

Variations in Overshot Weaving

BY R. F. HEARTZ

WITH the renewal of interest that is being taken in the revival of handweaving, we are turning, as did our ancestors, to Europe for examples and inspiration. Over there the crafts have not been superseded by a machine age but have been passed on from generation to generation, and thus has been kept alive the tradition of beautiful patterns and excellent craftsmanship.

Great interest is being taken, particularly, in the craft of weaving and the high type of work that comes from the Scandinavian countries. Comparing their drafts with the ones with which we are most familiar

we find that many of them are very similar, if not identical, yet they get more interesting and charming effects from the same drawing draft than we do.

The type of weaving draft which we know as the Colonial or Overshot weaves are in common use in the Scandinavian countries. They do not always treadle the drafts for the overshot effect, but vary the treadling differently, with varied and interesting results. The Overshot type of weaving is known as Simplified Damask, distinguishing it from the true Damask, which is also an extremely popular weave. The variations known as weaves on opposites or "Munkabolde," which is plainly Monksbelt. There are many others that are quite similar, but the names of which have no English equivalent.

The several weaves with which we will work all produce a firm, well-woven fabric, with no long overshots on the face of the fabric, and which

are very suitable for use as bags, pillows and upholstery. They all have one characteristic, which limits their use as table runners, wall hangings and rugs, and that is the long loose floats of weft at the back of the fabric.

The principle of the first variation in treadling

that we will take up may be used with any drawing in draft with which the loom at the time may be set. It may be woven as drawn in, that is, we may work from the drawing in draft and weave each block as it occurs, or one may experiment and weave a sampler in various effects and colors, for the practice before attempting a finished piece.

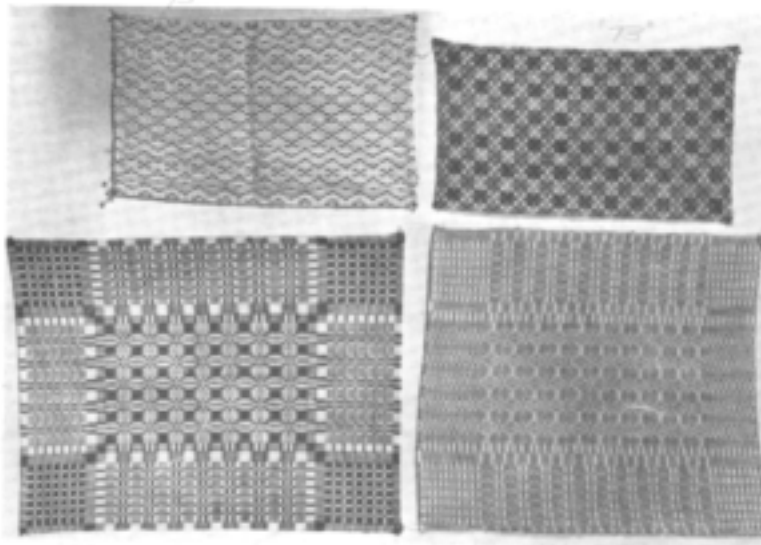
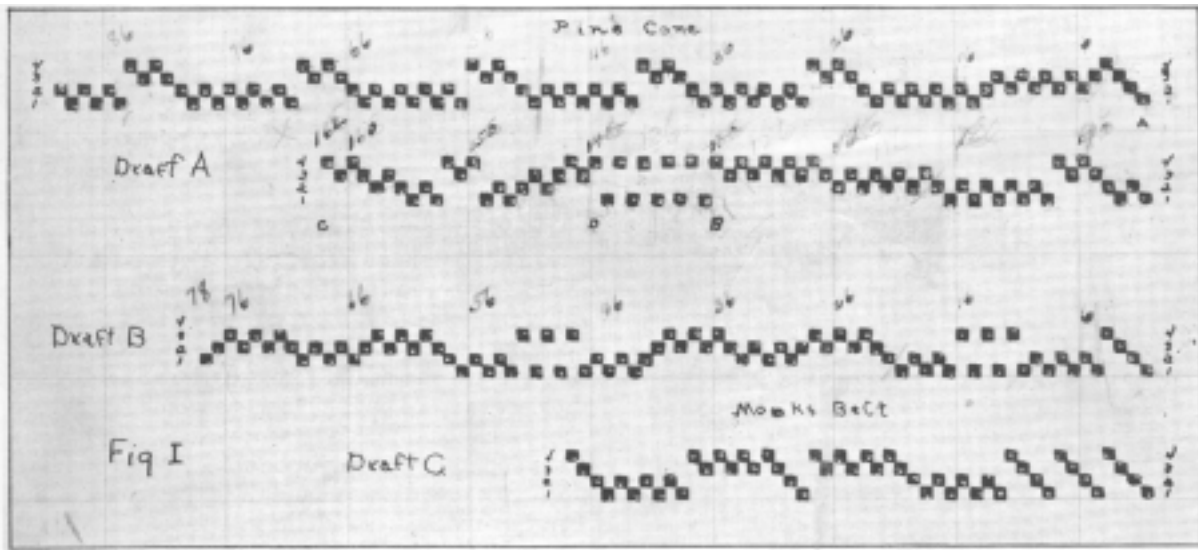


