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## EC5506 Lets Keep our Christmas Merry

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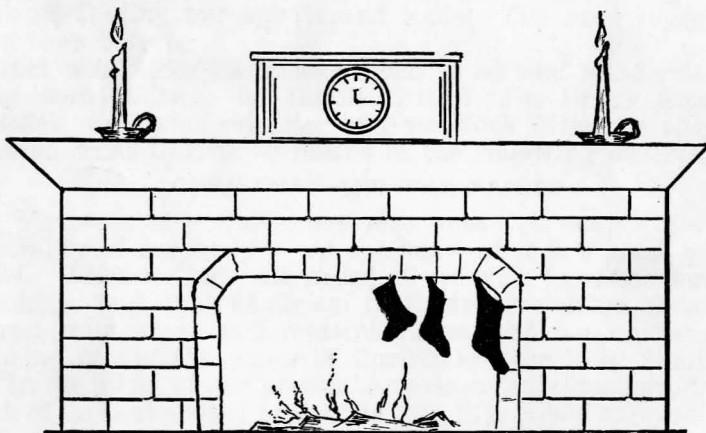
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# Extension Circular 5506  
5506

E.C. #5506

June, 1933

LET'S KEEP  
OUR CHRISTMAS MERRY



The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service  
and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

# Let's Keep Our Christmas Merry

BY LEONA S. DAVIS

"Help us to remember the birth of Jesus,  
That we may share in the songs of the Angels,  
The gladness of the shepherds and the worship of the  
Wise Men.

Close the doors of hate, and open the doors of love all  
over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desire with  
every greeting.

Deliver us from evil with the blessing that Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy  
children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our  
beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,  
For Jesus' sake, Amen."—Henry Van Dyke.

Have you ever stopped to think of what Christmas really means to you and to your family? Have you ever taken time to seriously evaluate the true meaning of Christmas and to list the many blessings which are yours? In times of economic stress and changing conditions, we need to pause now and then more than ever before to take time to be spiritually conscious. Much emphasis has been placed on the feeding of physical bodies, but let us not forget the equally important task of feeding our spirits and souls. The need is greater now than before.

Just what does Christmas mean to us and what relationship does it have on family living? Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, renowned minister of New York City, has ably expressed what Christmas means in the following excerpt.

## CHRISTMAS AND THE FAMILY

"Whatever else Christmas may mean, it stands for the centrality of family life. At the heart of it is a home with a child. When we have discarded all we wish to of the legends, theology, and ecclesiasticism that have grown up about the Christ child, there still remains an unescapable, challenging, alluring fact at the center of Christmas—the Holy Family.

"In the midst of our present American individualism, where each of us is supposed to live his own life, freely express himself, avoid repressions and inhibitions, and in general let himself go, this aspect of Christmas ought to fall on our minds like a shaft of light.

"The race does not begin with the individual but with the family. The original unit of humanity is not a single person, but a triad—father, mother, child. We are not originally individuals; we are family products whose very existence consists in belonging to somebody, and the constituent atoms of the race are not single personalities, but homes.

"The popular American idea is that homes are made up of individual persons; the truth is that individual persons are

created by homes. The family is primary. No nation, therefore, ever rises higher than the level of its family life, and at Christmas time, as always, the Holy Family is the symbol of our basic social need.

"America would better keep Christmas. We Americans would better all keep Christmas at this central point where it touches the quick of human life. We may multiply our inventions and raise to its pinnacle the mechanized miracle of a civilization we have started here; we may make our industrial efficiency still more the marvel of the world and accumulate endless wealth; we may even build great temples dedicated to public worship and great schools dedicated to public education; but what this country is going to amount to in the end depends on what happens to its homes.

"Christmas symbolizes a fundamental fact in mankind's experience; the loveliest things in human life have their fountainhead in lovely homes. Of course, this fact is crucial for religion. Christianity, in particular, did not only start with the family, it stayed there. All the basic Christian ideas are home ideas, from calling God our Father and ourselves His Children, to describing the human ideal in terms of brotherhood.

"Any real and vital religion is not primarily taught, it is caught, and the home is the place to catch it. We Americans, in this regard and others, are busily engaged in loading off upon secondary institutions the real responsibilities of our homes. We may well be grateful for all the character-producing religion that can come into a child's life from the church, the church school, the day school, and every other agency interested in the welfare of children. But after all, the quality of life which the child catches at home goes deepest. There are no substitutes for parents.

