Parish and Home.

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A WELCOME.

The winds of dark December roar,
The hail beats on the window-pane;
Pile up the fire, throw wide the door
To welcome Christmas back again—
A light on life's dark wintry tide
To brighten every fireside.

It comes with many a glad surprise,
And loving tokens rare and sweet—
Perchance good angels in disguise,
With friends we long had sighed to meet;
And hands and hearts unite again,
After the parting and the pain.

While children of the merry heart,
Are sporting round the Christmas tree,
Amid our smiles a tear may start
For friends afar or o'er the sea;
Or those beyond Time's restless tide,
Who wait us on the other side.

While loving gifts we gladly greet,
'Tis still more blessed to impart
A Christmas boon with kindness, meet,
To some forsaken, lonely heart
At Christmas—Christmas ushered in,
To still the storm of human sin.

—*The Christian.*

THE ROBE MADE WHITE.

By the REV. G. CRITCHLEY, B.A.

Once upon a time there lived a boy whose name was Philantos. The country in which he lived was a very curious one, for there was something in the light, or else there was something in the people's eyes that made every thing which belonged to another very much worse than it really was, while everything that belonged to one's self appeared very beautiful indeed.

Now Philantos was pretty much like all the other people living in this place. In his own estimation he was a very superior kind of a boy. His own dress, manners, and education, gave him the very highest satisfaction. He felt good all over, and so did his neighbors.

But the king of this country had been very much displeased with his people's self-conceit, and consequently had moved away from his palace in the city to one in a distant town. Yet he still tried to bring them to a better mind, and so he sent a message to them from time to time that if any would come to his house wearing really a white robe, he should receive honor and reward. For, said the king, "Such shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

Well, the king's messenger arrived, and after sounding his trumpet, made this proclamation.

"Oyez! Oyez! this is to give notice that whosoever will go to the king's palace wearing a robe without spot or stain shall receive honor and reward."

Now it happened that just as the king's messenger was making this proclamation, Philantos was passing across the great market-place of the city, and stopped to listen. He was greatly pleased and said to himself: "Why, I am just the one to go. I am the only one in all the crowd with a spotless robe."

So he hurried away, but just outside the city gate he met a venerable looking old man, one of the attendants of the king's messengers who said, "Whither away, young sir? You seem to be in haste."

"So I am," was the reply, "I am going to see the king."

"You?" exclaimed the old man. "The proclamation says 'a robe without spot or stain.'"

"Just so," said the lad; "and that is exactly why I am going. Look at my dress. There is not one single spot or stain to be seen upon it."

The old man did look, and then, with a strange smile upon his face, took from his pocket a black leather case, from which he drew a pair of spectacles. Offering them to the boy he said: "Please put these on and look at yourself with them; they are genuine orthopanoptikon spectacles, which show all things as they really are."

Philantos, full of self-confidence, placed the glasses across his nose, and then gave a great "Oh," of surprise. His robe was not white—anything but that. All down the right side was a great smear of red, stamped with green letters—P-r-i-d-e. Down the left side was a streak of dull blue, stamped with sleepy-looking grey letters—S-l-o-t-h. Down the front was a yellow stain with black letters—S-e-l-f.

Tears of shame gathered in his eyes, and he said, "Oh, sir, am I really so bad as this? Then I can never see the king."

But as he was turning away, the old man said, "Stop! Stop! All these stains may be removed; you need not despair."

"What must I do?" asked Philantos.

"Come with me," said the old man, and led him a little distance along the road, until they came to a narrow path that stretched away across the fields and hills farther than the eye could reach. A strange path, for all along it were red stains, as if some one had walked there with bleeding feet. And pointing with his finger, the old man said, "Follow that path, and you will find out how such robes as yours are made white and clean."

Uttering a word of thanks, Philantos hastened on his way, and after a pleasant walk through some fields and woods he came to the bank of a river. It was neither very deep nor very wide, but it was swift, and the banks were lined with mud. Suddenly, just as Philantos was going to cross the bridge, he heard a cry, "Help! help!" He thought he knew the voice, and looking out he saw his own little brother struggling in the dangerous stream. He began to run, but then stopped, for the thought came, "Dare I go down there and get my robe more stained?"

It was only for a moment, for, to his surprise, he saw that the crimson trail left by the bleeding feet went straight down to the