

# SOMETHING NEW IN RUGS

By MARY M. ATWATER

Rug making is an important branch of the art of weaving, and goes all the way from the miracles of Oriental knotted pile to the trashy rag affairs "made in Japan" that one may buy for a few cents in the "bargain basement" of any department store.

There are coarsely knotted pile rugs in the Swedish "Flossa" technique, and many kinds of tapestry rugs — Navajo, Killim, Soumak, to name a few — rugs with uncut looped pile picked up on wires; warp-face rugs in the Swedish "Matta" and other styles; "twice-woven" rugs; rugs in three-harness weaving; rugs in our familiar weaves — four-harness overshot, crackle, and summer-and-winter weave.

Just how, then, shall we make the rugs we are perhaps planning for the bed-room, the hall, the sun-room or nursery?

Very few of us have either the time or the deft fingers for true Oriental knotted-pile weaving. And even if we have, these elaborate and exquisite things with their delicate designs are not altogether in the spirit of our modern times or suited to modern decorative schemes. For my part I can marvel and admire without a twinge of desire to go and do likewise. Also, I think, few of us have the slightest desire to compete with Japan in the turning out of sleazy rag rugs in plain weave. And I sincerely hope none of us are planning rugs in the overshot weave. Of all the ways to make rugs this is probably the poorest.

What most of us want, I think, is a technique that will produce a firm and durable rug without a heavy cost for material or undue expenditure of time, and a technique that permits free use of color and design.

In some recent experiments with rug-technique I have come upon one that seems to me to unite these desirable qualities in a very satisfactory manner. I hasten to pass it on.

I found this, oddly enough, in working with a technique much used in the manufacture of cheap and rather unhand-some commercial rugs — a technique I have always avoided as it seemed to me to hold little appeal for the hand-weaver. One never can tell!

This method of rug-making, which I am calling the "Two-Warp" technique, has one practical draw-back: it requires the use of a loom equipped with two warp-beams. Of course it is neither difficult nor expensive to have a second warp-beam added to any large, solidly constructed loom, but for this weave it absolutely must be done. This is because the two warps used in this type of rug weave at different tensions and cannot possibly be taken from the same beam.

Some of the commercial rugs of this type have as many as

seven different warps, but for our purposes two are enough. One of the warps, which I shall call the "weaving" warp, interweaves with the weft; the other warp, called the "stuffer" warp, does not interweave at all. It serves simply to separate the upper and under sides of the rug and to add thickness and firmness to the fabric. It does not show anywhere except in the fringes — if any.

This fact is responsible for the trashiness of some of the commercial rugs made in this weave. The stuffer material used may be very poor in quality — I have heard of paper being used. Some of us may have had the unhappy experience of seeing a nice-looking rug disintegrate in water the first time it is washed. That is the reason. But this is a practise hand-weavers are unlikely to follow. The stuffer warp may be a cheap material but it must be firm and strong.

Threading drafts for this weave may be written in several ways, but I find it convenient to use the system of threading we employ for patterns in the summer-and-winter weave — though interpreted in a special manner. As in the summer-and-winter weave, the two front harnesses are used for the "ties" — in this two-warp weave the threads of the weaving warp — and the rest of the harnesses are used for the pattern and are threaded with the stuffer warp. On four harnesses only patterns of two blocks are possible. However, there should be twice as many ends of stuffer warp as of weaving warp, and the "unit" of the weave requires six warp-ends instead of four. This is shown on the diagram. The threading may be done in two different ways, as shown at (a-1) and (a-2) on the diagram. The (a-1) method of threading produces a texture like that of the rug shown in Illustrations 1, 2, and 3. The (a-2) method produces the different effect shown in the other illustrations. I prefer the (a-1) texture, but the other beats together a little more easily.

In weaving, the stuffer warp should be stretched tight, and the weaving warp much looser, and as the take-up is all in the weaving warp, this warp should be longer than the other. In my experiments I found that this difference amounted to one extra yard of weaving warp to each four yards of stuffer warp. This if you warp twelve yards of stuffer warp, makes the weaving warp fifteen yards long.