"On Christmas Day, we may all stand together in Bethlehem, before that human trinity, the Holy Family, with which Christendom began and meditate on the tremendous significance of the home."—*Harry Emerson Fosdick.*

#### A MERRY HEART DOETH GOOD

This year is a good time to recapture some of the spirit of play and buoyancy to substitute for the costly gifts and expensive celebrations we have been inclined to build around Christmas. Why would it not be fun this year to let go—back up a few years and once more be the jolly self you once were before you began to take the affairs of the world seriously? Join the frolics of the children, really enjoy the games, the decorating of the tree, the secrets and the surprises.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" and being merry does not conflict with the spiritual significance. It is a merriment that comes from a sense of spiritual security and a realization that after all the greatest things in life can not be bought or sold.

In good times and bad, in youth and in old age, we all have this one time when we can join in a glorious celebration and be merry.

There is no time in the year that compares with Christmas for experiencing the unalloyed joy that comes from making others happy. The goal this year is to keep it the merriest kind of a Christmas. Setting one's own attitude right, catching on and holding to the real Christmas spirit is going to mean more in making the family Christmas a successful one than any amount of money could possibly do.

However, we all realize that so far as children are concerned, Christmas isn't really Christmas without remembrances and plenty of them. The anticipation and the thrill of finding a bulging stocking on Christmas morning rewards others in the family for all the time and effort spent in making Christmas a merry one. Almost everyone finds more pleasure in giving remembrances which they have made than in giving articles which they have purchased. Children need very little encouragement along this line as they readily recognize the pleasure that is theirs from making something for someone else and doing it as a surprise. Holiday time is the happiest time when each child has a real share in the Christmas preparation.

If each child has a part in planning and making gifts for each other, Christmas then becomes a festival of giving as well as receiving.

If the Christmas is to be a merry one, some time and that need to be expended. So now is the time to seriously consider this business of filling Santa's pack and to insure joy on Christmas day.

#### GIFT SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

##### Child's Scrap Book

Attractive scrap books may be made from brown wrapping paper. Crumple and wet the paper, dry, and iron out. Cut the sheets any desired size. Fold the edges of each sheet under one-fourth of an inch and paste two sheets together. Choose attractive magazine pictures of child interest and mount on both sides of the double sheets. A number of plain sheets may be included in the book for use later.

A cover may be made of heavy cardboard and covered either with cloth or oil-cloth. Brads or notebook rings may

be used to hold the sheets which may be punched with a leather punch.

### Hobby Horse

A hobby horse head made out of an inner tire tube or oil-cloth and mounted on a broomstick appeals to the runabout child who likes to play "horse". To make the hobby horse:

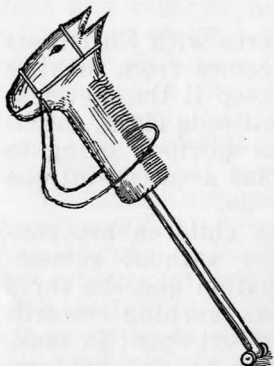


Fig. 1

1. Place the two right sides of material together.
2. Trace the pattern on the back and cut out.
3. Cut narrow strips one-half inch wide for bridle and reins.
  - a. One eight-inch strip to go around ears.
  - b. One five-inch strip to go over mouth.
  - c. One twelve-inch strip to go around mouth.
  - d. One sixteen-inch strip to go around neck.
  - e. Two thirty-six-inch strips for reins.
4. Cut one strip 8 x 3 inches for the horse's mane. Slash mane into narrow strip about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep.
5. Cut a circle 5 inches in diameter and cut lacing one-eighth inch in width.
6. Cut a length of broomstick one yard long. At one end, tack a small block 2 x  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Two small wheels may be attached on either side of this small block.
7. At the other end of the broomstick tack a small piece of wood seven inches long, forming an L shape.
8. To construct the horse:
  - a. Paint features with black enamel.
  - b. Attach bridle and reins with brads.
  - c. Pad carefully the L shaped end of the stick with soft cloth. Tie securely.
  - d. Punch holes for lacing with a leather punch and lace the two sides of the mouth together. Insert the L shaped stick and stuff tightly with cotton or old rags.
  - e. Punch holes in the mane at same time other holes on the back of neck are punched.
  - f. Continue lacing and stuffing.