Figure 6. Top (right) Variation of Draft B. Figure 7. Top (left) Variation of Draft B in Figure 1. Figure 3. Bottom (left) Variation of Pine Cone. Figure 4. Bottom (right) Variation of Pine Cone

The draft at A, Figure 1, is an arrangement of the popular Pine Cone pattern. The overshot method of weaving it as drawn in is shown in Figure 2. Referring to Draft A, Figure 1, a to b is one repeat of the border, b to c one repeat of the pattern, b to c may be repeated several times for the central motif, drawing d to a in the reverse order for the opposite border.

The treadling draft for the Pine Cone is below:

A	2 & 3 — 10 times	} 6 X	D	1 & 4 — 10 times
	1 & 2 — 10 "			3 & 4 — 2 "
	3 & 4 — 4 "			2 & 3 — 2 "
	1 & 2 — 10 "		1 & 2 — 2 "	
	2 & 3 — 10 "		3 & 4 — 2 "	
B	3 & 4 — 10 "		1 & 2 — 2 "	
			2 & 3 — 2 "	
			C	3 & 4 — 2 "



The table scarf illustrated in Figure 3 is a variation of the same draft used in Figure 2, and the material for a bag shown in Figure 6 is a variation of Draft B, Figure 1; Figure 5 being the more common method of weaving the same draft.

This method of weaving, if used with a fine silky weft, as Perle No. 20, and a coarse soft tabby weft produces the effect of lace over a silk ground.

The warp for Figure 6 is of fine white cotton, set 32 ends to the inch, and the pattern weft is of fine white Perle cotton No. 20, with a coarser green Perle No. 3 for the tabby weft. In Figure 6 the color scheme was reversed and a soft white tabby was used with a colored pattern weft.

A striped warp and several colors of pattern weft may be used with one color for a pattern weft. I recently saw an imported piece in this weave in which the warp was of very fine cotton, set 56 ends to the inch, and was arranged in bars of blue and grey. In weaving, a dark red cotton was used for the tabby with a fine silky cotton for

a pattern weft, the pattern weft being narrow stripes of blue, gray, green, and white.

To get the lace effect above noted, the treadles are used singly with the tabby between the blocks only. Referring to the treading draft, the first block is 2 & 3 — 10 times. Here, we depress first No. 2 of one throw, and then No. 3 for one throw, until we have ten throws. Then we insert the tabby weft for two throws, one on 1 & 3 and one on 2 & 4.

The next block is 1 & 2 — 10 times, and this is woven as was the above block, first 1 and then 2 being lowered for ten throws of the shuttle. The entire treading draft is woven in this manner, but always the same number of throws should be

used for each block, regardless of whether 2 or 10 are called for. The reason for this will be evident when one begins weaving. If only two or four repeats of a pattern thread are called for, when the tabby weft beats up it covers the pattern weft, and if too many are put in the tabby weft cannot be beaten up enough to cover the long floats of pattern

