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## THE CHARM OF CHRISTMAS

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**T**O me the charm of Christmas lies in the fact that the entire Christian world stands round the cradle of a Child.

We are simple souls once more. We are not men and women struggling for place and power. We have laid down our weapons of offence and defence. We have abandoned our self-regarding attitude.

The breath of Christ is in the air, but not the Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary; not the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; not even the Christ of the Beatitudes and Parables—the Christ of the Galilean sunshine—but just the Christ-child in Bethlehem, Mother Mary's child—type of all human helplessness, innocence, and loveliness.

And we, strong men and brilliant women, delight to come again at the foot of His cot. That, to me, is the ideal Christmas mood.

To every one of us, even to the most guarded life, this world of ours brings conflict. By reason of conflict most of us grow hard, and many of us grow bitter; but in the Child-presence something of the hardness drops from us. Bitterness cannot live.

Cynicism is a thing unreal, unthinkable. Without effort we have attained—not childishness—God forbid!—but childlikeness; and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!

So that the meaning of Christmas to me is nothing less than that of the angels' song: "Peace on earth amongst men of goodwill."

What other mood is possible by the cradle of a child? Who would take his jealousies, rivalries, passions, hates, there?

Let the world but gather in fact, and not in fancy only, where the Wise Men from the East gathered, and it needs no seer to tell the new Christmas story.

There would be no problem of the unemployed in city or country. There would be no famine-stricken millions in India, no rubber slaves dying under the lash in Africa, no fires of blood-red fury flaming from one end to the other, no throned tyrannies and murderous mobs. The willerness and the solitary place would be glad, the

desert would flourish and blossom as the rose. Swords would be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and the nations would learn war no more.