For my small rug I warped with ordinary carpet warp, fifteen ends of weaving warp to each two inches in the reed, and 30 ends of stuffer warp to each two inches. In sleying I sleyed the weaving warp one end to the dent and the stuffer warp two ends to the dent, in a 15-dent reed. If a 12-dent reed is used, warp six ends of weaving warp and twelve ends of stuffer warp to the inch.

If a thicker rug is desired the stuffer warp may be made of coarser material or the number of ends may be doubled.

The nicest material for weft is Bernat's "Smyrna" rug-yarn. Cotton chenille may also be used, or the fine cotton rug-yarn recently appearing in the shops. The very heavy cotton roving is too heavy and clumsy for this weave, and though fine-cut rags may be used, this material is not recommended.

In weaving both feet must be used at times to make the sheds, as a complete tie-up requires too many treadles. The effect of the weave is a thick double-faced fabric with the pattern the same on both sides, in reversed colors.

Weave with two shuttles, carrying the same material but in different colors and proceed as follows: Suppose you wish to weave dark on top and light underneath, all across, for a plain border at the end of a rug in Pattern (a), and are using a "rising shed" loom; treadle 1, (tie-up (a-4)), and weave a shot of dark material; treadle 1-5 and weave light; treadle 2 and weave dark; treadle 2-5 and weave light. Repeat these four shots as desired. On a sinking shed loom, tie-up (a-3) this treadling will reverse the colors — light on top and dark underneath, so to weave dark on top and light underneath on a sinking shed loom treadle: 1-5 dark; 1, light; 2-5, dark; 2, light, and repeat.

To weave block 1 of the pattern treadle:

1-4, dark; 1-3, light; 2-4, dark; 2-3, light, and repeat as required. To weave block 2, treadle in the same manner but reverse the colors: 1-4, light; 1-3 dark and so on.

The treadling for an eight-harness pattern is the same. For instance for pattern (b), weave the first block: 1-3, dark; 1-4, light; 2-3, dark; 2-4, light, and so on.

But the most amusing possibility in two-warp weaving is the fact that one may weave free patterns, like those used in Finnweave, by a very simple pick-up process. I have never seen rugs woven in this way except my own and I have never seen any notes on such a weave in any of the books, so perhaps this is something new. At least it was entirely new to me so may be to readers of *The Weaver*. I found it highly entertaining and the results spirited and amusing. For this weave consider each group of four threads of stuffer warp as a unit. Raise all the stuffer warp — treadle 5 on a tie-up (a-4) or treadles 1-2 on tie-up (a-3). Insert a pick-up stick under the groups of threads corresponding to the desired figure. For instance for the first line of the "duck" figure used for Illustration No. 6, skip ten groups and pick up nine.

Make this pick-up in front of the reed. Now treadle on 1, (a-4) or 1-5, (a-3), allowing the pick-up stick simply to ride the top of the shed. Weave a shot of background color under the stick. Raise the stuffer warp again and pick up all the groups corresponding to the background — all the groups skipped the first time. Treadle as for the first shot and weave the pattern color. Raise the stuffer warp and make the same pick-up made for the first shot. Treadle on 2 (a-4) or 2-5 (a-3) and weave background. Pick up the background as before and repeat the second treadling, weaving a shot of pattern color. These four shots correspond to a unit of the weave, and the whole piece is woven in exactly this manner. Nothing could well be simpler, and though, of course, this method of weaving takes more time than the plain pattern weaving, it really goes quite rapidly as the material is coarse and the groups of threads are easy to count for the pick-up.