### Homemade Drum

Material needed for this popular type of toy is a large coffee can with lid. Punch two rows of holes, the rows being about four inches apart, around the can as shown in Figure 2.



Cut a piece of red paper and fit around the can, leaving the holes uncovered. Cover the ends with circles of red paper.



Fig. 2

Take a long heavy cord and run thru the holes so the cord runs up and down on the outside of the drum. Fasten securely. Place lid on tightly. Fasten a strong ribbon or cord from one side to the other of the drum to wear around the neck. For drumsticks use pencils or some straight sticks.

#### Building Blocks

All children love to build, and a box full of brand new blocks will gladden small boys and girls between two and five years of age. Cut the blocks from scraps of lumber into different sizes and shapes, including some fairly large ones, 4 x 6 x 10 inches, 2 x 6 x 12 inches, 6 x 8 x 8 inches. These may be sanded so there will be no rough edges. They may be painted or left plain. To make the gift more complete, pile the blocks in a box which has been gayly painted.

#### Corn Shuck Doll

The materials for this doll may be found on almost any Nebraska farmstead. Materials needed are strong white string, long white corn shucks, corn silk, water colors, and hot water. Cut off the shuck at the big end of the ear of corn, slipping the entire shuck off at once. Separate the pieces, and dip in hot water.

To make the body and dress, gather six of the inside shucks together and tie tightly about one and one-half inches from the small end. This makes the neck. Over this to form the dress place the large smooth shucks turned inside out, tying them at the neck.

To make the arms, roll two half shucks to the size of a lead pencil, tie the large end to the neck. Determine the desired length and wrap the wrists with cord. Cut off the remainder of rolled shuck at a right angle to make the hand. Tie a narrow bit of shuck over the wrist cord wrapping.

To make the head, roll the ends of the short piece of the body over each



Fig. 3

other to form the head. If it is not large enough, roll up a few pieces of shuck and stuff the head. Cover both front and back with the end of a long smooth shuck turned inside out so a face can be painted on it. If the shuck does not stay in place, twist it slightly. Fasten this face shuck around the neck with a narrow strip of shuck about one and one-half inches wide. The end of the face shuck is turned toward the front and extends to the waist line to form the vest and to hide the roughness at the neck.

Tie a cord around the body to make the waistline. Select a shuck about three inches in length for the apron, rounding it at the bottom edge. Hold the straight edge to the waist and tie on the doll with cord. For the shawl use a long piece of shuck about one and one-half inches wide, turning in one edge as a hem. Place around doll's shoulders, cross in front and tie down at waistline. Trim ends. Tie a narrow shuck strip around the waist to serve as an apron band hiding all cord used. Use a large pair of scissors and trim all shucks at bottom of skirt, thus enabling the doll to stand alone.

To make the hair, braid the corn silks. Sew unbraided silks to the head, fastening in the middle to represent a part. Fasten the ends of hair and the braid to the neck in back. To make the bonnet, fold a shuck crosswise, rounding the ends in the shape of an old fashioned bonnet. Between the edges sew a pleated husk cut lengthwise of the shuck. To the straight and double edge, sew a crown of shuck cut circular making a couple of pleats in the top while sewing this on. Tie the bonnet around the neck with a cord covering it with a narrow strip of shuck tied into a bow at the back.

When completed the doll is about ten inches long, arms three inches long and head about two inches in circumference. Final features are painted on with water colors.

#### Marble Bags

A gift a young sister might make which ought to please any boy is a marble bag. Two six-inch squares may be cut from denim, gingham, or chamois skin and sewed together securely on three sides. A narrow hem and a drawstring finish the top. The bag filled with marbles will prove to be a desirable gift.

#### Doll's Table Cloth and Napkins

The young sister who plays house will be enthusiastic over a luncheon set consisting of a table cloth and napkins for her small table. These are attractive when made out of checked gingham with edges frayed.



### Oilcloth Blackboard

A blackboard is a desirable addition to the play equipment. A satisfactory one may be made from a piece of black dull surfaced oilcloth about one yard square bound around the edges with bright colored tape. The top edge should have tiny rings for hooking over nails on the wall when the blackboard is in use and the lower corners may be finished with two pockets, one for crayons and the other for the cloth eraser.

