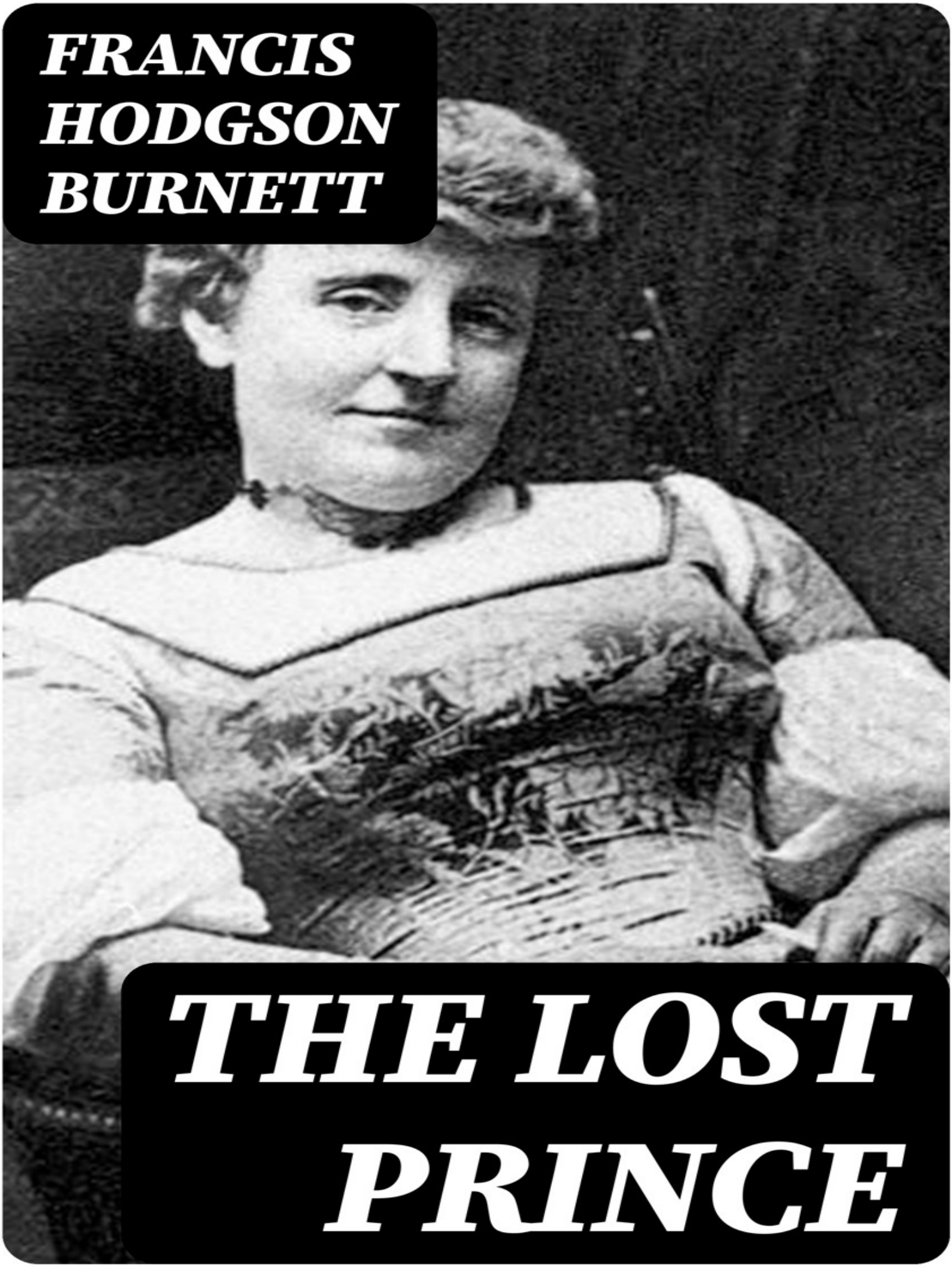
FRANCIS HODGSON BURNETT



THE LOST PRINCE

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The Lost Prince

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I

The New Lodgers At No. 7 Philibert Place

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There are many dreary and dingy rows of ugly houses in certain parts of London, but there certainly could not be any row more ugly or dingier than Philibert Place. There were stories that it had once been more attractive, but that had been so long ago that no one remembered the time. It stood back in its gloomy, narrow strips of uncared-for, smoky gardens, whose broken iron railings were supposed to protect it from the surging traffic of a road which was always roaring with the rattle of busses, cabs, drays, and vans, and the passing of people who were shabbily dressed and looked as if they were either going to hard work or coming from it, or hurrying to see if they could find some of it to do to keep themselves from going hungry. The brick fronts of the houses were blackened with smoke, their windows were nearly all dirty and hung with dingy curtains, or had no curtains at all; the strips of ground, which had once been intended to grow flowers in, had been trodden down into bare earth in which even weeds had forgotten to grow. One of them was used as a stone-cutter's yard, and cheap monuments, crosses, and slates were set out for sale, bearing inscriptions beginning with "Sacred to the Memory of." Another had piles of old lumber in it, another exhibited second-hand furniture, chairs with unsteady legs, sofas with horsehair stuffing bulging out of holes in their covering,

mirrors with blotches or cracks in them. The insides of the houses were as gloomy as the outside. They were all exactly alike. In each a dark entrance passage led to narrow stairs going up to bedrooms, and to narrow steps going down to a basement kitchen. The back bedroom looked out on small, sooty, flagged yards, where thin cats quarreled, or sat on the coping of the brick walls hoping that sometime they might feel the sun; the front rooms looked over the noisy road, and through their windows came the roar and rattle of it. It was shabby and cheerless on the brightest days, and on foggy or rainy ones it was the most forlorn place in London.

At least that was what one boy thought as he stood near the iron railings watching the passers-by on the morning on which this story begins, which was also the morning after he had been brought by his father to live as a lodger in the back sitting-room of the house No. 7.

He was a boy about twelve years old, his name was Marco Loristan, and he was the kind of boy people look at a second time when they have looked at him once. In the first place, he was a very big boy—tall for his years, and with a particularly strong frame. His shoulders were broad and his arms and legs were long and powerful. He was quite used to hearing people say, as they glanced at him, "What a fine, big lad!" And then they always looked again at his face. It was not an English face or an American one, and was very dark in coloring. His features were strong, his black hair grew on his head like a mat, his eyes were large and deep set, and looked out between thick, straight, black lashes. He was as un-English a boy as one could imagine, and an