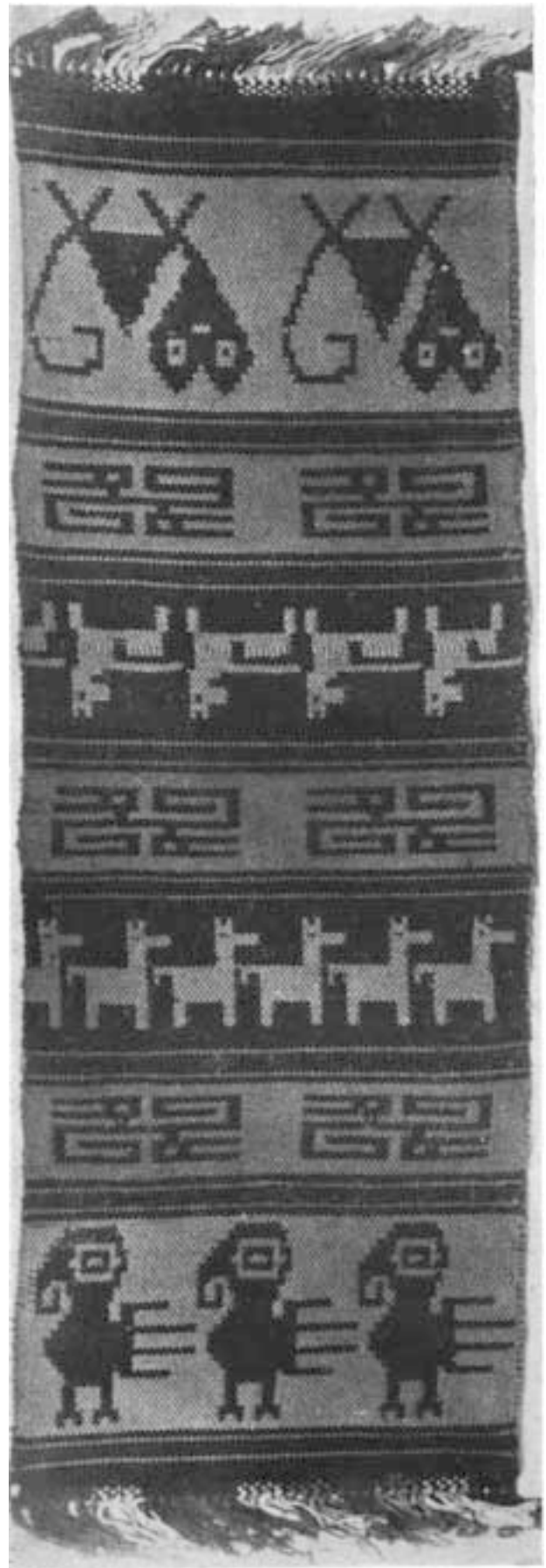


Illustration No. 1

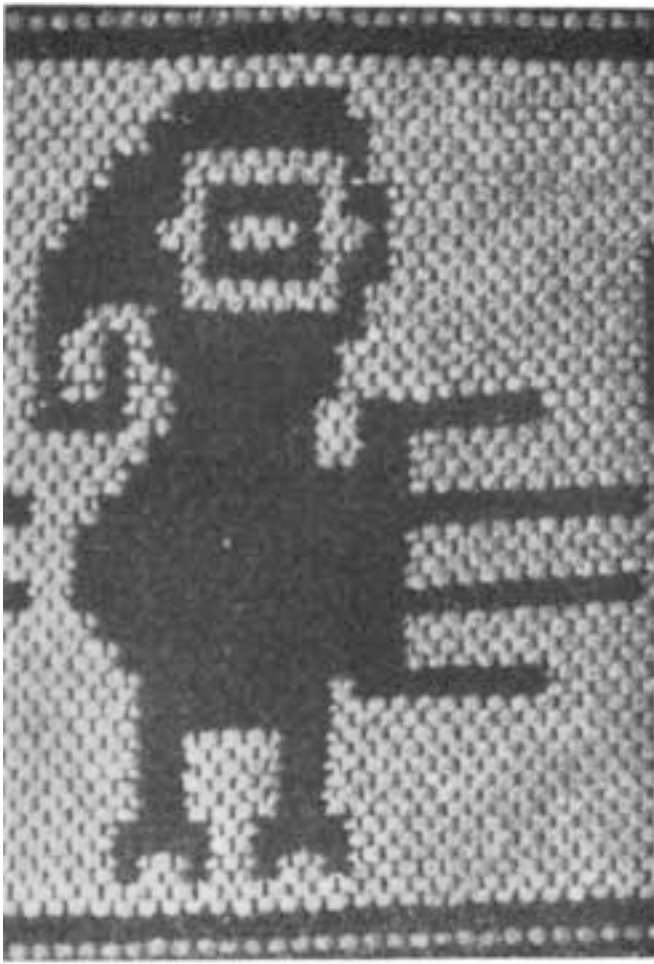


Illustration No. 2

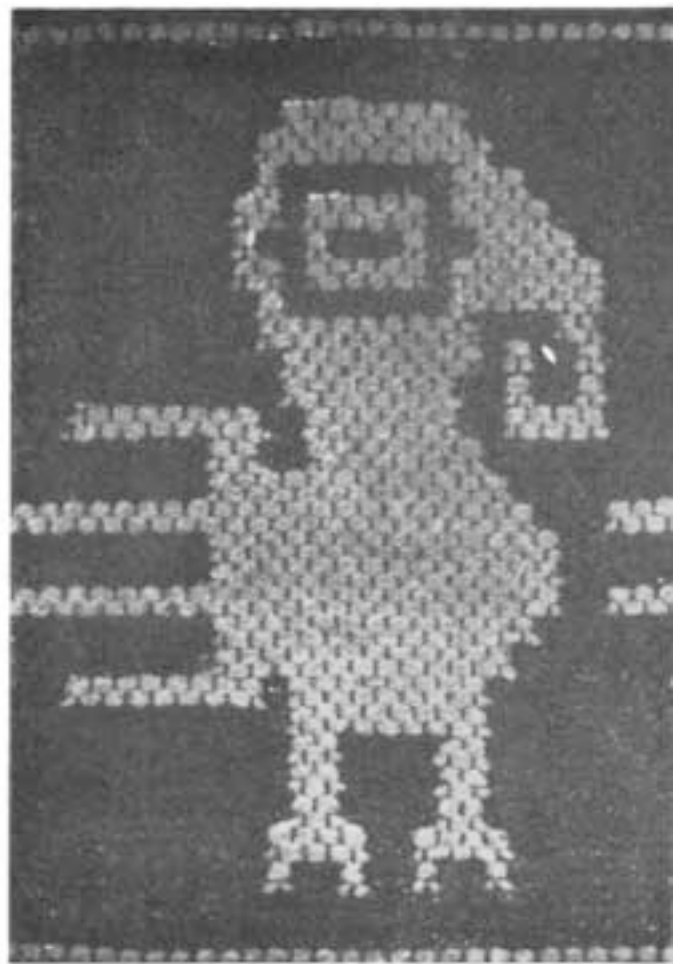


Illustration No. 3

