HANDWEAVING NEWS

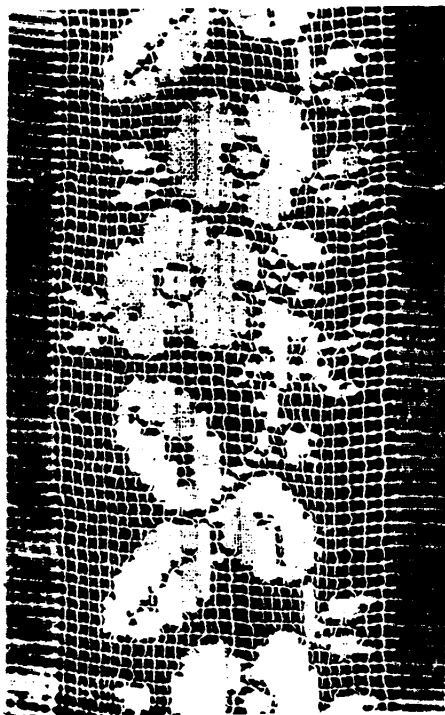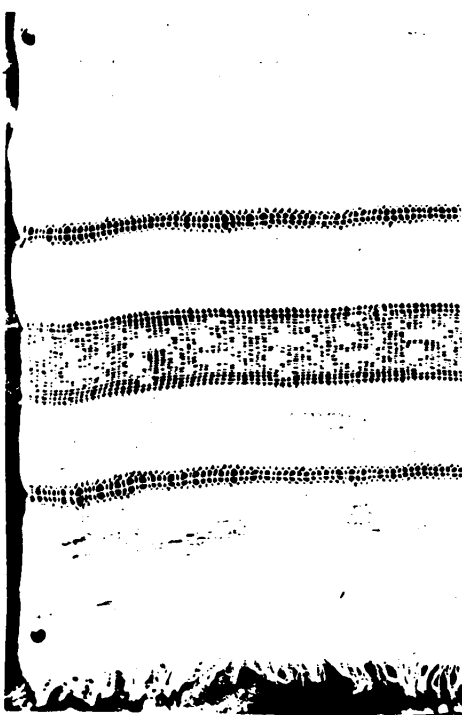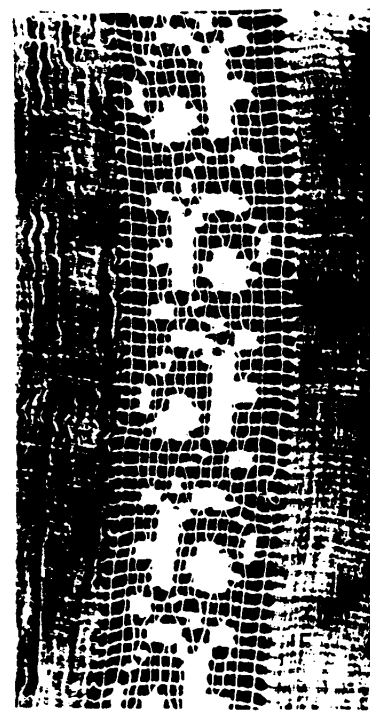Figure No.1   Figure No.2   Figure No.3

A Form of Roumanian Gauze Weave.

Many interesting and unusual forms of free techniques have been first introduced to American handweavers through Handweaving News,and this month I am present ing a form of gauze weave which is different from anything else I have seen written up. I first discovered this weave on a very fine silk scarf which is used as a head dress by the Roumanian women,at an Exhibit of Roumanian textiles at the Naval Armory in 1934 during an exhibit of Women's work. The technique is really a form of woven lace worked out on the loom and based on the gauze weave. At Figure No.1 above is shown the detail of the first silk scarf that I saw at this time. Figure No.2 is another scarf of the same kind with a different border,and Figure No.4 is the sample which I wove in order to take off the technique at the time. I had a large loom set up to weave for exhibit and made this piece on it. I shall never forget the real excitement of the woman who owned the scarf when she saw my woven piece on the loom. She said," None of the women of my country know how to do this now here in America, you are the only one in United States that can do it." And I am sure that was true at that time. Her scarf was over 100 years old,and woven by her great grandmother.

Technique of the Weave. This weave may be done on any loom which allows for plain weave,so a two harness loom is all that is necesary. It is composed of a simple gauze twist,with a heavy thread carried through the twist,and then the solid parts of the design are formed by weaving this heavy thread back and forth over the number of groups of threads as required by the pattern design,in a manner similar to that of spanish weave.This row is a combination of the gauze weave twist with the solid of the spanish weave. Then several rows of plain weave with very fine thread are put in all across the width of the loom,then another row of the twist and spanish weave combination according to the pattern design is put in, and so on for the width of the border.