observing person would have been struck at once by a sort of SILENT look expressed by his whole face, a look which suggested that he was not a boy who talked much.

This look was specially noticeable this morning as he stood before the iron railings. The things he was thinking of were of a kind likely to bring to the face of a twelve-year-old boy an unboyish expression.

He was thinking of the long, hurried journey he and his father and their old soldier servant, Lazarus, had made during the last few days—the journey from Russia. Cramped in a close third-class railway carriage, they had dashed across the Continent as if something important or terrible were driving them, and here they were, settled in London as if they were going to live forever at No. 7 Philibert Place. He knew, however, that though they might stay a year, it was just as probable that, in the middle of some night, his father or Lazarus might waken him from his sleep and say, "Get up—dress yourself quickly. We must go at once." A few days later, he might be in St. Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna, or Budapest, huddled away in some poor little house as shabby and comfortless as No. 7 Philibert Place.

He passed his hand over his forehead as he thought of it and watched the busses. His strange life and his close association with his father had made him much older than his years, but he was only a boy, after all, and the mystery of things sometimes weighed heavily upon him, and set him to deep wondering.

In not one of the many countries he knew had he ever met a boy whose life was in the least like his own. Other boys had homes in which they spent year after year; they

went to school regularly, and played with other boys, and talked openly of the things which happened to them, and the journeys they made. When he remained in a place long enough to make a few boy-friends, he knew he must never forget that his whole existence was a sort of secret whose safety depended upon his own silence and discretion.

This was because of the promises he had made to his father, and they had been the first thing he remembered. Not that he had ever regretted anything connected with his father. He threw his black head up as he thought of that. None of the other boys had such a father, not one of them. His father was his idol and his chief. He had scarcely ever seen him when his clothes had not been poor and shabby, but he had also never seen him when, despite his worn coat and frayed linen, he had not stood out among all others as more distinguished than the most noticeable of them. When he walked down a street, people turned to look at him even oftener than they turned to look at Marco, and the boy felt as if it was not merely because he was a big man with a handsome, dark face, but because he looked, somehow, as if he had been born to command armies, and as if no one would think of disobeying him. Yet Marco had never seen him command any one, and they had always been poor, and shabbily dressed, and often enough ill-fed. But whether they were in one country or another, and whatsoever dark place they seemed to be hiding in, the few people they saw treated him with a sort of deference, and nearly always stood when they were in his presence, unless he bade them sit down.