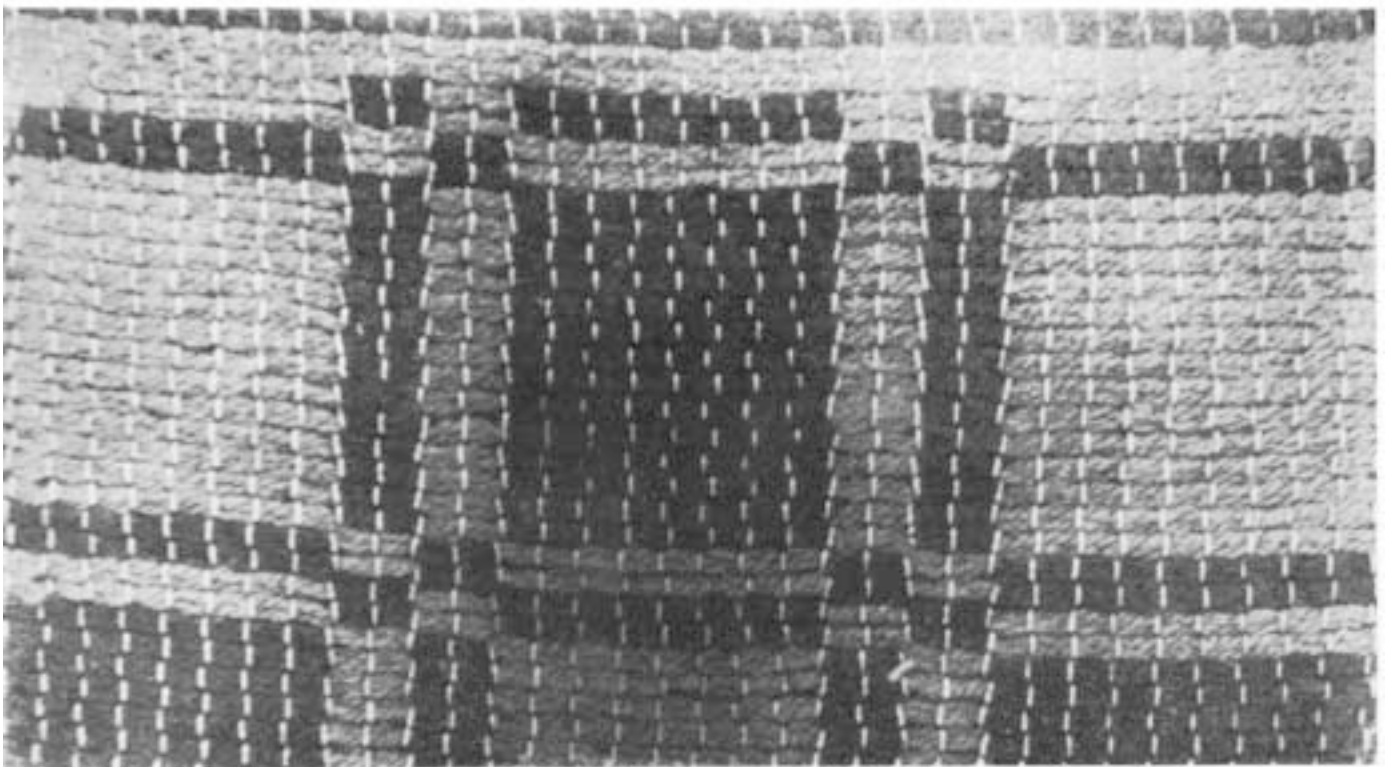


Illustration No. 4

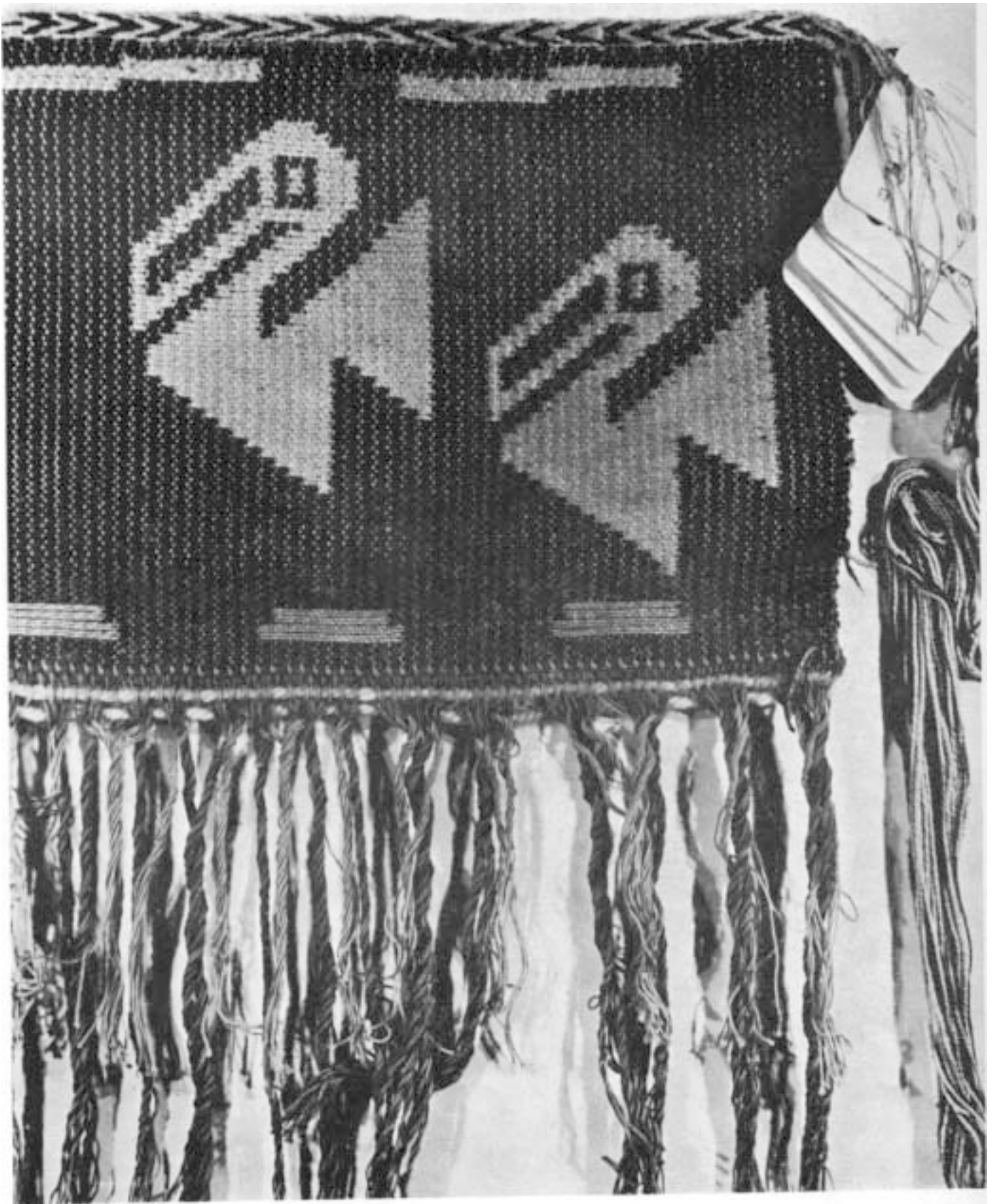


Illustration No. 5

The various motifs used for the rug are Peruvian in style and were taken from Finnweave patterns published by the Shuttle-Craft Guild. The colors used were dull blue and tan, for the large figures, and brown and henna for the

small figures. The duck pattern in Illustration No. 6 was done in green and white. The piece with the flying pelicans was woven as a table mat, the weft being double strands of "raw" silk in wine and dusty rose. Note the card-woven

