

# ADAPTATIONS OF A SIMPLE DANISH STITCH

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THE so called Danish stitch is a simple stitch which is very similar to the blanket stitch in embroidery. It is easy and quick to do on the loom, and has many effective variations.

A description of the Danish method of working the stitch is given on Page 16 of "Dansk Husflidsselskabs Vaevbog" by LaCour and Siegumfeldt. A slightly different method of using the technique was given in my monthly leaflet "Handweaving News" for March 1939, and some of the variations of this will be given here.

Method of Working the Stitch. The loom is set up as usual. Any threading can be used, as long as there is a plain weave shed. This can easily be used also on the simple heddle belt-loom, and the bag and place mat illustrated were both woven on this kind of a loom. As the warp is being sleyed through the reed, several dents are skipped at regular intervals where the stitch is to be made. The Danish method is to make a blanket stitch with the weft to catch together the previous wefts which fall where the dents have been

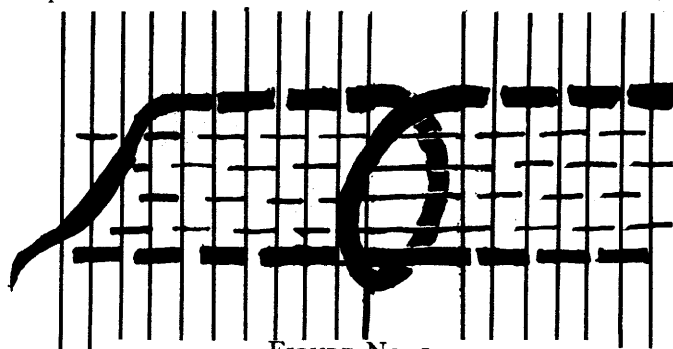


FIGURE NO. 1

Method of Working the Danish Technique

left free. The illustration at Figure No. 1 shows how this is done. Instead of leaving any skipped dents, set the loom up in the usual way and sley as usual. While the results are not quite as lacy, it gives one an opportunity to use the technique much more freely, as there are no set places where the blanket stitch has to be made, but it can be put into the fabric at any desired point. In this way many different types of design can be built up and used.

Weave the desired amount for a plain weave heading, for convenience weave this with white. Then thread a large eyed sail needle or netting shuttle with blue, and put in a shot of this all across the width of the loom in plain weave. Now weave three or four more shots of plain weave with the white. A netting shuttle for the color can be used *only* if the loom has been set up in the Danish method, that is by leaving skips in the slewing of the reed.

Now open the next shed which is for the blue colored weft. Carry it through the open shed up to the place where the first blanket stitch is to be made, let us say under eight of the raised warp threads. Now bring the needle out of the shed and down over the four rows of plain weave in

white and the first row of blue, through to the back of the weaving, and out to the front at the top of the four rows to make a simple blanket stitch. Draw up slightly to pull the threads together. The amount this stitch is pulled up can be gauged by the effect one wishes to get. With the shed still open carry the needle with the blue thread through the open shed to the point where the next blanket stitch is to come. Make another stitch as before. Continue this as desired all across the width of the loom. This is very easy and simple to do, and takes very little time, yet is effective and interesting. The thread used for the blanket stitch should either be of a different weight from that used for the plain weave, or a thread of a different color for the best effect.

The stitches can be made directly above each other as in the bottom border shown in Illustration No. 2 or they can be staggered above each other as in the top border of this same illustration. In both of these borders the distance between the stitches is the same length. In the lower border note how the distances are arranged so as to form a center figure. This is very useful in planning bags or a large all-over pattern.

As soon as the first row of stitches are made, put in another row of blue weft all across the width of the loom, then four rows more of the plain weave in white, and then

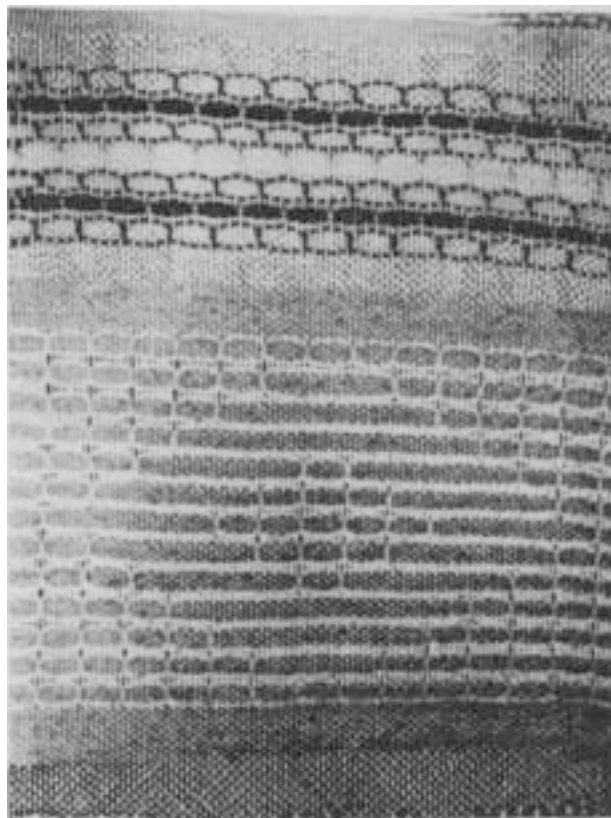


FIGURE NO. 2

Two Borders in Danish Technique

another row of the Danish stitches. The number of rows of the plain weave between the blanket stitches can also be varied to suit the effect desired or the size of the thread being used.