"It is because they know he is a patriot, and patriots are respected," the boy had told himself.

He himself wished to be a patriot, though he had never seen his own country of Samavia. He knew it well, however. His father had talked to him about it ever since that day when he had made the promises. He had taught him to know it by helping him to study curious detailed maps of it—maps of its cities, maps of its mountains, maps of its roads. He had told him stories of the wrongs done its people, of their sufferings and struggles for liberty, and, above all, of their unconquerable courage. When they talked together of its history, Marco's boy-blood burned and leaped in his veins, and he always knew, by the look in his father's eyes, that his blood burned also. His countrymen had been killed, they had been robbed, they had died by thousands of cruelties and starvation, but their souls had never been conquered, and, through all the years during which more powerful nations crushed and enslaved them, they never ceased to struggle to free themselves and stand unfettered as Samavians had stood centuries before.

"Why do we not live there," Marco had cried on the day the promises were made. "Why do we not go back and fight? When I am a man, I will be a soldier and die for Samavia."

"We are of those who must LIVE for Samavia—working day and night," his father had answered; "denying ourselves, training our bodies and souls, using our brains, learning the things which are best to be done for our people and our country. Even exiles may be Samavian soldiers—I am one, you must be one."

"Are we exiles?" asked Marco.

"Yes," was the answer. "But even if we never set foot on Samavian soil, we must give our lives to it. I have given mine since I was sixteen. I shall give it until I die."

"Have you never lived there?" said Marco.

A strange look shot across his father's face.

"No," he answered, and said no more. Marco watching him, knew he must not ask the question again.

The next words his father said were about the promises. Marco was quite a little fellow at the time, but he understood the solemnity of them, and felt that he was being honored as if he were a man.

"When you are a man, you shall know all you wish to know," Loristan said. "Now you are a child, and your mind must not be burdened. But you must do your part. A child sometimes forgets that words may be dangerous. You must promise never to forget this. Wheresoever you are; if you have playmates, you must remember to be silent about many things. You must not speak of what I do, or of the people who come to see me. You must not mention the things in your life which make it different from the lives of other boys. You must keep in your mind that a secret exists which a chance foolish word might betray. You are a Samavian, and there have been Samavians who have died a thousand deaths rather than betray a secret. You must learn to obey without question, as if you were a soldier. Now you must take your oath of allegiance."

He rose from his seat and went to a corner of the room. He knelt down, turned back the carpet, lifted a plank, and took something from beneath it. It was a sword, and, as he

came back to Marco, he drew it out from its sheath. The child's strong, little body stiffened and drew itself up, his large, deep eyes flashed. He was to take his oath of allegiance upon a sword as if he were a man. He did not know that his small hand opened and shut with a fierce understanding grip because those of his blood had for long centuries past carried swords and fought with them.

Loristan gave him the big bared weapon, and stood erect before him.

"Repeat these words after me sentence by sentence!" he commanded.

And as he spoke them Marco echoed each one loudly and clearly.

"The sword in my hand—for Samavia!

"The heart in my breast—for Samavia!

"The swiftness of my sight, the thought of my brain, the life of my life—for Samavia.

"Here grows a man for Samavia.

"God be thanked!"

Then Loristan put his hand on the child's shoulder, and his dark face looked almost fiercely proud.

"From this hour," he said, "you and I are comrades at arms."

And from that day to the one on which he stood beside the broken iron railings of No. 7 Philibert Place, Marco had not forgotten for one hour.

II
A Young Citizen of the World

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He had been in London more than once before, but not to the lodgings in Philibert Place. When he was brought a second or third time to a town or city, he always knew that the house he was taken to would be in a quarter new to him, and he should not see again the people he had seen before. Such slight links of acquaintance as sometimes formed themselves between him and other children as shabby and poor as himself were easily broken. His father, however, had never forbidden him to make chance acquaintances. He had, in fact, told him that he had reasons for not wishing him to hold himself aloof from other boys. The only barrier which must exist between them must be the barrier of silence concerning his wanderings from country to country. Other boys as poor as he was did not make constant journeys, therefore they would miss nothing from his boyish talk when he omitted all mention of his. When he was in Russia, he must speak only of Russian places and Russian people and customs. When he was in France, Germany, Austria, or England, he must do the same thing. When he had learned English, French, German, Italian, and Russian he did not know. He had seemed to grow up in the midst of changing tongues which all seemed familiar to him, as languages are familiar to children who have lived with them until one scarcely seems less familiar than another. He did remember, however, that his father had always been

unswerving in his attention to his pronunciation and method of speaking the language of any country they chanced to be living in.

