

# WARP & WEFT

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## THE SECOND CHRISTMAS by F. K. Foraadh

The reign of unconsciousness slowly gave way to the dim stirrings of intelligence. Little Jesus, one year old, was waking up. Black obscurity - darkness - then a faint glimmer of light. Nothing radiant, glistening, or with form; simply the preface to a shapeful glow. But enough to excite curiosity.

From the outer room Mary the mother could hear if anything were wrong, which was unlikely. Jesus was a peaceful sleeper. But now little Jesus was waking up; waking up in a three-room cabin; a three-room cabin in the darkness of passionless Palestine. He began to recognize the light without much bustle on his part, which is not unusual for an infant of twelve months. Unless alarmed by some sudden interference from without, the senses of a child ascend silently through stratum and ever-lighter stratum of unknowingness till finally they bubble gently to the surface of the conscious. Aroused, no doubt, by some abstruse jerk in the machinery of his tiny middle, Baby Jesus

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moved gently in his little crib -- the crib made by the industrious Joseph. With a stifled, imperceptible yawn, he pulled his right arm out from under his chest and rolled over on his back. This demanded another yawn, then his eyes opened.

Immensity! A vast universe! Without floor, without ceiling, without walls. Only tremendous distances in every direction. A dreadful, unknown, terrifying world without even a line of horizon. Alone in space - unknown space - eclipsed, yet not altogether black.

Joseph was insistent on leaving him a night lamp. But any baby knows that a night lamp, especially a flickering oil burner, can bring to life more intimidating apparitions than the nothingness of unaided night. Then, suddenly the lonely universe was filled with silent beings. Even by so small, so immature an intelligence as Baby Jesus' these beings were perceived, apprehended. And is it

little wonder, for are we not born in the clutch of racial consciousness? And do we not in those waking splinters of time, relive, reinhabit the lives of men dead these thousands of years?

Little Jesus, heir on this planet to a life heavily endowed by the shortcomings, errors and sins of all his myriad forefathers, lay awake in the outskirts of darkness. And though he could not, as yet, be held accountable for the fact, he was also the inheritor of that strong cord of wisdom, beauty and love which had needled its way down through the ages.

There he lay, in the terror of loneliness peopled with shapes. It was hardly possible for him really to know the shapes; but in his little undeveloped mind he was aware that they were there. In that delicate undermind handed down from the past, he felt them.

All was stillness - save for an indistinct purr from the night

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lamp. Then a sudden flicker of light and all the shadows hiding in the corners bounced to life. Something approached, came close. It couldn't be seen; nothing tangible moved, but those shapes were there. They not only lingered over him, next to his delicate cheek, but were at the same time at a great distance, far away, which roused a wild terror in Baby Jesus' poor little unarmed soul.

Flight was the only answer. Nothing but fleeing into the darkness could stamp out those feelings. And turning away, seeking cover, was the only flight possible to a baby. He must put a stop to seeing, and so be no longer there. With a stunted cry that uttered his soul's alarm, little Jesus rolled sharply over and buried his face in warm, soft obscurity. In the fleecy softness of the new birthday pillow (purchased that afternoon by the never-forgetting Joseph) the baby buried his whole being. He was not. Nothing could seize him now. Those

strange shapes could not reach him in that consoling, warm, soft obscurity. No wonder that Joseph had commented on the luxurious quality of the new pillow. It certainly was seducing in its softness. Surely the child must have been uncomfortable on that hard straw bolster of a thing!

Out in the front room the two parents were intent on their usual evening occupation. That is to say, Mary was weaving at her loom, and Joseph sat motionless save for his rhythmic strokes with the file on the saw he was sharpening. Mary was, at the moment, endeavoring to count out the required twenty-five threads necessary for one weave. And except for an occasional secret recollection of the events of "that day" of the preceding year, she was silently filled with an enlightenment of which few women are gifted. Suddenly she looked up. "Did you hear anything, Joseph?" she turned to ask her husband.

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"Uh ... did you say something, Mary?" he inquired, a little peevishly, detaching his mind with reluctance from the beautiful chair he was planning to start carving in the morning.

"I thought I heard the baby."

"I didn't," mumbled Joseph, his thoughts already back on the chair.

Mary paused, finished the weave, which, she having miscounted, contained only twenty-four threads. Then she got up from her loom. "I don't suppose there's anything wrong," she said to herself, "but .." She went into the sleeping room.

A couple of minutes passed before she returned. Her face was quite pale. "Nothing wrong, is there?" inquired Joseph, who had sensed her departure from the room.

"He's all right now," was her brief answer. She was a quiet, prayerful woman, never known to make a fuss. Adjusting her stool, she continued her weaving. But it must not go by unnoticed that she was, however, shaken up a bit.

She realized, and certainly would never forget, what a close call it had been. It is altogether conceivable that she might have merely noted with calm satisfaction the way the child pressed his tiny face into the soft pillow. She might have walked out without realizing that the new possession in which he appeared to take such comfort was actually smothering him! But a flash of intuition had led her to turn his head. Then she had replaced the soft pillow with the hard one, and added this episode to the many ponderings of her heart.

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SUMMER AND WINTER DAMASK PATTERN

If you follow the trend toward "January linen sales" your thoughts may be turning toward weaving of linen damask for your "after the holiday" winter activity. For this reason we give you this month a summer and winter block pattern. The sample we work in color so that you may more easily see the pattern. However, in all white or cream or grey and white it makes an exquisite formal damask. The pattern is given for each block. The pattern is repeated the number of times necessary to give you the size blocks desired.