At Figure No. 3 is shown a place mat woven on the heddle loom using carpet warp and candlewick cotton, natural for the plain weave center, with orange and dark brown used for the border. With the warp fastened into a picture frame or a hooked rug frame a simple inexpensive loom is available on which many articles may be easily woven. Almost any kind of yarn or thread can be used for this type of weaving. Heavy linen floss for the warp and weft, Peasant yarns and tapestry wools are all adapted to this simple form of weaving. Note in the borders on the place mat shown in Figure No. 3, how the length of the distance between the blanket stitches increases the effectiveness of the borders. Where the stitches come at irregular intervals as these do, it is necessary to center the pattern before beginning to make the stitches, so they will come out evenly on each edge. If desired the rows of plain weave may be of different colors. There are many ways of making effective variations of color with this stitch.

At Figure No. 5 is shown a bag woven of raw silk on carpet warp. This also was made on the heddle loom. It is mounted on a clear crystal frame 10" size. These frames were designed especially for handweaving by the author of this article. It is important in planning a bag to use a suitable frame for it. Much handweaving is often spoiled by a cheap overly decorated bag frame. To my mind it is better to use

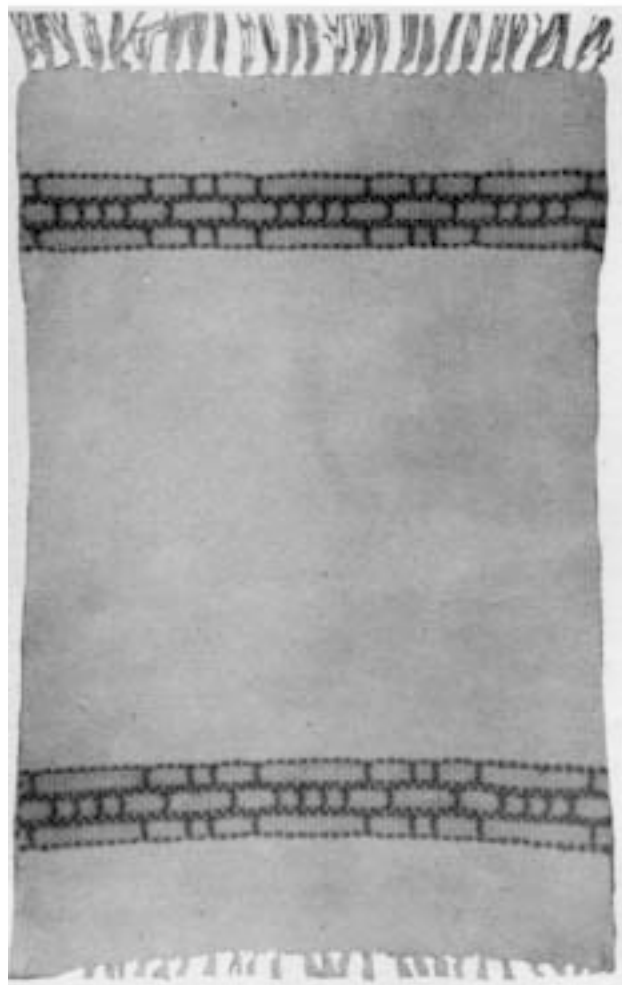


FIGURE NO. 3  
Place Mat Woven with Borders in Danish Stitch



FIGURE NO. 4

Danish Technique

Bag Woven on 12 "Heddle" Loom with Borders in

a simple zipper and make a bag with it, than to use a cheap inexpensive frame on a nice piece of weaving. For this bag weave a plain heading of 2½" of plain weave with the raw silk. Then one shot of dark red raw silk, 4 shots natural plain weave. Now the first row of stitches are put in with dark red. Make the stitch nine threads apart, or in other words have the stitch come between the 9th and 10th warp thread. Then one row of natural raw silk. Then four rows of plain weave with dark red. The next row of stitches are staggered so they come in the center of the previous row. These are made with the natural raw silk all across the width of the loom. Now one row of plain weave with dark red, four rows of plain weave with rose color, and the third row of Danish stitch is worked with dark red placed so they come directly over the stitch made on the first row.

This completes three rows as shown for the side borders of the bag. Now weave 1½" plain weave with natural raw silk. Then repeat the Danish stitch in the same order and with the same colors as in the first border, for three rows. When these are finished, for the fourth row of Danish stitch, weave one row plain weave with rose color, 4 shots of natural, then do a row of the Danish stitch with the rose color, so the stitch comes directly above the stitches of the second row. For the fifth row, a shot of rose plain weave, four shots of dark red plain weave, then do Danish stitch with the rose color. For the 6th row of Danish stitches, repeat as for the 4th row. For the 7th row one shot of natural plain weave, 4 shots of dark red, then do the Danish stitch with the natural. This is the center of the wide border on the bag. Reverse this order of weaving right back to the beginning to complete one side of the bag. As this was woven on the 12" heddle, only one side of the bag can be woven at a time. So for the other side, repeat the borders in the same order. The total length of this piece of weaving when it was taken from the loom was 28". Note that the width of the weaving was used for the depth of the bag, so that the borders go up and down on the bag.

Many other arrangements of this simple technique are possible and may easily be worked out. And the stitch can be used on a regular loom with fine materials just as effectively. The author of this article will gladly answer any questions concerning this if anyone cares to write to her.