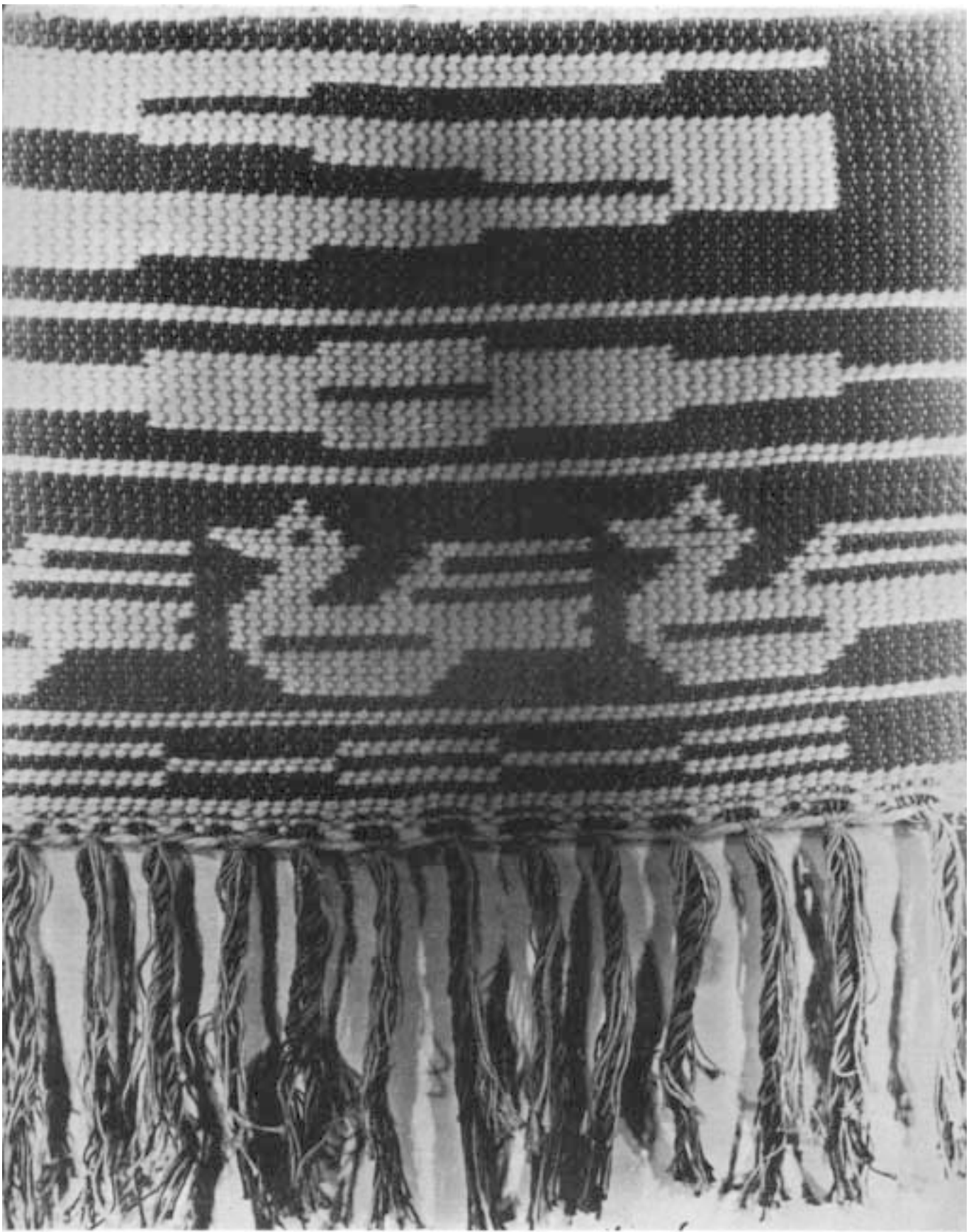
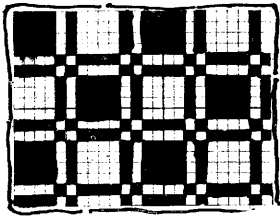


Illustration No. 6

binding on this piece. The warp of the mat was used as weft in the card-weaving. This makes an attractive finish for a piece of this type.

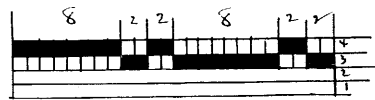
So to those who want something novel and amusing for their next rug-weaving I can recommend the two-warp technique.

# Diagram, Two-Warp Weaving

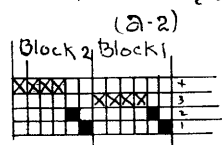


Pattern (a)  
Illustration No. 4

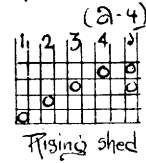
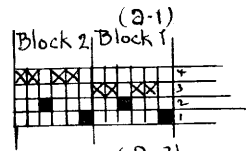
Pattern for Illustration No. 4. (a)



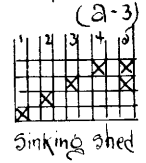
24 units  
48 ends weaving warp  
96 " stuffer "