THREADING

Block 1			
x	x		4
			3
	x		2
		x	1

Block 2			
			4
x	x		3
	x		2
		x	1

TIE-UP

		x	x	x		4
		x	x		x	3
x	x				x	2
x			x	x		1
1	2	3	4	5	6	

TREADLE:

Block 1 - 4 - 1 - 4 - 3

Block 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 3

Tabby weave - Treadles 1 and 3

A simplified treadling is possible on Rising Shed looms with the following tie-up:

		x		x	x	4
		x	x		x	3
x	x		x			2
x			x	x		1
1	2	3	4	5	6	

Block 1 - 5-4-5-6

Block 2 - 2-1-2-3

Tabby is 4 and 6  
or 1 and 3

WARP: 40/2 linen set 32 to inch (2 per dent in 16 dent reed)

WEFT: Same as warp if desired

Heavier weight: 20/2 loose twist or 12/1  
Medium weight: 20/1

Blocks may be threaded equal in size or varied:

Blocks Varied

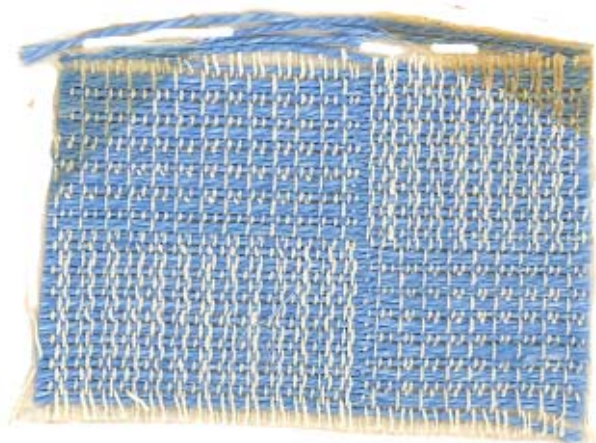
1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
32x	18x	9x	8x	18x	14x	9x	12x

This makes a luncheon mat 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " finished width as per sample. It may be treadled as warped or blocks varied in size in treadling.

Blocks Threaded Equal in Size

1	2	1	2
2	1	2	1
6X	6X	6X	6X

SAMPLE



## WEAVING WITH LINEN

Beautiful table linens have always been the mark of a good housewife. The modern, casual use of luncheon sets for formal as well as informal occasions has probably intensified the interest in these beautiful little table accessories. Handwoven linen ranks as high in this field as Irish damask does for formal banquet cloths.

In weaving with linen thread, use a high tension for the warp; the beat may be regulated according to whether you wish a soft, loosely woven material, or heavier, tightly woven.

A two ply twisted linen thread for warp and a single ply thread for weft, makes a smooth looking material. Do not attempt to use untwisted thread for warp -- it becomes roughened and breaks from the constant action of the beater.

After linen is removed from the loom and washed, the threads seem to become unified and the

appearance of the fabric is greatly changed. It must always be remembered that linen on the loom is not nearly so beautiful as it is after it has been laundered. For white linen, the water may be quite hot, but for colors use mild soap and lukewarm water. Linen fabrics have a higher gloss and iron more beautifully when fairly damp.

\* \* \* \*

Mrs. George A. Reed of the Des Moines Weavers Guild writes, "We have 65 members and are doing some very nice and creative work. Our meetings are well attended and we have good speakers."

Mrs. Merrill of Portland is warping small looms for the Red Cross and for the boys to work on in Veterans Hospital in Portland, as they cannot warp them in bed.

We would like to let our readers know what you and your guild are doing.

## LINEN THREAD MANUFACTURE

The manufacture of linen thread as it has been practiced for centuries is a very slow process involving the recovery of the flax fiber from the flax straw. After the seeds have been separated the straw is submitted to a process known as retting.

Two methods of retting have been in common use since the time of the Pharaohs. In water retting the straw is submerged in a pond or river for 15 to 25 days, when decomposition rots away the gum or wax which binds the fiber to the pithy stock. In dew retting, the flax is spread out in an open field from 5 to 8 weeks and is decomposed by the elements. The flax stems are then dried and passed between heavy fluted rollers, where the woody matter is broken up into small particles, later being separated from the fiber. These fibers are treated and graded for quality and finally spun into thread for weaving.

Recently there has been perfected in the U. S. a new process which does away with these slow operations of retting, and the fiber is ready for spinning in less than a day.

\* \* \* \*  
SILAS SAYS:

In 1640 the General Court of Connecticut issued this order:

"Whereas yt is observed as experience hath made appeare, that much grownd within these liberties may be well improved in hemp & flaxe, and that ye myght in tyme have supply of lynnene cloath amongst orselves, and for the more speedy procuring of hemseed. It is ordered that every prticular family within these Plantations, shall procure & plant this present yeare at lest one spooneful of Englishe hempseed, in some fruitful soyle at lest a foote distant betwixt eur seede; and same so planted shall prsearve and keep in husbandly manner for supply of seed for another yeare."

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Don't get too discouraged about your trials and errors.

Remember --

By adversity are wrought  
The greatest works of  
admiration;  
And all the fair examples  
of renown  
Out of distress and misery  
are grown.

- Samuel Daniel





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