

# DOUBLE WEAVING ON EIGHT HARNESSSES

By CORNELIA STONE

Some time ago there came into my possession an old book on weaving, the title page of which reads as follows:

Instructions for Weaving,  
in all of its  
Various Branches.  
by Abslam Hecht  
price \$1.  
Baltimore

Printed by James Young,  
Corner of Baltimore and Holliday Streets  
1849

Among the interesting forms of weaving described is this one for Double Weaving on eight harnesses. The page holding the directions is headed "Draft for Double Coverlets and Carpets." I first threaded a trial strip in a two block threading just to gain some idea of the texture. That bit working all right, I then threaded a larger piece in a four block pattern only to find that two of the blocks were given a wrong tie-up, and instead of a closely interwoven piece of goods I had one with long floats whenever these two blocks occurred. Then followed the fun of correcting the tie-up.

The Complete tie-up requires 16 treadles, but I find on my loom that it is so heavy that it is impossible for me to raise the harnesses, so I tie each harness separately and then the two combinations that prove the hardest to hold down I tie to other treadles, using in all ten treadles. The treadling becomes a bit of an acrobatic feat as first five treadles and then four treadles must be held down. Unfortunately this is rather conducive of mistakes, but with care they can be overcome.

On the accompanying page of drafts I give both the complete tie-up and the one I finally used for the four block patterns. The complete tie-up can be used in a two block pattern.

In *THE WEAVER*, Volume V, Number 2, April-May, 1940, page 9, there is a picture of a drapery material in this weave. The draperies hang in a dark hall where clear cut colors are necessary in order to avoid a characterless appearance. The threading used is the John Landes pattern No. 63 doubled throughout. The linen thread used was Knox 25/2 weaving twist. Using 40 threads to the inch, I threaded the front four harnesses with natural mercerized linen and the back four with red mercerized linen. One repeat of the pattern required 268 threads, and the full width was 6 repeats and the first 162 threads, or 1770 threads for material finishing (after washing) 40 inches wide. I find this material hangs in graceful folds making it very satisfactory for draperies.

I have never found in my hunt for old pieces of hand weaving a single bit of weaving of this kind. The nearest approach to it in texture that I can suggest is old Ingrain carpets.

Drafts No. 2 and No. 3 are just as given in this old book. If you use No. 2 be sure to check it, as I have not used it.

I am not sure that it is free from accidentals that should be eliminated. I have included them as they are in the book thinking you might like to see just how Abslam Hecht wrote his drafts.

The last draft is a two block one I have on one of my looms now experimenting with a warp of linen and wool that I hope will be heavy enough to lie flat on the floor. I am trying materials that were on hand to get more of an idea of just what yarns I think will be best for rug making as well as textiles for other uses.

When you select patterns to use in this type of weaving, choose those with large blocks, as blocks having fewer than six or eight threads are completely overshadowed by the interwoven threads surrounding them. Also in using a two block pattern write your draft so that the blocks will be on harnesses 1 and 2, for block one and on 3 and 4 for block two. For the tie-up of such a two block pattern use 1 and 3 of the complete tie-up.

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"IT'S PRETTY — BUT IS IT 'ART?'"

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Of course it does take a good deal of technical training plus some natural ability, to design pleasing patterns and to use them to best advantage. A monotony of repeating pattern, like the carpet in that nightmare hall, may be extremely distressing, and a clumsy figure may be anything but decorative. Not all people are gifted to make their own designs. And here we come back to Mrs. Albers' "approved repetitions." A musician may not be able to compose so much as a cowboy lament, and still be able to make the "approved repetition" of a Chopin sonata to the delight of all listeners. And to say that such music is not 'Art' would be foolish. I doubt if either Mrs. Albers or Mr. Henning-Rees would care to go so far. In exactly the same way a skillful weaver can make an "approved" textile "repetition" with highly satisfactory results. Such renderings need not be slavish copies, they may be highly individualized interpretations, for weaving like music is endlessly variable.

Mr. Henning-Rees concludes with this sage dictum: "Thus pattern weaving is the product of a time and is very interesting historically, but there is no reason for our repeating it now when we have such a wealth of textured threads made for us by the machine age." I confess I do not know exactly what he means by this. He does not say what kind of pattern weaving is the product of what time or why it should be particularly interesting historically. Of course pattern weaving is the product of all human times, our own included, and though any product of human endeavor has its historic interest, the chief interest in pattern weaving for most of us is here and now, for the decoration of our own textiles. It seems to me unlikely that the use of "raw silks with their dull-sheen surface, or looped or bumpy rayons, or loosely spun or slubby linens" will for most people make sleazy tabby weaving the peak of beauty in the textile art.

I wonder just how much Mr. Henning-Rees knows about pattern weaving?

