Handwoven Curtains

BY VIRGINIA S. DOAN

HOUSEKEEPING a year, and no curtains in the dining room. It really was a family disgrace, and yet I had the idea (peculiar, to say the least, but not unusual among craftsmen) that they must be handwoven; but how one person could warp a 44-inch loom was a mystery to me. Finally, with the help of three friends who had never even seen a loom before, we warped it, using 20/3 Egyptian cotton and threading it in one of Mary M. Atwater's adaptations of one of John Landes patterns taken from an old coverlet in the Philadelphia Museum. This pattern is a combination of the whig rose and chariot wheel. Any other pattern might be used; for instance, the rose path or honeysuckle patterns. The warp was 20 yards long, enough to weave the curtains and a coverlet which I wanted to make, using this same pattern. I repeated the unit of the pattern five times, and tied a piece of string to the first heddle of the last group, so that by simply un-threading the last group and threading in the border, my loom was ready to weave the coverlet without unthreading the entire loom. The threads were threaded two in each reed of a beater with reeds, fifteen to an inch, making thirty threads to the inch. The extra warp threads turned out to be a great blessing in figuring the amount of warp left on the loom, and I do not think I shall ever set up a loom without leaving an extra thread at one side to help measure the remaining yardage. When making the coverlet I tied extra pieces of thread

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to the last unit of the design, re-threaded these through the heddles and the beater, and wrapped these ends around common pins, which had been pinned through the material just woven, pulling the ends tight enough to make the tension the same as in the other part of the loom. The extra threads I threaded in place and tied them to the beam with a piece of ribbon. Next I shot a few inches of cloth through the shed to separate the threads evenly, and I was ready to proceed.

To return to the story of my curtains: in order to speed up the work of making them, I chose the heaviest material I could find, a mercerized thread, No. 3 perle cotton, in sand shade. It turned out to be a happy accident, as the sand when woven through the white warp gave a very pretty texture and, when hanging at the windows, have a trans-parent, almost gold ef-fect with the light shin-ing through them.
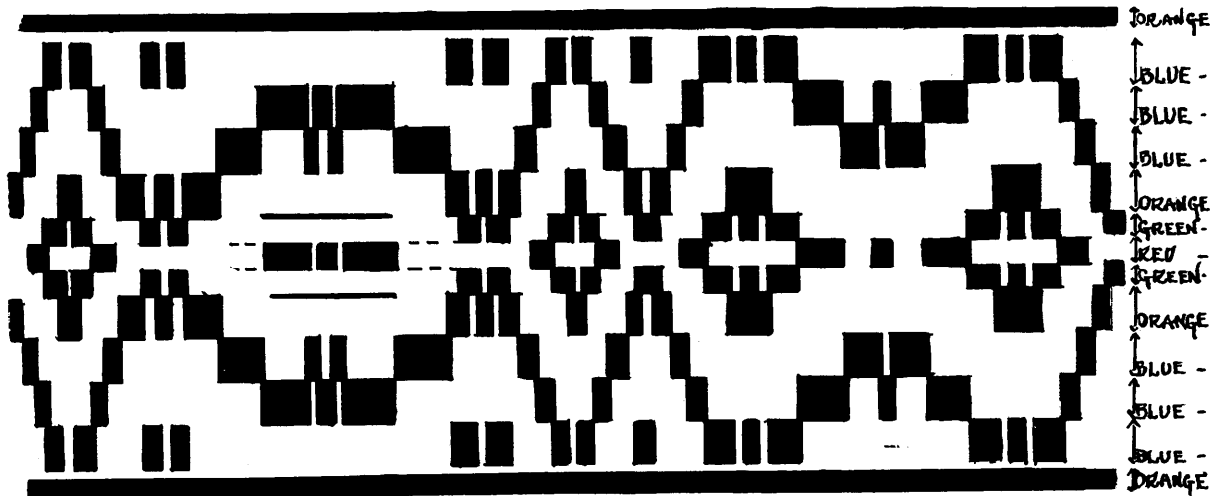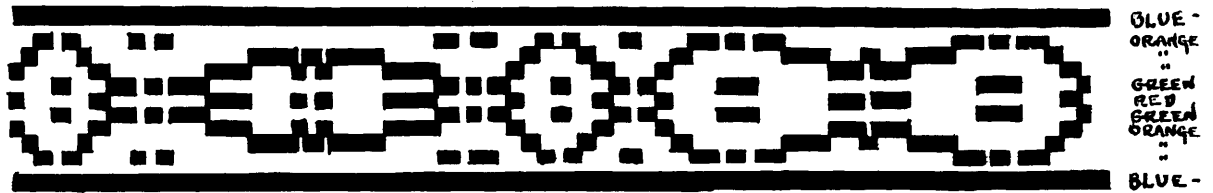
Weave 8 inches of plain weave, then the follow-ing narrow border: two rows plain weave (blue), one row plain weave (sand), and the following, called the key, which gives every possible combination of the pedals of the loom and is a great help in weaving, especially in designing borders. A Danish teacher taught me to always weave the key in every piece of weaving, as it may be a great help to refer to it later, and it can be worked into most any design.

