

THU He Came.

Cold and obs. in vain the King and sage
Gave law and learning to the darkened age
There was no present faith, no future hope
Earth bounded the earth-torn horse of Time
Till in the east there rose the promise-star
Till rose the sun of righteous hope afar
Till on a world redeemed Emanuel shone
Earth for his footstool, heaven for his throne
L. F. Landor

A Christmas Eve Experience.

BY GRACE ETHELWYN COBB.

"Come, darling, come! Don't drag on mamma's hand."

But the little prince had stopped short before an immense window full of dolls. He was a manly little figure with the straight, dark blue coat buttoned almost to his ankles, and the close-fitting, woolly cap upon his head; but inside the coat was a white pique dress with lace and ruffles, and underneath the cap shone out a soft and dimpled baby face with full, red lips, and great, dark, starry eyes.

It was the day before Christmas and the little prince's eyes had been growing larger all the afternoon. The store windows were so full of wonders and he so full of baby awe and admiration. He had not learned to weary of it at all, to dread the rushing crowds, and to think bitter thoughts about money and the sweet things he would like to do. He simply wanted everything he saw, and when he found he could not have it he just forgot that want in some new wonder.

Only these dolls, those gaily-dressed beautiful dolls—they were a different matter!

He stood holding his mamma fast, while the hurrying people jostled them this way and that way.

"Oh, see—jess see! he cried. "Mamma out of all dose many don't you sink dat you can buy me one, jess on'y one?"

"Oh, precious!" she answered, trying to push on. "Mamma couldn't buy another thing to-night. See, it's getting dark, and papa will be home and think we're lost."

Still he hung back, his lips quivering with disappointment.

"Mamma," he said at last, choking down a sob, "you'd like to buy me one—you want to do it very bad—oh, very bad—don't you?"

"Why, yes, my sweet. I would like to get you everything you want."

"All right, den," he answered, and, turning, trudged manfully away from the enchanting sight.

It was a mistake, anyway, having to go down town that afternoon.

The little prince's mamma had finished her Christmas shopping a week before, but that very morning, to her dismay, Bert's brown dressing gown had come home with navy blue instead of a dark green velvet collar and cuffs.

Bert, you know, is papa to the little prince. He is a handsome fellow, with twinkling blue eyes and brown mustache and wavy hair, and it was most important that his dressing gown should be exactly right. It was to have been so stylish—brown and green—the "very sweetest combination!" Besides, that was not the piece of velvet Bert's wife had taken to the tailor's. It was much finer and better every way than the one he had put in? That settled it.

She bundled up the dressing gown, took the little prince by the hand, and started for the tailor's. It was away down town, but never mind.

Of course the tailor was very sorry—of course it was a mistake. Of course it never would have happened, except for the Christmas rush, and of course it could not possibly be changed that day. Of course she would have to give it to her husband as it was and have it altered afterward.

"Of course you will alter it to-day

and have it ready, as you promised, or of course I will not take it at all," she answered, borrowing his own expression in rather a saucy way.

The tailor looked at her determined face and changed his tone. They could change it and muck it that day, he admitted so much, but they positively could not promise to deliver the garment, so would it not be better, after all, to give it as it was, and there

She cut him short. "Take it and make it right. I will call for it myself when it is done."

Bert's little wife detested carrying packages as much as anyone, but "I guess I can do it for Bert at Christmas time," she told herself.

So she and the little prince had wandered from store to store all the afternoon until now, with the dressing-gown safe in her arms, she was on her homeward way.

It was close upon dinner time. The car was crowded, but the tired little prince stood bravely first on one foot and then on the other, and looked love at his tired little mamma whenever she glanced his way. He knew she could not hold him with that bulky bundle in her arms. Besides, he knew the secret from papa about the gown, and he was going to keep it, too.

Dear little prince! That was not his real name at all, but somehow it seemed to fit—he was such a royal little man.

When they reached home there was barely time to put away their wraps before Bert came home and dinner was announced.

It had been a hard day at the office and Bert was tired, or he never would have noticed when the little prince insisted on his having his place at the table moved from the end around to "mamma's side." As it was he looked annoyed, though he said nothing.

The little prince was hard to please that evening. He could not eat the bread that mamma had prepared because he "wanted to butter it." He threw a spoon across the table because it happened not to be the one marked with his name, and succeeded altogether in proving that his day's work had been far too heavy for his baby strength.

Bert was silent for the first ten minutes. Then, "My dear," he said, and his little wife knew instantly that what he meant to say would not be pleasant.

"Do you think," he went on with a smile that was only half a smile, "that you are giving me a square deal in the matter?"

"I don't know what you mean," she said constrainedly.

"Beg pardon, but I think you do. As many times as I have told you how I enjoy our quiet dinners when we two are alone and as easy as it is for you to have that boy asleep before this time, it seems to me that your keeping him up to turn the whole meal topsy-turvy, is not exactly doing as you would be done by, to say the least."

"But, Bert," she began to speak and stopped. If she could tell him how she and the little prince had spent the day—how sadly they had tired themselves, and all for him—he would forgive them on the instant, she was sure. But the idea of divulging a Christmas secret before the proper moment was not to be accepted. So she waited.

"It would be different," he resumed, "if you had anything in the world to do except care for the boy. But you told me repeatedly your Christmas work was all done days ago, and you had only to be lazy from now on, and I tell you when a man comes home as tired as I am—"

"Other people besides men get tired sometimes, too," she interposed. "You may not know what I've been doing, but I have had a very busy

day, and as for the baby, he's as tired as you are, every bit!"

