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CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

Christmas, greatest of the Christian world's festivals, once again stands at the door. As we enter upon the festive season, during which we can, for a while, relax and throw off our cares and preoccupations, the comforting thought arises that the outlook is less gloomy than it has been for a long time. The year now ending offers, in effect, a retrospect of slow and gradual but unmistakable improvement in human affairs throughout the world. True, the "Goodwill on Earth" for which we are all yearning is far from achievement. The fear of war is still haunting us, appalling and deadly weapons are still being forged and modern science and human ingenuity continue to be applied to the devising of the most frightful means of destruction ever known.

But a glimmer of hope shines through the dark clouds. As we are about to celebrate the birth of Christ we perceive dimly a change for the better in the relations between peoples. The war wounds are healing, the tension is easing, common-sense begins to prevail and the hostility born of opposing ideologies and extreme nationalism appears to be giving way to better understanding and greater tolerance.

We have, therefore, much to be thankful for. Not only does the danger of war seem to be receding, there are also signs of more general prosperity and a steady advance in social welfare and human well-being, blessings of which our beloved homeland, we are happy to note, is receiving a full share.

Material success, however, is not everything. Christmas ought to be something more than a time for rejoicing and merry-making. It should also be an occasion for introspection and spiritual stock-taking. Are we, individually, better men and women than we were a year ago? Have we grown in character and in moral attributes? Do we cultivate the Christian virtues of humility, neighbourly love and charity? If to these questions we attempt a sincere answer, the spirit of Christmas will be with us and in us indeed.

Such are the thoughts that the coming festivities awaken in our heart.

To all our readers the Editor extends his personal greetings and his best wishes for a happy Christmas and New Year.



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