### Crocheted Bean Ball

A gayly colored crocheted ball filled with beans will add gaiety to the Christmas tree and give delight to the child who receives it. It may be crocheted of several gay colors, using colored wrapping cord or heavy crochet cotton. If colored cord is not on hand, some day when dyeing is being done, dye some ordinary white twine in the dye bath.

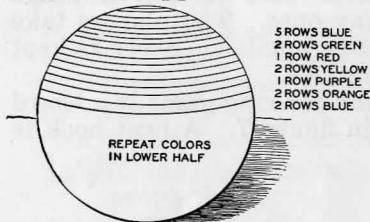


Fig. 4

To make the ball, chain five, join and single crochet into this circle seven stitches, continue to crochet around in circular fashion, increasing as necessary and adding new colors when desired.

After the crocheting is nicely started, it is well to slip a ball inside occasionally in order to help shape the crocheted covering. Crochet closely. When almost finished fill with beans and close the opening.

### Humpty Dumpty Toy

A small figured print combined with a plain material for face, hands, and feet make an interesting humpty dumpty toy. He may be stuffed with cotton or beans.

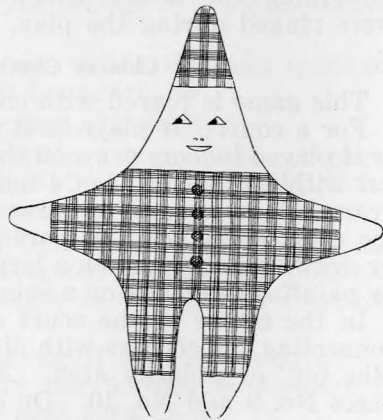


Fig. 5

## GAMES FOR OLDER CHILDREN TO MAKE

### Jar Ring Games

A. Equipment needed for this game is a board six inches wide, twelve inches long and one inch thick, and twenty jar rings. Four-inch spikes are driven into the board in a straight line about four inches apart.

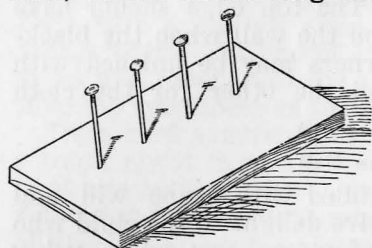


Fig. 6

The object of the game is to stand at a distance of ten feet from the board and toss the rings over the nails. If two people are playing one player may toss red rings

while the other player may use gray ones. The players take turns tossing rings, tossing the entire number. Score is kept by each player, each ring counting five.

B. Equipment needed for a second jar ring game is a board two feet square marked as shown in figure 7. A bent hook is screwed above each figure.

Each player is supplied with five jar rings. The object of the game is to stand five feet from the board and toss the jar rings on the hooks. The score consists of the numbers of the squares containing the hooks which were ringed during the play.

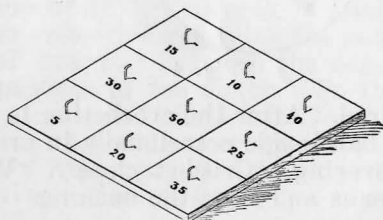


Fig 7

### Chinese Checkers or Scullie

This game is played with checkers or bottle tops.

For a court: If played out of doors, use one cement block or if played indoors draw on the floor a square 3 x 3 feet. Lay out within this court ten 4-inch squares as shown in the diagram. These squares or bases should be at least 3 inches from the court boundary. A more permanent game may be made by drawing this court on a large square of wrapping paper or by painting the court on a square of oilcloth.

In the center of the court draw a rectangle 8 x 12 inches connecting the corners with diagonal lines. This is known as "the pit" or unlucky area. Adjoining it on either side are bases No. 9 and No. 10. On one side of the court boundary is a check mark (x) which indicates the point at which the game is started.

*Players:* There may be from two to six players to a court. Each player should be equipped with a checker or bottle top for a shooter.

Players shoot in turn using the thumb and forefinger to make the shot. The order of turns may be determined by a draw.

The object of the game is to advance the checker by a series of shots thru the ten bases of the court in proper sequence. The first player to complete the round and reach base No. 10 wins the game.

