

NOTES ON NAVAJO WEAVING<sup>1</sup>

**I**N ordinary weaving the various colored weft threads run from selvedge to selvedge, while those not required for the surface of the weave remain temporarily behind the others, showing only on the wrong side of the material.

In tapestry, however, at least as they make it at the Gobelins Factory, one colored thread completes the area of that color in the design, running back and forth over that particular space only; let us say, for example, a bit of blue sky. Standing out against that there may be a red rose. Here the red strands go back and forth from one side of the rose to the other and are terminated when the rose is completed, so that the red threads do not continue to run behind the blue sky, but where the colors meet, there are two distinct, vertical edges producing a narrow slit. Sometimes when the tapestry is taken off the loom, these edges are lightly tacked together with fine silk.

In Navajo weaving, however, the technique differs slightly from that employed in either of the above methods. In this case, supposing the background of the rug in question to be gray, the weaver takes some gray wool and fills in a bit of the ground with little regard to margin or outline, neither running her strand all the way across from selvedge to selvedge, nor weaving it exactly to the point of contact with a different color, but just using up the particular piece of wool she has in hand, then taking another bit of yarn of the same color and putting it in so that one edge meets the zigzag where she left off, and the other one forms a new, irregular boundary of its own. Of course this is all beaten down

<sup>1</sup>Collected by the author during a recent trip through the Indian country.—EDITOR.

firmly into place with a stick as the worker proceeds. Her work, however, leaves a quantity of little, scattered, vertical slits at different points where the various zigzags touch.

GERTRUDE WHITING.



BLANKET WEAVERS  
"THE PAINTED DESERT" SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA