

Some Further Steps in the Evolution of Summer-and-Winter

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Summer-and-Winter, being the only truly American weave, should enjoy a greater popularity than it does. But most of us have looked at Summer-and-Winter as the pessimist looked at the doughnut, we have seen its limitations instead of its possibilities, and have sighed for a loom of more than four harnesses. And those of us who go in for "self expression" in a big way, have resented the limitations of any harness controlled pattern. The pioneer Americans who invented Summer-and-Winter were nothing if not adaptable to changing conditions; and so it is with their weave. Summer-and-Winter adapts beautifully to the demands of "Modern" design. With these modern designs, it is not so much a new technique as it is a combination and rearrangement of several well known methods. It is more a problem of design than it is of weaving.

The ability to combine blocks in any Summer-and-Winter pattern is one of its most appreciated and outstanding characteristics. Its two-tone quality is another great asset. Certainly there is nothing new about "picking-up" parts of patterns. So what more natural than to combine these advantages and techniques to produce new designs and fabrics?

Those weavers who weave by formula or rule, — those who write out a complete order of treadling and then follow it minutely, will never enjoy this method; it is not a strictly mechanical process.

A review of some Summer-and-Winter techniques and the making of a sampler is a great help before beginning to weave any article. A detailed description could be confusing, for the order of threading often varies. Some weavers use the two back harnesses for ties, and those who use the front ones are not all agreed as to the proper sequence. For example, should the A block be threaded 1-3-2-3 or should it be 3-1-3-2? So far as the structure of the cloth is concerned, the sequence makes no difference, but the relation of tabby shots to pattern shots will have to be adjusted accordingly. Another point of possible confusion is the well known one of rising and falling sheds. Therefore for the sake of clarity, let it be known that the directions for the samples illustrated are given for the small Structo loom, and that the blocks were threaded 3-1-3-2 and 4-1-4-2. The pattern used was the one illustrated at fig. 1.

In the sampler "X", the first stripe (A) was woven:—
lever No. 1 down, weave with pattern thread
levers 1-2 down, weave with tabby
lever No. 2 down, weave with pattern thread
levers 3-4 down, weave with tabby and repeat until eight pattern threads have been woven. In stripe B the relation of the tabby to the pattern has been reversed as follows:
lever No. 1 down, weave with pattern thread
levers 3-4 down, weave with tabby
lever No. 2 down, weave with pattern
levers 1-2 down, weave with tabby, and repeat for

eight pattern threads. There is very little difference in the appearance of the two textures. Although there are the same number of pattern shots in each sample, stripe A is very slightly narrower than stripe B, thus making a more compact cloth.

Stripe C is woven in pairs in the following order:—1, pattern; 1-2, tabby; 1, pattern; 3-4, tabby; 2, pattern; 1-2, tabby; 2, pattern; 3-4, tabby; and repeat until twelve pattern shots have been made. Stripe D is also woven in pairs, but the relation of tabby to pattern has been reversed. The order of treadling in stripe D is:—1, pattern; 3-4, tabby; 1, pattern; 1-2, tabby; 2, pattern; 3-4, tabby; 2, pattern; 1-2, tabby. There is a very obvious difference in the appearance of the two textures as well as the more compact nature of the weave in stripe C.

In the remaining stripes, E to K, the pattern shots are paired, and the relation of tabby to pattern is the same as in stripe D. These remaining stripes are exercises in picking up the parts of the pattern wanted.

In stripe E, levers 4 and 1 are down, the shuttle enters from the right and is brought to the top of the web a few threads beyond the small pattern block. Then lever 3 is also brought down, making levers 1-3-4 down; this combines both blocks on the under side of the cloth and leaves all background on the visible side. The shuttle is re-entered in the shed, exactly where it was brought out, and then taken through the shed to the left edge of the cloth. Stripe F started the same as E on levers 1-4, but changed to No. 1 only so as to combine both blocks on top of the cloth. Stripe G started with 4-3-1, and changed to 3-1. Stripe H started with 4-1, changed to 4-3-1, and changed a second time to 3-1. The remaining stripes are self evident.

The whole trick of the weave is in bringing the shuttle out of the shed at the correct place, and in re-entering it at the exact place where it was brought out. A little experimenting on the loom will be of more value than pages of description. The draft of Summer-and-Winter is so arranged that it will produce clean cut edges between the blocks, and in the actual weaving, taking advantage of this transition from one block to another makes for smooth weaving and for speed, even though there may be several changes of shed in one pattern shot.

In sampler Y, the small samples are woven, not with a tabby, but on opposites. There are two pattern yarns of contrasting color, but of equal size. Stripe M was woven: 1-3 with green; 2-4 with tan, and repeated. With interesting yarns, this might make an interesting "texture" weave; but so far as pattern is concerned, it is a total loss. Stripe N was woven: 1-4 weave with green; followed not by a tabby, but by the opposite of 1-4, which is 2-3, in tan; 2-4 in green, followed by its opposite 1-3 in tan.

Stripe O was woven in pairs: 1-4, 1-4, 2-4, 2-4, and each pattern shot followed by its opposite in a contrasting color. The result is not too pleasant, but if the weft yarn is changed to a finer softer one, that packs more closely, the result is most pleasing (stripe P). Stripes Q, R, and S are woven singly, or "one-and-one", and are exercises in combining and picking up blocks. When weaving a pattern in pairs, whether with a tabby binder or an opposite binder, it must be remembered that each block begins and ends with half of a pair. This is the same as with any orthodox Summer-and-Winter pattern.

When picking up patterns and an opposite binder is used, there are occasions when the binder is omitted. Stripe Q is an illustration. In the first half of the sample, the dark color is the pattern and the light one is the binder; when the colors change to make the light color the pattern, the order of weaving is: dark pattern followed by light pattern; — *not* dark pattern, light binder, light pattern. It is this and similar irregularities that make it impossible to write out a complete treadling. The weaver must know how the fabric should look, and keep a close watch that no errors slip into the work.

Design methods will vary with the individual weaver, that is whether to make the draft after making the design, or whether to fit the design to a given draft. Fig. 1 illustrates the latter method. The two-block pattern shown at A was designed first; it was planned primarily for a bath mat. In order to make a second and different rug, without rethreading the loom, the pattern shown at B was made. The two blocks of the pattern were combined to make the dark stripe across the border, and the two blocks were combined on the under side to make the light center of the rug. The A blocks were used for one border and the B blocks were used for the other border. The next step in the evolution of the design was to pick up the blocks, separately or combined, and to eliminate them entirely when they were not wanted.

Because Summer-and-Winter is a two-tone fabric, this type of pick-up weaving makes a very definite pattern on an even toned background. The pattern weft as well as the binder (whether tabby or opposite) is carried entirely across the width of the material, resulting in a very even weave. There are no lumps due to the pattern yarn reversing directions as in most types of pick-up and the entire cloth is of the same thickness throughout.

Fig. 2 is another example of working from a known pattern. The familiar Monk's Belt pattern furnished the foundation for the pattern shown. It is a simple matter to translate the usual Monk's Belt from the Colonial Overshot type of fabric to a Summer-and-Winter fabric. The Colonial Monk's Belt, of course, will not "go modern". The design shown at fig. 2 was planned for the upholstery on a small foot stool, and the Monk's Belt was considerably enlarged, although its proportions were kept.

Figs. 3 and 4 were designed first and then the draft was adjusted to the pattern. The design was tentatively made, and the draft tried out with it. Adjustments were then made in the design to meet the demands of the harnesses. In making designs for harness weaving, the mechanics of the loom cannot be ignored. In making these designs, it must be borne in mind that blocks can be combined, but they cannot be divided, — or at least not successfully.

A few suggestions as to materials and textures may be helpful. Linen carpet warp the same size as the ordinary four-ply cotton warp sleyed at eight per inch, woven with Smyrna Rug Wool for pattern and Turkey Wool for a tabby binder, made a beautiful rug. The same warp woven with two tones of Turkey Wool doubled, treadled in pairs and the binder on opposites gave a nice texture, though not so heavy a rug. Perhaps the most successful rug was on a cotton warp, eight per inch. An old cotton blanket was cut in quarter-inch strips for the pattern, which was woven singly. Each pattern shot was followed by two tabby shots of cotton chenille.