*Playing Rules:*

1. A player continues shooting until there is a miss and then resumes playing his next turn from the spot where the checker stops. The play is a miss:
  - (a) If the checker fails to stop within or touching the proper base.
  - (b) If the checker is shot out of bounds.
  - (c) If the checker comes to rest touching a diagonal line of the pit.
2. A player must return his checker to the starting point and begin the game over his next turn:
  - (a) If the checker is shot out of bounds in two consecutive turns.
  - (b) If the checker comes to rest within the open space of the pit or touching a pit boundary line.
3. Players are allowed the following advantages:
  - (a) If in shooting a player strikes an opponent's checker, he may have an additional turn and also skip the next base for which he was due.
  - (b) After a successful shot the player may move his checker to a more advantageous position for the next shot, provided the checker is not entirely removed from the base.
  - (c) When the checker is shot out of bounds it may be returned to the boundary line at the point where it crossed over before the next turn.

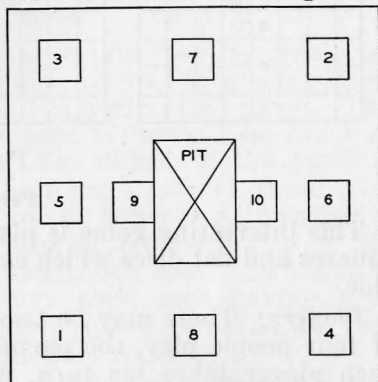


Fig. 8

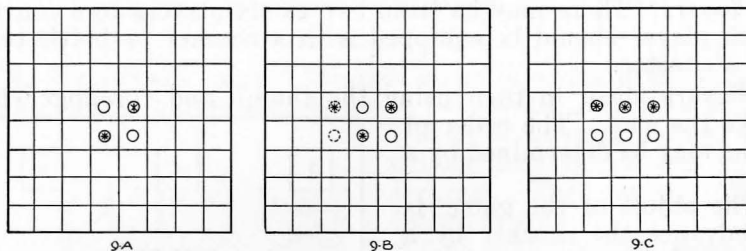


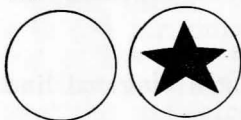
Fig. 9

### Friends

This interesting game is played with a marked board of 64 squares and flat discs which can be marked differently on each side.

**Players:** There may be two or four players for this game. If four people play, the partners sit opposite each other and each player takes his turn, playing in clockwise rotation. The men are divided evenly among the players.

The object of the game is to make friends by enclosing the opponent's man between two of the player's men. When the player has a man on each side of the opponent's man, the opponent's man is turned over and becomes the player's "friend".



### Playing rules:

1. One disc is added at each play.
2. Each player must be able to enclose an opponent's disc between two of his own or else lose his turn.
3. From one to six of the opponent's discs may be turned if enclosed between two of the player's men.
4. The play may be made either in a straight or diagonal line.
5. No plays may be pointed out by the partner.
6. Four discs, two of each kind, are laid on the board before the first play is made. See Figure 9A. For the first play, the player with the discs having the plain side would perhaps place it on the other side of the opponent's man in the lower row as shown in Figure 9B. This would turn the disc into the player's friend. As a result the lower row would be plain discs. If on the next play the second player (the one with starred discs) places his man in the upper row in order to enclose his opponent's man, the upper row would become starred discs. See Figure 9C. The game is continued until as many friends as possible are made.

7. Score is kept by each player, counting the number of friends he and his partner have on the board at the end of the game. The game is ended if neither player can turn his opponent's men into friends.

#### Nine Men Morris

This game of Greek and Roman origin may be drawn on the back of the Friends game board. It was formerly played with stones, but men are used in the modernized game. The

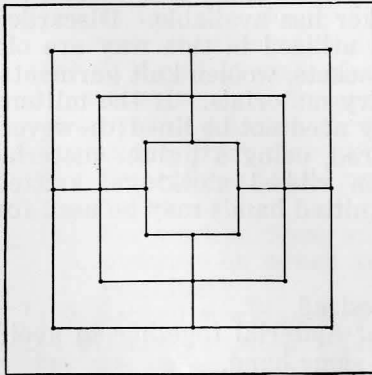


Fig. 10

board is marked as follows:

The object of the game is to form a row of three men and by doing so gain the privilege of removing one of the opponent's men. Two people may play, each having nine men apiece, marked in two distinct ways.