Then:

Pedals 1 and 2, orange, 1 row
" 2 " 3, " 1 "

BLUE-
ORANGE
"
"
GREEN
RED
GREEN
ORANGE
"
BLUE-

ORANGE
BLUE -
BLUE -
BLUE -
ORANGE
GREEN-
RED
GREEN-
ORANGE
BLUE -
BLUE -
BLUE -
ORANGE

DESIGN FOR CURTAIN BORDER-

Pedals 3 and 4, orange, 1 row
   " 1 " 4, green, 1 "
   " 3 " 4, red,   1 "
   " 1 " 4, green, 1 "
   " 3 " 4, orange, 1 "
   " 2 " 3,   "   1 "
   " 1 " 2,   "   1 "
1 row sand, plain weave
2 rows blue, plain weave
9 rows sand color
2 rows orange, plain weave
1 row sand, plain weave
Pedals 1 and 2, blue,   4 times
   " 2 " 3,   "   4 "
   " 3 " 4,   "   4 "
   " 1 " 4, orange, 4 "
   " 1 " 2, green, 2 "
   " 2 " 3, red,   2 "
   " 1 " 2, green, 2 "
   " 1 " 4, orange, 4 "
   " 3 " 4, blue,   4 "
   " 2 " 3,   "   4 "
   " 1 " 2,   "   4 "
1 row sand (plain)
2 rows orange "
9 "   sand   "
Repeat key.

Now weave 7⅝ inches sand, plain weave, which will shrink to 7 inches when the material is removed from the loom. Then with the shuttle thread on the left-hand side of the loom, weave the following stripe, using the sand-colored thread for both the pattern and the binder:

   (1 and 2), 1 time   (1and 2), 1 time
   (2 " 4), 1 "   (2 " 4), 1 "
   (2 " 3), 1 "   (2 " 3), 1 "
   (1 " 3), 1 "

This little stripe adds to the hand-woven effect and at the same time is a big help in measuring your material.

Repeat 7⅝ inches of plain weaving as many times as desired for the length of your curtains. Then repeat the "key" and weave 10 inches plain weave in sand color for the heading at the top of the curtain.

I was quite pleased to discover while weaving these curtains that by weaving about 8 inches of my second curtain I could cut off my first one and pin the second one to the apron on my loom with common pins, placing them about every inch apart. This is sometimes a great saving in warp if a person desires to cut off one article on the loom without sacrificing valuable inches of warp, which may be just enough for certain planned work.

Of course, some people do not like fringe (I do not like the movie theatre kind, either) but, to take away the hand-tied fringe on handwoven articles, part of the handicraft look is lost, so I tied twelve threads together all the way across, allowing 6 inches for fringe. If you would add a certain Czecho-slovakian look to them, tie a second row of knots in the following manner, numbering these groups, from left to right, one to nine, making the second row of knots about ⅛ inch below the first row (measuring diagonally), or ⅝ inch below (measuring in a straight line):

1 and 3 knotted sections together
2 " 5 " " "
3 " 7 " " "
6 " 9 " " "
8 " 11 " " " , etc.

The curtains may be simply hemmed at the top edge and gathered on the rod, but I think they are more attractive if they are hung on rings with folds, as "draw curtains" are made. A special ring with an upper and lower projection may be pur-chased in the drapery section of a dry goods store for 50 cents a dozen. It requires about six for each yard. Made in this way these curtains answer for glass curtains and drapes as well, and may solve the problem of curtaining a difficult arrangement of windows. Mine were 42 inches wide and, with one-half pound, 34 inches could be woven so at $2.00 a pound. It really makes very inexpensive curtains. You must be sure, however, to measure your windows carefully and to allow for the shrink-age when the material is removed from the loom. I found that out of every 8 inches woven and meas-ured on the loom, I would have about a shrinkage of almost an inch.

For the border I used wool yarn in order to obtain the shades which I desired for my room, and I liked the effect. For a binder I used the same sand mer-cerized thread.
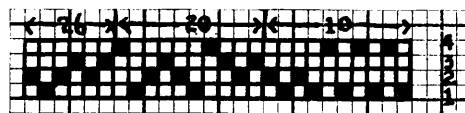
THREAD-UP FOR CURTAINS:

(3 and 4), 1 time   (3 and 4), 6 times
(1 " 4), 1 "   (1 " 4), 5 "
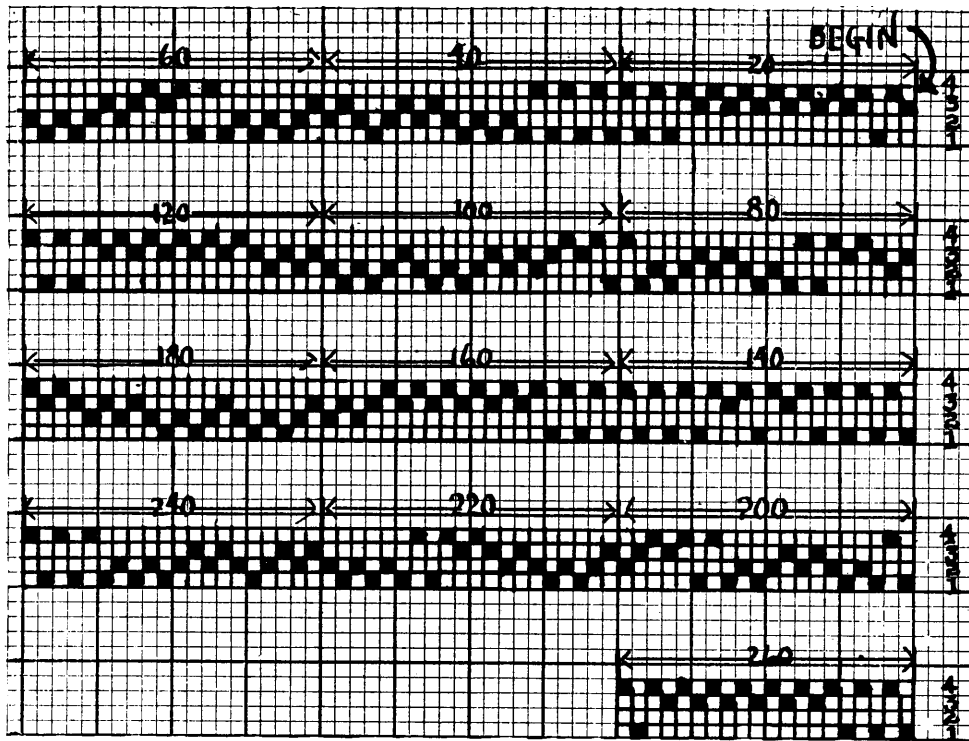
Repeat 5 times for curtains. Repeat 4 times END 78. 46 to 78—7 times to make border for coverlet
Combination Whig Rose and Chariot Wheel