"You must not seem a foreigner in any country," he had said to him. "It is necessary that you should not. But when you are in England, you must not know French, or German, or anything but English."

Once, when he was seven or eight years old, a boy had asked him what his father's work was.

"His own father is a carpenter, and he asked me if my father was one," Marco brought the story to Loristan. "I said you were not. Then he asked if you were a shoemaker, and another one said you might be a bricklayer or a tailor—and I didn't know what to tell them." He had been out playing in a London street, and he put a grubby little hand on his father's arm, and clutched and almost fiercely shook it. "I wanted to say that you were not like their fathers, not at all. I knew you were not, though you were quite as poor. You are not a bricklayer or a shoemaker, but a patriot—you could not be only a bricklayer—you!" He said it grandly and with a queer indignation, his black head held up and his eyes angry.

Loristan laid his hand against his mouth.

"Hush! hush!" he said. "Is it an insult to a man to think he may be a carpenter or make a good suit of clothes? If I could make our clothes, we should go better dressed. If I were a shoemaker, your toes would not be making their way into the world as they are now." He was smiling, but Marco saw his head held itself high, too, and his eyes were glowing as

he touched his shoulder. "I know you did not tell them I was a patriot," he ended. "What was it you said to them?"

"I remembered that you were nearly always writing and drawing maps, and I said you were a writer, but I did not know what you wrote—and that you said it was a poor trade. I heard you say that once to Lazarus. Was that a right thing to tell them?"

"Yes. You may always say it if you are asked. There are poor fellows enough who write a thousand different things which bring them little money. There is nothing strange in my being a writer."

So Loristan answered him, and from that time if, by any chance, his father's means of livelihood were inquired into, it was simple enough and true enough to say that he wrote to earn his bread.

In the first days of strangeness to a new place, Marco often walked a great deal. He was strong and untiring, and it amused him to wander through unknown streets, and look at shops, and houses, and people. He did not confine himself to the great thoroughfares, but liked to branch off into the side streets and odd, deserted-looking squares, and even courts and alleyways. He often stopped to watch workmen and talk to them if they were friendly. In this way he made stray acquaintances in his strollings, and learned a good many things. He had a fondness for wandering musicians, and, from an old Italian who had in his youth been a singer in opera, he had learned to sing a number of songs in his strong, musical boy-voice. He knew well many of the songs of the people in several countries.

It was very dull this first morning, and he wished that he had something to do or some one to speak to. To do nothing whatever is a depressing thing at all times, but perhaps it is more especially so when one is a big, healthy boy twelve years old. London as he saw it in the Marylebone Road seemed to him a hideous place. It was murky and shabby-looking, and full of dreary-faced people. It was not the first time he had seen the same things, and they always made him feel that he wished he had something to do.

Suddenly he turned away from the gate and went into the house to speak to Lazarus. He found him in his dingy closet of a room on the fourth floor at the back of the house.

"I am going for a walk," he announced to him. "Please tell my father if he asks for me. He is busy, and I must not disturb him."

Lazarus was patching an old coat as he often patched things—even shoes sometimes. When Marco spoke, he stood up at once to answer him. He was very obstinate and particular about certain forms of manner. Nothing would have obliged him to remain seated when Loristan or Marco was near him. Marco thought it was because he had been so strictly trained as a soldier. He knew that his father had had great trouble to make him lay aside his habit of saluting when they spoke to him.

"Perhaps," Marco had heard Loristan say to him almost severely, once when he had forgotten himself and had stood at salute while his master passed through a broken-down iron gate before an equally broken-down-looking lodging-house—"perhaps you can force yourself to remember when I

tell you that it is not safe—IT IS NOT SAFE! You put us in danger!"

It was evident that this helped the good fellow to control himself. Marco remembered that at the time he had actually turned pale, and had struck his forehead and poured forth a torrent of Samavian dialect in penitence and terror. But, though he no longer saluted them in public, he omitted no other form of reverence and ceremony, and the boy had become accustomed to being treated as if he were anything but the shabby lad whose very coat was patched by the old soldier who stood "at attention" before him.