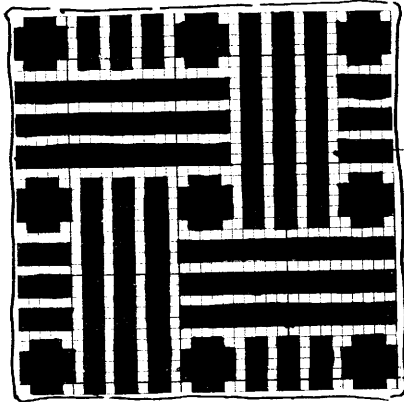
■ Weaving warp  
⊗ Stuffer warp



Rising shed

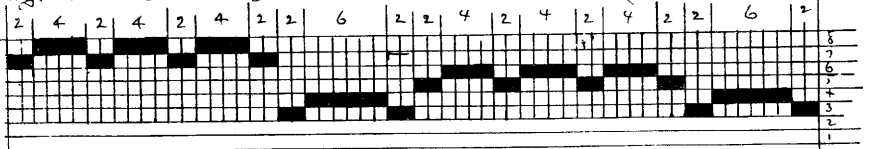


Sinking shed

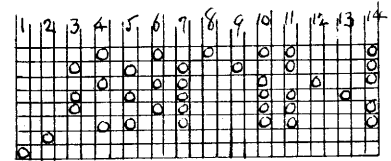


Pattern (b)

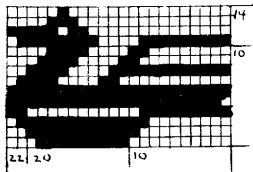
Eight-harness Pattern-Draft - 246, Shuttle-Craft-Book (b)



60 units  
120 ends weaving warp  
240 " stuffer "

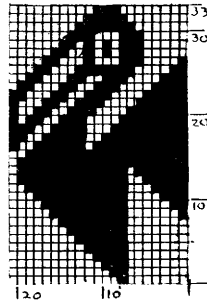


Tie-up, Rising shed

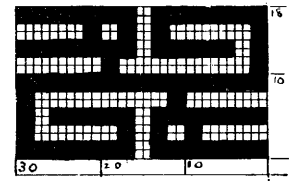


Guatemalan duck

— motif used for  
Illustration No. 6

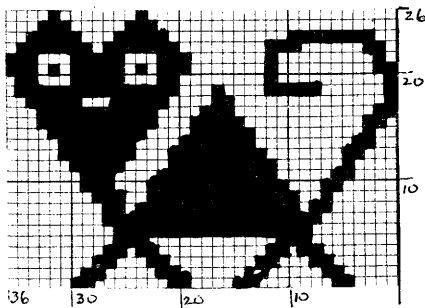


Peruvian Pelican  
— motif used for  
Illustration No. 5

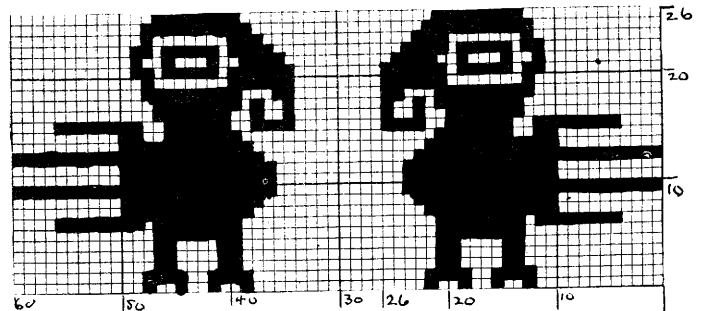


Peruvian Bird figure  
— motif used in rug—  
Illustration No. 1

(These motifs are reproduced from the Shuttle-Craft patterns for Finnweave)



Peruvian Cat — motif used in rug,  
Illustration No. 1



Peruvian Parrot — motif used in rug, Illustration No. 1.  
Also in Illustrations No. 2 and No. 3

M.M. Atwater  
Basin, Mont.