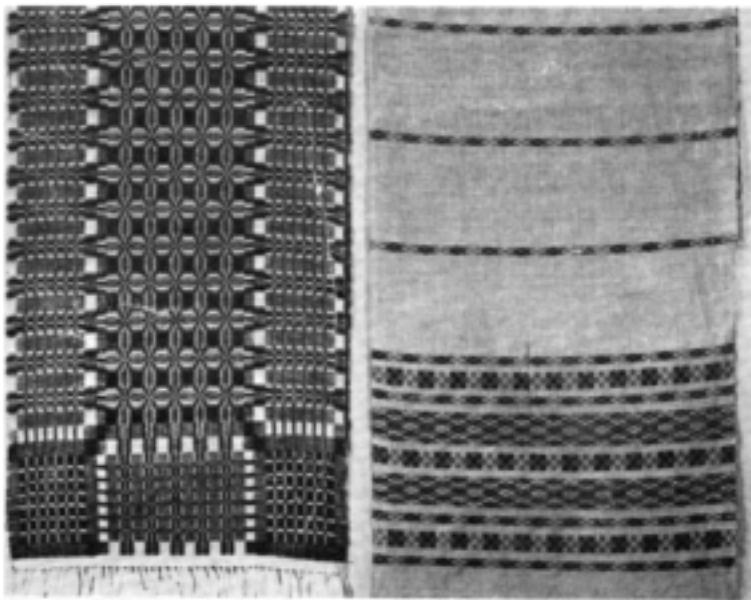


Figure 2. (Left) Pine Cone Overshot Pattern. Figure 5. (Right) Swedish Pattern Overshot Weaving

weft and a thin loosely woven fabric results. The proper number of throws depends upon the weft being used, and can only be determined by experiment.

Following is the treadling draft for Figure 6 with Draft B, Figure 1, as the drawing in draft:

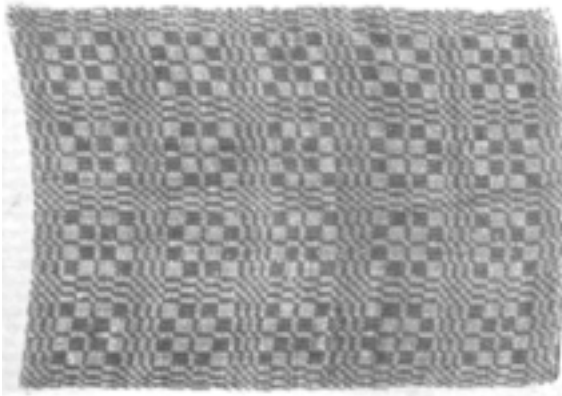


Figure 8. Variation of Monk's Belt

12, 14, 23, 34, 12, 14, 23, 14, 12, 34, 23, 12, 14,
12, 23, 34, 12, 14, 23, 34, 12, 14, 34, 23, 34, 12,
14, 12, 34, 23, 34, 12, 14, 12, 34, 23, 34, center.

Still another way of weaving Draft A, Figure 1, is shown in Figure 4, Figure 7 being the effect of weaving Draft B, Figure 1, in a similar manner, and Figure 8 the same treatment of Figure 1C, which is the Monk's Belt Draft.

This variation produces a fine firmly woven piece which has the appearance of plain weaving in colored figures. The weft may be of the same weight as the warp, or it may be coarser than the warp and beaten very closely so as to cover the warp.

All of the overshot drafts are so arranged that when one combination of two treadles treadled against the remaining two treadles, plain weaving results. Usually this is 1 & 3 — 2 & 4. By using

these treadles one at a time and in a regular order, a fabric with a plain surface, but with long overshots underneath, develops. If we vary the colors of our weft a tweed effect becomes evident, but by arranging the order of the colors we can build up the blocks as they should come in the overshot pattern.

There are several ways in which this may be accomplished, but for the sake of clearness only one will be given. In treadling we will use the 1, 3, 2, 4 order for depressing the treadles. That is the cycle or repeat upon which the colored wefts are inserted, and a cycle should be repeated the same number of times to build up the block, as would be used for the same block in an overshot weave. There is one variation, too, that might be noted. When building up a cross or a diamond and the center block of the figure is reached, an additional 1 & 3 should be inserted so that the cycle will be 2, 4, 1, 3, till the next big block is reached, when it should be 1, 3, 2, 4, again. This is done to balance the pattern, the same as an occasional square is omitted in arranging a drawing in draft.

To build up the blocks in colors on a plain ground the color weft should be inserted in the same sheds in which they would be entered for overshot weaving. If our treadling draft calls for 2 & 3 — 10 times, we will treadle our pattern in the regular order of 1, 3, 2, 4, inserting the ground color in sheds 1 and 4 and the blue weft in sheds 3 and 2. The entire treadling draft for any overshot pattern can be carried out in this order.

As with many other patterns, many varied and interesting results may be achieved in these methods of treadling by the introduction of several colors and kinds of materials in building up some blocks in silk on a subdued or a wool ground. Each separate drawing in draft is a theme in itself, and by taking it and using the ideas given and those that occur as one builds up a pattern, other interesting and pleasing fabrics will be produced.