"Yes, sir," Lazarus answered. "Where was it your wish to go?"

Marco knitted his black brows a little in trying to recall distinct memories of the last time he had been in London.

"I have been to so many places, and have seen so many things since I was here before, that I must begin to learn again about the streets and buildings I do not quite remember."

"Yes, sir," said Lazarus. "There HAVE been so many. I also forget. You were but eight years old when you were last here."

"I think I will go and find the royal palace, and then I will walk about and learn the names of the streets," Marco said.

"Yes, sir," answered Lazarus, and this time he made his military salute.

Marco lifted his right hand in recognition, as if he had been a young officer. Most boys might have looked awkward or theatrical in making the gesture, but he made it with naturalness and ease, because he had been familiar with

the form since his babyhood. He had seen officers returning the salutes of their men when they encountered each other by chance in the streets, he had seen princes passing sentries on their way to their carriages, more august personages raising the quiet, recognizing hand to their helmets as they rode through applauding crowds. He had seen many royal persons and many royal pageants, but always only as an ill-clad boy standing on the edge of the crowd of common people. An energetic lad, however poor, cannot spend his days in going from one country to another without, by mere every-day chance, becoming familiar with the outer life of royalties and courts. Marco had stood in continental thoroughfares when visiting emperors rode by with glittering soldiery before and behind them, and a populace shouting courteous welcomes. He knew where in various great capitals the sentries stood before kingly or princely palaces. He had seen certain royal faces often enough to know them well, and to be ready to make his salute when particular quiet and unattended carriages passed him by.

"It is well to know them. It is well to observe everything and to train one's self to remember faces and circumstances," his father had said. "If you were a young prince or a young man training for a diplomatic career, you would be taught to notice and remember people and things as you would be taught to speak your own language with elegance. Such observation would be your most practical accomplishment and greatest power. It is as practical for one man as another—for a poor lad in a patched coat as for one whose place is to be in courts. As you cannot be

educated in the ordinary way, you must learn from travel and the world. You must lose nothing—forget nothing."

It was his father who had taught him everything, and he had learned a great deal. Loristan had the power of making all things interesting to fascination. To Marco it seemed that he knew everything in the world. They were not rich enough to buy many books, but Loristan knew the treasures of all great cities, the resources of the smallest towns. Together he and his boy walked through the endless galleries filled with the wonders of the world, the pictures before which through centuries an unbroken procession of almost worshiping eyes had passed uplifted. Because his father made the pictures seem the glowing, burning work of still-living men whom the centuries could not turn to dust, because he could tell the stories of their living and laboring to triumph, stories of what they felt and suffered and were, the boy became as familiar with the old masters—Italian, German, French, Dutch, English, Spanish—as he was with most of the countries they had lived in. They were not merely old masters to him, but men who were great, men who seemed to him to have wielded beautiful swords and held high, splendid lights. His father could not go often with him, but he always took him for the first time to the galleries, museums, libraries, and historical places which were richest in treasures of art, beauty, or story. Then, having seen them once through his eyes, Marco went again and again alone, and so grew intimate with the wonders of the world. He knew that he was gratifying a wish of his father's when he tried to train himself to observe all things and forget nothing. These palaces of marvels were his

school-rooms, and his strange but rich education was the most interesting part of his life. In time, he knew exactly the places where the great Rembrandts, Vandykes, Rubens, Raphaels, Tintorettos, or Frans Hals hung; he knew whether this masterpiece or that was in Vienna, in Paris, in Venice, or Munich, or Rome. He knew stories of splendid crown jewels, of old armor, of ancient crafts, and of Roman relics dug up from beneath the foundations of old German cities. Any boy wandering to amuse himself through museums and palaces on "free days" could see what he saw, but boys living fuller and less lonely lives would have been less likely to concentrate their entire minds on what they looked at, and also less likely to store away facts with the determination to be able to recall at any moment the mental shelf on which they were laid. Having no playmates and nothing to play with, he began when he was a very little fellow to make a sort of game out of his rambles through picture-galleries, and the places which, whether they called themselves museums or not, were storehouses or relics of antiquity. There were always the blessed "free days," when he could climb any marble steps, and enter any great portal without paying an entrance fee. Once inside, there were plenty of plainly and poorly dressed people to be seen, but there were not often boys as young as himself who were not attended by older companions. Quiet and orderly as he was, he often found himself stared at. The game he had created for himself was as simple as it was absorbing. It was to try how much he could remember and clearly describe to his father when they sat together at night and talked of what he had seen. These night talks filled his happiest hours. He never

felt lonely then, and when his father sat and watched him with a certain curious and deep attention in his dark, reflective eyes, the boy was utterly comforted and content. Sometimes he brought back rough and crude sketches of objects he wished to ask questions about, and Loristan could always relate to him the full, rich story of the thing he wanted to know. They were stories made so splendid and full of color in the telling that Marco could not forget them.