#### *Rules of the game:*

1. Each player taking his turn, places one man upon a spot.
2. Each player is to prevent his opponent from placing three of his men in a row by placing one of his own men in the way.
3. If a row of three is formed, the player doing so may remove any one of his opponent's men.
4. When a row of three has been achieved, it can not be touched if there are any other men of that kind on the board.
5. When all men have been placed on the board they may be moved forward and backward in any direction from one spot to another.
6. The player who succeeds in removing all of his opponent's men first wins the game.

### PRACTICAL GIFTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Most people achieve a good deal of satisfaction from making useful and acceptable gifts from old materials on hand.

Warm, useful and comfortable mittens may be made out of such materials and a necessary clothing need may be met without any expenditure of money. From father's big husking mittens to baby's tiny red ones, each member of the family may be outfitted satisfactorily in homemade mittens. Materials which may be used for these are many and varied, depending upon what the homemaker has available. Discarded garments which may be further utilized in this way are old woolen coats, mackinaws, suede jackets, woolen knit garments, sheepskin jackets, and other heavy materials. If the mittens are made of heavy materials, they need not be lined; however, a lining may be included if desired, using a lighter material for this. Ribbed material from ribbed stockings, knitted bands from old jackets or hand knitted bands may be used for cuffs.

#### Directions for cutting mittens:

1. Select the size of pattern desired.
2. Place the two right sides of material together to avoid having both mittens for the same hand.
3. If lining is used, cut lining from same pattern.
4. One-fourth inch seams are allowed on mittens. Use three-eighths inch seam on lining.
5. Contrasting material may be used for cuff.

#### Directions for making mittens:

1. Baste and stitch one-fourth inch plain seam on thumb pieces. Press seam open. If material is heavy and mitten is to be unlined, buttonhole over seam to make it firm and to prevent raveling.
2. Fold mitten with right sides together, baste, and stitch, using one-fourth inch plain seam on hand part of the mitten, taking care to stitch the top rounding. To do this, stitch one inch beyond end of seam. It is desirable to use a double stitching and to tie thread ends securely.
3. If a lining is used, baste and stitch a three-eighths inch seam so that the lining will be somewhat smaller than the outside of the mitten. Press seams open.
  - (a) To insert lining, place the lining on hand with the right side of lining next to the hand.
  - (b) Pull the outside of the mitten over the lining. Pin all seams together.
  - (c) Tack the lining in place with an invisible stitch made in the center of the seams. This keeps the lining in



place and prevents the lining from pulling out when the mitten is taken off.

4. Finishing the bottom of the mitten.

- (a) If no cuff is used, pin and baste the lining to outer part of the mitten at the lower edge. Bind the edge with a bias strip one and one-half inches wide, using a firm material such as sateen. Apply the right side of bias to the right side of mitten; baste and stitch. Turn to wrong side and fasten edge of bias by hand. In order to insure a closely fitted wrist band, a piece of elastic may be attached inside this facing.
- (b) If a cuff is used, place right side of cuff to right side of mitten, baste, and stitch. Press open. Fold cuff over and fasten on the under side.

Variations which may be used are:

- (1) For children's and women's mittens, snap on inside of wrist.
  - (2) For work mittens, snap cuff on back of wrist to avoid pressure on wrists and to avoid danger in catching in machinery.
  - (3) Ribbed stocking tops sewed on children's mittens.
  - (4) Shaped wrist line for trim fitting mittens.
  - (5) Elastic webbing may be used for cuffs.
5. Pressing: Adjust the thumb in place and press well.

**Types of Mitten Finishes**

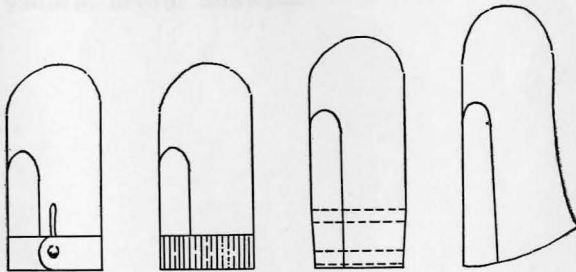


Fig. 11

## GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN

God rest ye, merry gentlemen; let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.  
The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone through the gray,  
When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.  
God rest ye, little children; let nothing you affright,  
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night;  
Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay,  
When Christ, the child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas-day.  
God rest ye, all good Christians; upon this blessed morn  
The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born;  
Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He takes away;  
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.

—*Dinah Maria Mulock Craik*