



Seasonal Greetings

FROM
HIS MASTER'S VOICE
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H.M.V.

YES! CHRISTMAS IS HERE AGAIN! — Time to give gay music, happy laughter as your contribution for a very "Merry Christmas" to your friends and relations this year! Hear the lilting voices of Eddie Fisher, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, Vera Lynn, or Kitty Kallen. . . The Orchestras of Mantovani, Gordon Jenkins, Glenn Miller or Artie Shaw in popular recordings by H.M.V., Columbia, Decca, Parlophone, Regal Zonophone, Vogue and M.G.M., as the gifts that will surely make Christmas, 1954, the gayest on record. Remember, too, that there is a complete range of the World's Finest Operatic Symphonies on 78 R.P.M. and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ R.P.M. on your local dealer's shelves.



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The Return of Christmas

WITH a feeling almost of disbelief, we print this week the programmes for Christmas. The year had seemed scarcely to be started when we were compelled to look towards its end; and if it were not for the shop windows and a subtle change of temperature the calendar would surely be under suspicion. But there it is: 1954 has almost run its course. Presently the shopping will be over, the happiest day of the year will come—and pass as quickly as any other day—and most people will rest from work. It is, when we have time to get used to it, a pleasant thought.

A temptation of the season is to fall into a mood heavy with suggestions of vanity under the sun. One Christmas, we say, is much like another. The word itself can evoke memories within a familiar pattern: we feel again the warmth of the sun, the ache from heated pavements, the slow excitement of the streets when the crowds come in for their shopping, and the pressure of work that must be done before idleness is permitted. A thousand impressions, latent for many months, invade the mind until the red tunic of Santa Claus, the tinsel decorations, the sound of carols, the faces of children around a green and silver Christmas tree, and the steam of hot dinners are curiously drawn into a holiday of all the senses. This remains the central mood, the core of feeling that stays with us when Christmas is over; but there is much else besides, taken from the private and collective experience which gives each year its special character.

Where so much is looked for, there are bound to be disappointments, and worse. Everyone remembers a Christmas when the

happiness was flawed, or utterly destroyed; and sometimes the whole nation, hearing news of disaster, has had no heart for festivity. Who can forget the shadow which a year ago spread swiftly across these islands from a place called Tangiwai? Seldom before had a season so full of promise fallen away so quickly into tragedy. The Queen was in New Zealand, and was to speak to the Commonwealth from Auckland. Her message was given, ending with a memorable postscript; and thereafter the Royal Tour went proudly forward. But Christmas, 1953, had been darkened at Tangiwai, and a year later we must not expect to be untroubled by the memory.

This year there will be no Royal occasions, though the Queen's broadcast will be heard on Boxing Day, and on December 23 a programme from YA stations will revive our impressions of the Royal Tour. For the rest, it will, we hope, be an "ordinary" Christmas. The season has its own memories, its religious significance and its central tradition. Our human situation is perhaps given its true epitome in a mixture of joy and sorrow; but at Christmas we are all young again, and feel entitled to happiness. The year has been loaded as always with its private burdens; it has its landmarks for the nation, and its special meanings for the world. And beyond it, without any interruption in the pulse of living, mankind will carry its weight of history into new seasons. But first there will be time to pause, to move more slowly, to be closer to families and friends, and to hear again the sustaining message. We hope our readers will have a quiet Christmas, eventful only in happiness.

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 17, 1954.