III
The Legend of the Lost Prince

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As he walked through the streets, he was thinking of one of these stories. It was one he had heard first when he was very young, and it had so seized upon his imagination that he had asked often for it. It was, indeed, a part of the long-past history of Samavia, and he had loved it for that reason. Lazarus had often told it to him, sometimes adding much detail, but he had always liked best his father's version, which seemed a thrilling and living thing. On their journey from Russia, during an hour when they had been forced to wait in a cold wayside station and had found the time long, Loristan had discussed it with him. He always found some such way of making hard and comfortless hours easier to live through.

"Fine, big lad—for a foreigner," Marco heard a man say to his companion as he passed them this morning. "Looks like a Pole or a Russian."

It was this which had led his thoughts back to the story of the Lost Prince. He knew that most of the people who looked at him and called him a "foreigner" had not even heard of Samavia. Those who chanced to recall its existence knew of it only as a small fierce country, so placed upon the map that the larger countries which were its neighbors felt they must control and keep it in order, and therefore made incursions into it, and fought its people and each other for possession. But it had not been always so. It was an old, old

country, and hundreds of years ago it had been as celebrated for its peaceful happiness and wealth as for its beauty. It was often said that it was one of the most beautiful places in the world. A favorite Samavian legend was that it had been the site of the Garden of Eden. In those past centuries, its people had been of such great stature, physical beauty, and strength, that they had been like a race of noble giants. They were in those days a pastoral people, whose rich crops and splendid flocks and herds were the envy of less fertile countries. Among the shepherds and herdsmen there were poets who sang their own songs when they piped among their sheep upon the mountain sides and in the flower-thick valleys. Their songs had been about patriotism and bravery, and faithfulness to their chieftains and their country. The simple courtesy of the poorest peasant was as stately as the manner of a noble. But that, as Loristan had said with a tired smile, had been before they had had time to outlive and forget the Garden of Eden. Five hundred years ago, there had succeeded to the throne a king who was bad and weak. His father had lived to be ninety years old, and his son had grown tired of waiting in Samavia for his crown. He had gone out into the world, and visited other countries and their courts. When he returned and became king, he lived as no Samavian king had lived before. He was an extravagant, vicious man of furious temper and bitter jealousies. He was jealous of the larger courts and countries he had seen, and tried to introduce their customs and their ambitions. He ended by introducing their worst faults and vices. There arose political quarrels and savage new factions. Money was squandered until

poverty began for the first time to stare the country in the face. The big Samavians, after their first stupefaction, broke forth into furious rage. There were mobs and riots, then bloody battles. Since it was the king who had worked this wrong, they would have none of him. They would depose him and make his son king in his place. It was at this part of the story that Marco was always most deeply interested. The young prince was totally unlike his father. He was a true royal Samavian. He was bigger and stronger for his age than any man in the country, and he was as handsome as a young Viking god. More than this, he had a lion's heart, and before he was sixteen, the shepherds and herdsmen had already begun to make songs about his young valor, and his kingly courtesy, and generous kindness. Not only the shepherds and herdsmen sang them, but the people in the streets. The king, his father, had always been jealous of him, even when he was only a beautiful, stately child whom the people roared with joy to see as he rode through the streets. When he returned from his journeyings and found him a splendid youth, he detested him. When the people began to clamor and demand that he himself should abdicate, he became insane with rage, and committed such cruelties that the people ran mad themselves. One day they stormed the palace, killed and overpowered the guards, and, rushing into the royal apartments, burst in upon the king as he shuddered green with terror and fury in his private room. He was king no more, and must leave the country, they vowed, as they closed round him with bared weapons and shook them in his face. Where was the prince? They must see him and tell him their ultimatum. It was he

whom they wanted for a king. They trusted him and would obey him. They began to shout aloud his name, calling him in a sort of chant in unison, "Prince Ivor—Prince Ivor—Prince Ivor!" But no answer came. The people of the palace had hidden themselves, and the place was utterly silent.