Repeat as often as desired for curtains Rose Path Pattern

Repeat as often as desired for curtains Honeysuckle Pattern

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(1 and 2), 3 times     (1 and 4), 2 times     (3 and 2), 1 times     (3 and 2), 1 times
(3  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  4), 1  "        (1  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  4), 2  "
(1  "  2), 1  "        (3  "  2), 3  "        (3  "  2), 3  "        (1  "  4), 1  "
(3  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  4), 2  "        (1  "  2), 3  "
(1  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  2), 1  "        (1  "  4), 1  "        (3  "  2), 2  "
     Thread No. 46     (1  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  2), 1  "
(1 and 4), 2 times     (3  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  2), 2  "
(3  "  4), 1  "        (3  "  4), 6  "        (1  "  2), 1  "        (1  "  2), 2  "
(3  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  4), 6  "        (1  "  4), 2  "        (1  "  4), 6  "
(1  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  4), 1  "        (3  "  4), 1  "        (3  "  4), 6  "
(3  "  2), 1  "        (1  "  4), 1  "        (3  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  4), 1  "
(3  "  4), 2  "           (middle)            (1  "  2), 2  "
(1  "  4), 1  "        (3 and 4), 1  "
(1  "  2), 2  "        (1  "  4), 6  "      Repeat five times for curtains.
(3  "  2), 2  "        (3  "  4), 5  "      Repeat four times for coverlet and from beginning
(1  "  2), 1  "        (3  "  2), 3  "    to star, and from thread No. 46 through thread No.
     Thread No. 78     (1  "  2), 2  "    78 six or seven times for border.
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TREADLING FOR COVERLET

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      First Section                 Second Section                  Third Section
      (3 and 4), 2 times          ( (2 and 3), 4 times            ( (3 and 4), 2 times
      (1  "  4), 2  "             | (1  "  2), 3  "               | (1  "  4), 2  "
      (3  "  4), 8  "         III<  (2  "  3), 2  "               | (1  "  2), 2  "
      (1  "  4), 8  "             | (1  "  2), 3  "               | (2  "  3), 2  "
    ( (1  "  2), 4  "             ( (2  "  3), 4  "              _| (1  "  2), 2  "
    | (2  "  3), 3  "               (3  "  4), 8  "           V |  (1  "  4), 2  "
  I<  (1  "  2), 2  "               (1  "  4), 8  "             | (3  "  4), 2  "
    | (2  "  3), 3  "               (3  "  4), 2  "             | (2  "  3), 2  "
    ( (1  "  2), 4  "               (1  "  4), 2  "             | (1  "  2), 2  "
    ( (1  "  4), 2  "               (3  "  4), 2  "             | (2  "  3), 2  "
    | (3  "  4), 2  "               (1  "  4), 8  "             | (3  "  4), 2  "
    | (2  "  3), 2  "               (3  "  4), 8  "             ( (1  "  4), 2  "
    | (1  "  2), 2  "             ( (2  "  3), 4  "             ( (1  "  2), 4  "
    | (2  "  3), 2  "             | (1  "  2), 3  "             | (2  "  3), 3  "
 II<  (3  "  4), 2  "          IV<  (2  "  3), 2  "          VI<  (1  "  2), 2  "
    | (1  "  4), 2  "             | (1  "  2), 3  "             | (2  "  3), 3  "
    | (2  "  3), 2  "             ( (2  "  3), 4  "             ( (1  "  2), 4  "
    | (1  "  2), 2  "                                            (1  "  4), 8  "
    | (1  "  4), 2  "                                            (3  "  4), 8  "
    ( (3  "  4), 2  "                                            (1  "  4), 2  "
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Repeat from beginning, First Section

You will note that "I" is exactly the opposite of "III" in pedals pushed down; "IV" exactly the opposite of "VI," "II" of "V," and the middle section of the pattern is the opposite of the beginning and end which comes together when the pattern is repeated.