"Then why isn't he in bed where he ought to be?" "I am know very well."

"Say, papa!" suddenly cried the subject of contention in a voice of high excitement.

"I hanged my stockin up ever since dis mornin an I just know something! I know Santa Claus is jess a joke an its trulk you and mamma that put in presents and sings after I'm gone to sleep. I foun dat out an I know it too!"

"Yes my son!" said Bert in a voice as low as he could make it. "Did you think your papa was deaf? I'm not. I can hear quite as well as ever. Then, to the little mother, "Where, I'd like to know, did he get the habit of shouting in that style! Do you ever stop him, and tell him to speak softly, or do you let him go on that way all day long?"

"I don't like your manner, Bert," she said indignantly.

"It's a pity that you hadn't found that out some years ago," he said dryly.

"I don't care," wailed the little prince, as the chill of the atmosphere struck his tender heart. "I don't like papa, an' I sink he's bad!"

"Hush, darling, hush!" said mamma.

"Oh, no!" said Bert. "Let him speak his mind. Don't make him a hypocrite with all his other faults."

"I don't—I don't!" the child went on. "I wis I didn't have him—he's so bad!"

His sobs grew louder with every breath.

Little Prince, whispered mamma "You will have to go away unless you stop. Mamma can't stay and let you cry like that."

"Call Bridget and let her take him and put him in bed," Bert proposed sharply.

"No—no—no!" shrieked the child. "I won't! I won't let her! Oh you bad, bad papa!"

"I always go with him, Bert, you know," said mamma.

"Well, its time he learned to go with some one else."

"Bert" her eyes were pleading, but he did not meet them. "Bert, dear—its Christmas Eve."

"Yes, and last Sunday it was Sunday dinner that must not be spoiled by disciplining him! Meantime, for the sake of present peace, are we to let our boy grow up an ungoverned, saucy good-for-nothing?"

"You are unreasonable!" she answered, hotly, turning to the weeping child once more and wiping the tears from his flushed excited face. "Any one could see that it would be foolish to try an innovation at a time like this."

Still the little prince could not be quiet and in a moment mamma rose decidedly. "Come!" she said.

"No—no! I want to stay to, cert. I want to—oh, I do!"

The little mother found it hard enough to lift the struggling screaming boy out of the chair to which he clung, and it was small wonder that during the operation one of his widely flying feet shot a glass of water from the table to crash in pieces on the hardwood floor.

Bert started up. "I shall punish him for that!" he said.

The small woman put her child behind her. He clung to her, frightened into silence by the sound of the breaking glass.

"You shall not even touch him while you are angry," she cried.

"I shall punish my boy when I think best!"

"You shall never strike my baby while I live."

They faced each other defiantly.

"Oh, very well," said Bert, after

a pause. "Go on. You are brave. I admire you. I will teach him to scream for what he wants until he gets it, and I will call his father names and I will hate him. By and by, when I'm big enough to knock me down, I will feel your work is done, and I should think you would want to instruct a class a mother like me, why don't you?"

It was too much. She turned her face with her hands.

"Oh," she sobbed, "you are so sarcastic, heartless thing! If my brother would hate you, I could hear you talk to me like that. Oh, I can't bear it! On Christmas eve! Oh, its dreadful! I won't stay with you! I'll take the baby out, somewhere—anywhere—away from here! I never can stay. I want to go home where they love me, and I will!"

Bert tried to look indifferent but this outburst. He shrugged his shoulders, and he pretended not to notice.

Tired men are sorry, sometimes after dinner.

Bert stole silently up the stairs and stood eavesdropping at the door of the room where the little prince was being put to bed.

"But I can't love him," he heard in a baby voice, still low with sobs.

"Why, sweetheart, of course you love your own dear papa."

"You don't love him do you, mamma?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes. I do, I do."

There were tears with the admission, and Bert found some in his own eyes at the same instant.

"Well, den, I will, if you want, was the answer.

"And now, darling, tell mamma you are sorry for flying into such a rage and saying and doing all those naughty things."

"I can't, mamma; I can't tell her. I tell res. It don't come into my heart to feel sorry—net a bit."

Then the tender voice repeated and went on and on so softly that Bert could not hear the words. He guessed that she was praying for the little culprit.

Suddenly he heard "It seems it's here. Oh, mamma, it came right into my heart, and oh, I feel so sorry. I do—I am—I didn't ought to say dose words an, more ever, I didn't ought to kick dat gress, an' oh—I never—never—never will again."

A silence followed. Bert knew that they were locked in one another's arms. After some time the little prince said "Mamma!" "Yes, darling."

"I'm so sorry—I kicked dat way!" the words had a drawn-out drag. "I sink I must have forgotten glass would break!"

Bert listened after that until he heard the little mother rise up from beside the sleeping child and cower softly toward the door. She started as she came upon him, standing there, but he did not give her time to turn away.

"Sweetheart! He took her face in both his hands. "I didn't ought to say dose words, and oh, I never—never—never will again!"

There were hot tears upon her lashes, but her head went down upon his shoulder and he held her close.

"Dearest, sweetest little wife," he whispered. "I am sorry—oh, so sorry! I think I must have forgotten glass would break!"

And then, although her face was pressed against his coat, he knew, somehow or other, that she was smiling.

Never does a man portray his own character more vividly than in his manner of portraying another.—Richard.