The king, despite his terror, could not help but sneer.

"Call him again," he said. "He is afraid to come out of his hole!"

A savage fellow from the mountain fastnesses struck him on the mouth.

"He afraid!" he shouted. "If he does not come, it is because thou hast killed him—and thou art a dead man!"

This set them aflame with hotter burning. They broke away, leaving three on guard, and ran about the empty palace rooms shouting the prince's name. But there was no answer. They sought him in a frenzy, bursting open doors and flinging down every obstacle in their way. A page, found hidden in a closet, owned that he had seen His Royal Highness pass through a corridor early in the morning. He had been softly singing to himself one of the shepherd's songs.

And in this strange way out of the history of Samavia, five hundred years before Marco's day, the young prince had walked—singing softly to himself the old song of Samavia's beauty and happiness. For he was never seen again.

In every nook and cranny, high and low, they sought for him, believing that the king himself had made him prisoner in some secret place, or had privately had him killed. The fury of the people grew to frenzy. There were new risings,

and every few days the palace was attacked and searched again. But no trace of the prince was found. He had vanished as a star vanishes when it drops from its place in the sky. During a riot in the palace, when a last fruitless search was made, the king himself was killed. A powerful noble who headed one of the uprisings made himself king in his place. From that time, the once splendid little kingdom was like a bone fought for by dogs. Its pastoral peace was forgotten. It was torn and worried and shaken by stronger countries. It tore and worried itself with internal fights. It assassinated kings and created new ones. No man was sure in his youth what ruler his maturity would live under, or whether his children would die in useless fights, or through stress of poverty and cruel, useless laws. There were no more shepherds and herdsmen who were poets, but on the mountain sides and in the valleys sometimes some of the old songs were sung. Those most beloved were songs about a Lost Prince whose name had been Ivor. If he had been king, he would have saved Samavia, the verses said, and all brave hearts believed that he would still return. In the modern cities, one of the jocular cynical sayings was, "Yes, that will happen when Prince Ivor comes again."

In his more childish days, Marco had been bitterly troubled by the unsolved mystery. Where had he gone—the Lost Prince? Had he been killed, or had he been hidden away in a dungeon? But he was so big and brave, he would have broken out of any dungeon. The boy had invented for himself a dozen endings to the story.

"Did no one ever find his sword or his cap—or hear anything or guess anything about him ever—ever—ever?"

he would say restlessly again and again.

One winter's night, as they sat together before a small fire in a cold room in a cold city in Austria, he had been so eager and asked so many searching questions, that his father gave him an answer he had never given him before, and which was a sort of ending to the story, though not a satisfying one:

"Everybody guessed as you are guessing. A few very old shepherds in the mountains who like to believe ancient histories relate a story which most people consider a kind of legend. It is that almost a hundred years after the prince was lost, an old shepherd told a story his long-dead father had confided to him in secret just before he died. The father had said that, going out in the early morning on the mountain side, he had found in the forest what he at first thought to be the dead body of a beautiful, boyish, young huntsman. Some enemy had plainly attacked him from behind and believed he had killed him. He was, however, not quite dead, and the shepherd dragged him into a cave where he himself often took refuge from storms with his flocks. Since there was such riot and disorder in the city, he was afraid to speak of what he had found; and, by the time he discovered that he was harboring the prince, the king had already been killed, and an even worse man had taken possession of his throne, and ruled Samavia with a blood-stained, iron hand. To the terrified and simple peasant the safest thing seemed to get the wounded youth out of the country before there was any chance of his being discovered and murdered outright, as he would surely be. The cave in which he was hidden was not far from the

frontier, and while he was still so weak that he was hardly conscious of what befell him, he was smuggled across it in a cart loaded with sheepskins, and left with some kind monks who did not know his rank or name. The shepherd went back to his flocks and his mountains, and lived and died among them, always in terror of the changing rulers and their savage battles with each other. The mountaineers said among themselves, as the generations succeeded each other, that the Lost Prince must have died young, because otherwise he would have come back to his country and tried to restore its good, bygone days."

"Yes, he would have come," Marco said.