In the original pieces at Figure No.1 and Figure No.2,this twist consists of eight warp threads,or four for the upper shed and four for the lower shed for each group,but these groups can be of 2,4,6, or even 10 threads if desired, though of course whatever number is chosen,it should be the same throughout the piece.

At Figure No.4 below is the modern piece which I wove on my loom at that time.It was woven on a No.20 mercerized cotton warp.set 24 threads to the inch,with the weft for the fine background weave the same as the warp,and the weft for the pattern gauze twist was of heavy linen Floss. No.5 cotton might be used instead of the linen if desired. An enlarged detail of this is shown at Figure No.5,almost in the actual size. While the design drawing used is shown at Figure No.6. Any design can be used,but it should be planned out for the piece to be woven in the same manner as No.6.And it is best to try a very simple figure for the first attempt. Each group of the twisted warp threads represents one square of the cross section paper design. The design below was used for a warp of 300 threads.Also in planning designs for this weave,do not have too many separate blocks,keep the figures rather solid.

Detail of the Weave.To begin,it is best not to twist the first and last group of threads.Start at the right side of the loom with the heavy pattern twist weft.Weave under four threads with the shed raised,change shed,weave back to edge under four, change shed,weave ahead under four warp threads,as in the spanish stitch weave. Be sure the edge warp thread of this shed is raised,or a thread that is up.We are now ready to do a warp twist all across the width of the warp up to the last group of eight warp threads. These are woven as the first group in a spanish stitch weave. With a black pick-up stick,with the shed raised,skip the second four warp threads, though these are really the first four which are twisted,reach down through the shed,
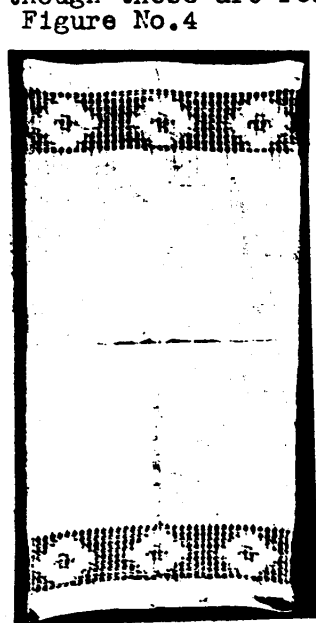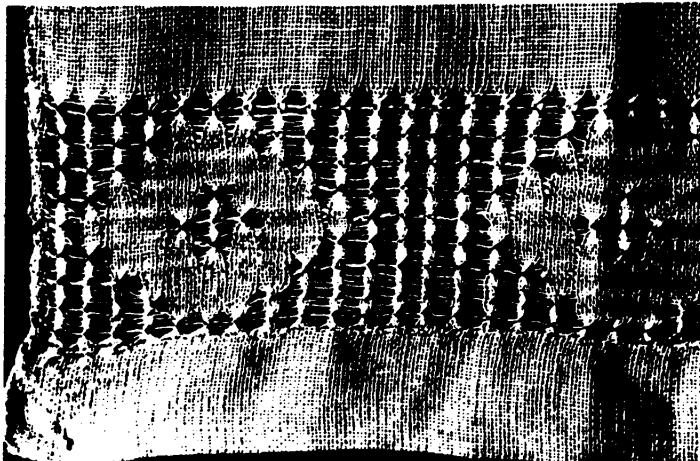
Figure No.4

and with the point of the pick-up stick bring up on top,the corresponding four threads in the lower shed;then push aside the next four threads on top and reach down again and pick up the next four threads,and so on for the width of the warp until the last group on the left side of the warp is reached.Do not twist this last group. Turn the pick up stick on edge and pass the weft through this twist shed which has been made by the pick up stick.Then weave the last group of eight warp threads with the spanish stitch as at the beginning.The fine weft can be passed through these same sheds with the heavy weft if desired. And if it is,there is no loop of fine weft on the warp edges. Now weave four shots of the fine weave all across the width of the loom, of course changing the shed each time. In the original pieces these fine threads are so very fine they scarcely show at all but they are there. This first row of twisted warp threads makes it possible to count the groups of pattern blocks which can be used for the design.Let each twisted group represent one square of cross section paper. Center the pattern design. Starting at the left edge,there are three twisted groups after the first edge group is woven solid.Pick up these on the black pick up stick,turn this on edge and pass the heavy weft through. Carry the heavy weft back and forth 5 times as in spanish stitch over the next three groups,then pick up 10 groups of twisted warp threads,and pass the heavy weft through,then work the heavy weft across the next three groups as for spanish stitch,then 10 more twisted warp groups, then through the next 3 groups with spanish stitch,then three twisted groups, and finish with the edge group solid. The.. pass four shots of fine weft,changing the sheds each time.Then pick up the next row according to the design pattern.This is not difficult to do and is effective. Let me know how you like it.

Figure No.5

Figure No.6