, but he or she can stay firm, without betraying their ethical, moral principles and attitude.

*The Prince and The Pauper* represents as well Mark Twain's first attempt at writing historical fiction, that will be followed later on by the works *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896). In the novel he combines his fascination with Europe's past with his natural satirical attitude against injustices and social conventions of both the Tudor's time and his own age. As a matter of fact, without attacking them directly, he is able to make the reader recognize some of the social hypocrisies and bad aspects that were common in Victorian America too.

Stylistically, the novel is very different from the previous ones that Twain had written. As a teller of tall tales, he perfectly knew and employed many devices and themes, such as tongue-in-cheek irony, ridiculous understatement, exaggeration, coincidence, and exchange of identities. Moreover, in this book he could show his deep knowledge of ancient and modern languages, such as Latin, French, old English. Often, his page echoes Shakespearian (or, at least, Elizabethan) terms, tone, dramatic effect, theatrical stage directions, dialogues. The same theme of madness, recalled more than once related to Tom and Edward's attitudes, recalls Shakespeare's dramas, such as *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Mark Twain, as a matter of fact, had a strange relation with Shakespeare's works. He began by gently mocking the nineteenth-century cult of "bardolatry", in which Shakespeare was worshiped as a secular god.<sup>(25)</sup><sup>14</sup>. In 1881, the same year of *The Prince and The Pauper*, he started writing *Burlesque Hamlet* (left unfinished), a sort of posthumous collaboration with Shakespeare. Unsatisfied with this attempt and failing as dramatist, he «sought to assuage his ego by denying Shakespeare's very existence» (25)<sup>15</sup>, and wrote *Is Shakespeare Dead?* in 1909. Some critics link this work to the Baconian theory of authorship, which however leaves some doubts: it is odd that such a cynic as Mark Twain should have become sympathetic to the Baconians, whose methods to demonstrate Shakespeare's non-existence were obviously dubious from a rational perspective.

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14 Joe Falocco, "Is Mark Twain Dead?: Samuel Clemens and the Question of Shakespearean Authorship", *The Mark Twain Annual*, II.1 (2004), 25-40.

15 *Ibidem*.

However, some are convinced that the Shakespeare authorship question was particularly important to Twain because it «offers evidence of humanity's unreason» (36)<sup>16</sup>, and willingness to make a cult, a godling out of anything.

The book is always very punctual in its references to historical events and uses, and to geographical descriptions. Footnotes are added by Twain to make the novel sound even more specific and based on true facts. He incorporates passages from major histories of England, such as David Hume's *History of England* (1754), Leigh Hunt's *The Town: Its Memorable Characters and Events* (1848), John Timbs's *Curiosities of London* (1855), and J. Hammond Trumbull's *The True-Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven* (1876). When Twain visited England in 1879, he spent some time also checking the settings for this novel.

The first note and bare sketch made by Mark Twain of the novel *The Prince and The Pauper* is dated November 23, 1877 (later published in his *Autobiography*). He wrote:

Edward VI and a little pauper exchange places by accident a day or so before Henry VIII's death. The prince wanders in rags and hardships and the pauper suffers the (to him) horrible miseries of pryncedom, up to the moment of crowning in Westminster Abbey, when proof is brought and the mistake rectified.

From this apparently simple plot, the author was able to produce a successful masterpiece, rich in its subject, characters and themes. Key element in the story appears to be, surprisingly, the seemingly insignificant incident of the Great Seal of England. It appears soon in the novel, and only at the end the reader understands the great value of that single episode. None is put randomly in Twain's work, but everything is perfectly structured in a sort of clockwork-scheme. Approximately in the same years, in 1889, the great Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov was saying:

If you hanged a rifle on the wall in the first act, in the last one it

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16 Warren Hope and Kim Holston. *The Shakespeare Controversy*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1992.

absolutely must go off. Otherwise, do not hang it. (437)<sup>17</sup>

Twain throughout the book manages to approach different themes, trying to make the children's point of view and the children's part stand out primarily. The notion of identity, since the beginning, is several times tackled, especially in relation to the concept of appearance and appearances. The author suggests that society, both in Tudor's times and his own, judges people just on the basis of their clothes, look, presence, admitting no thought of their identity and personality. Reputation, image, rumors are the first important things to care for, especially if belonging to the upper class (in this case, to the Royal family). That is why, in the story, all the court is more than once reminded not to make people know about the Prince's "madness", "illness". Respect and wealth go along the same line, and the order cannot be subverted. Children do not understand this, not even little Prince Edward: he knows his place in the world, he knows he deserves respect, but he himself has a hard time understanding that without his royal garments nobody will treat him as a Royal family member. Children have a different version of reality, according to Mark Twain, mainly because they are not affected by social prejudices and presuppositions. In reading the novel, the reader is guided to "think as a child", recognizing the strange customs of royalty and of adults, and agreeing with Tom Canty that «the great were prompt about small matters» (Chapter V). Twain seems, maybe too naively, convinced in the ever untouched, innocent, just attitude of children, who are not misled by the bad demeanor of their family members, like Tom Canty in relation to his violent and abusive father. That is why, the author allows the idea that justice belongs more to children than to adults, since they live closer to easy things, they experience events for the first time and are not therefore influenced by previous ideas and mental structures. However, if children are not allowed to go out to the world and try and do things by themselves, like Prince Edward, they will grow up less completely educated than others, missing part of their personal development.

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17 Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko, "Chekhov", in *Iz Proshlogo*, Moskow: Academia, 1936. The quote is translated by the author of this paper.

*The Prince and The Pauper*, being the only novel written by Twain primarily for children, combines in its plot the author's main ideas and concerns about childhood. It both gives children the focus and care they deserve, while at the same time it throws light on the difficulty and the plight of this young underestimated society. Be they rich and pampered, or poor and abused, these children lack comprehension from adults: they are expected to act as grown-ups, but their ideas and feelings are not considered worthy enough as those of adults; they should share the prejudices of those who, growing up, forgot their innocence and curiosity, without be grown up yet. However, Twain suggests, children's feelings and attitude towards life and others is possibly much closer to the idea of justice, tolerance, goodness, and adults should learn from them. Moreover, if children could learn by themselves, in Rousseauian terms, through direct experience, they will be more likely better grown-ups in the future.

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Table of Contents. The Prince and the Pauper. Mark Twain: A Biography by Albert Bigelow Paine. The Prince and the Pauper A Tale for Young People of All Ages. Table of Contents. Table of Contents. 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. 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. The Prince and the Pauper is a novel by American author Mark Twain. It was first published in 1881 in Canada, before its 1882 publication in the United States. The novel represents Twain's first attempt at historical fiction. Set in 1547, it tells the story of two young boys who were born on the same day and are identical in appearance: Tom Canty, a pauper who lives with his abusive, alcoholic father in Offal Court off Pudding Lane in London, and Edward VI of England, son of Henry VIII of England. But, in this novel, Twain focuses particularly on the many social injustices which are exposed to the new king as he roams his land as a common pauper. The subject matter specifically allowed Twain to utilize his vast knowledge of history and biography, two subjects which occupied much of Twain's reading time, and this novel also allowed him to meditate on the injustices inherent in human nature (or "the damned human race," as it was termed in his later work, *The Mysterious Stranger*). different sorts of language. The Prince and the Pauper is also Twain's most elaborately plotted novel. Seemingly an insignificant incident, the whereabouts of the Great Seal of England, becomes the key to the real identity of the new king. The prince and the pauper. by Mark Twain. 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. To those good-mannered and agreeable children Susie and Clara Clemens this book is affectionately inscribed by their father. 3. 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.