"He would have come if he had seen that he could help his people," Loristan answered, as if he were not reflecting on a story which was probably only a kind of legend. "But he was very young, and Samavia was in the hands of the new dynasty, and filled with his enemies. He could not have crossed the frontier without an army. Still, I think he died young."

It was of this story that Marco was thinking as he walked, and perhaps the thoughts that filled his mind expressed themselves in his face in some way which attracted attention. As he was nearing Buckingham Palace, a distinguished-looking well-dressed man with clever eyes caught sight of him, and, after looking at him keenly, slackened his pace as he approached him from the opposite direction. An observer might have thought he saw something which puzzled and surprised him. Marco didn't see him at all, and still moved forward, thinking of the shepherds and the prince. The well-dressed man began to

walk still more slowly. When he was quite close to Marco, he stopped and spoke to him—in the Samavian language.

"What is your name?" he asked.

Marco's training from his earliest childhood had been an extraordinary thing. His love for his father had made it simple and natural to him, and he had never questioned the reason for it. As he had been taught to keep silence, he had been taught to control the expression of his face and the sound of his voice, and, above all, never to allow himself to look startled. But for this he might have started at the extraordinary sound of the Samavian words suddenly uttered in a London street by an English gentleman. He might even have answered the question in Samavian himself. But he did not. He courteously lifted his cap and replied in English:

"Excuse me?"

The gentleman's clever eyes scrutinized him keenly. Then he also spoke in English.

"Perhaps you do not understand? I asked your name because you are very like a Samavian I know," he said.

"I am Marco Loristan," the boy answered him.

The man looked straight into his eyes and smiled.

"That is not the name," he said. "I beg your pardon, my boy."

He was about to go on, and had indeed taken a couple of steps away, when he paused and turned to him again.

"You may tell your father that you are a very well-trained lad. I wanted to find out for myself." And he went on.

Marco felt that his heart beat a little quickly. This was one of several incidents which had happened during the last

three years, and made him feel that he was living among things so mysterious that their very mystery hinted at danger. But he himself had never before seemed involved in them. Why should it matter that he was well-behaved? Then he remembered something. The man had not said "well-behaved," he had said "well-TRAINED." Well-trained in what way? He felt his forehead prickle slightly as he thought of the smiling, keen look which set itself so straight upon him. Had he spoken to him in Samavian for an experiment, to see if he would be startled into forgetting that he had been trained to seem to know only the language of the country he was temporarily living in? But he had not forgotten. He had remembered well, and was thankful that he had betrayed nothing. "Even exiles may be Samavian soldiers. I am one. You must be one," his father had said on that day long ago when he had made him take his oath. Perhaps remembering his training was being a soldier. Never had Samavia needed help as she needed it to-day. Two years before, a rival claimant to the throne had assassinated the then reigning king and his sons, and since then, bloody war and tumult had raged. The new king was a powerful man, and had a great following of the worst and most self-seeking of the people. Neighboring countries had interfered for their own welfare's sake, and the newspapers had been full of stories of savage fighting and atrocities, and of starving peasants.

Marco had late one evening entered their lodgings to find Loristan walking to and fro like a lion in a cage, a paper crushed and torn in his hands, and his eyes blazing. He had been reading of cruelties wrought upon innocent peasants

and women and children. Lazarus was standing staring at him with huge tears running down his cheeks. When Marco opened the door, the old soldier strode over to him, turned him about, and led him out of the room.

"Pardon, sir, pardon!" he sobbed. "No one must see him, not even you. He suffers so horribly."

He stood by a chair in Marco's own small bedroom, where he half pushed, half led him. He bent his grizzled head, and wept like a beaten child.

"Dear God of those who are in pain, assuredly it is now the time to give back to us our Lost Prince!" he said, and Marco knew the words were a prayer, and wondered at the frenzied intensity of it, because it seemed so wild a thing to pray for the return of a youth who had died five hundred years before.

When he reached the palace, he was still thinking of the man who had spoken to him. He was thinking of him even as he looked at the majestic gray stone building and counted the number of its stories and windows. He walked round it that he might make a note in his memory of its size and form and its entrances, and guess at the size of its gardens. This he did because it was part of his game, and part of his strange training.

When he came back to the front, he saw that in the great entrance court within the high iron railings an elegant but quiet-looking closed carriage was drawing up before the doorway. Marco stood and watched with interest to see who would come out and enter it. He knew that kings and emperors who were not on parade looked merely like well-dressed private gentlemen, and often chose to go out as