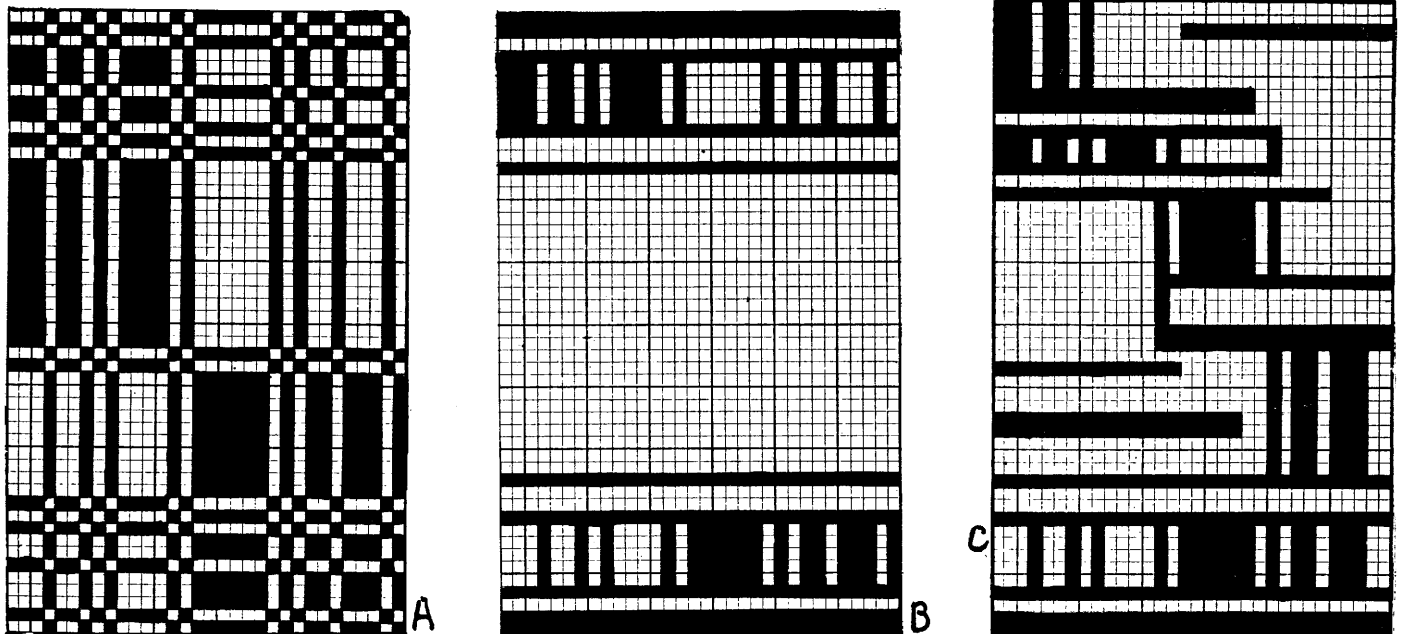


Figure 1

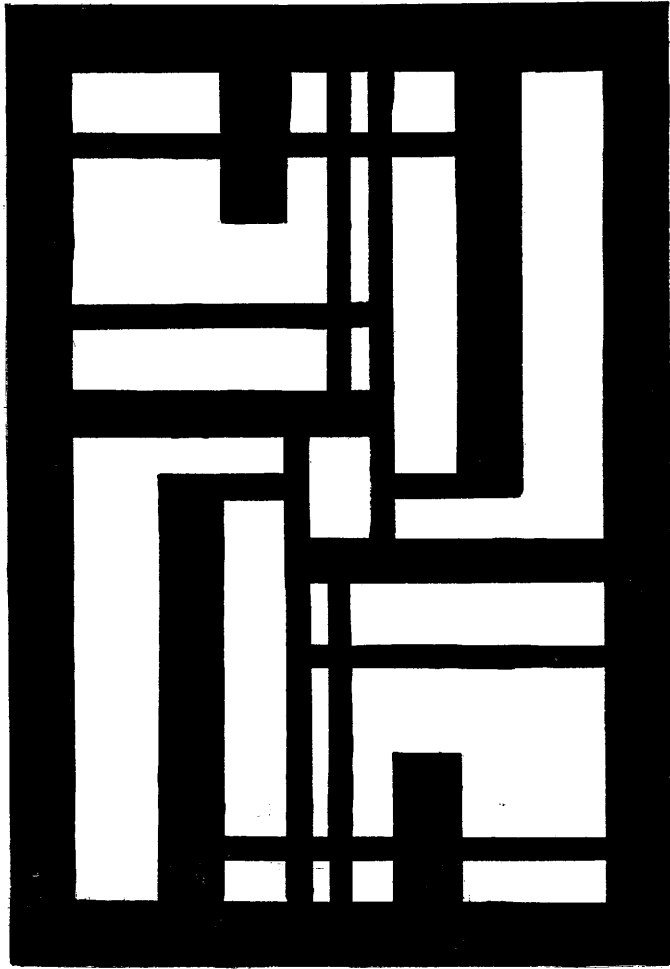
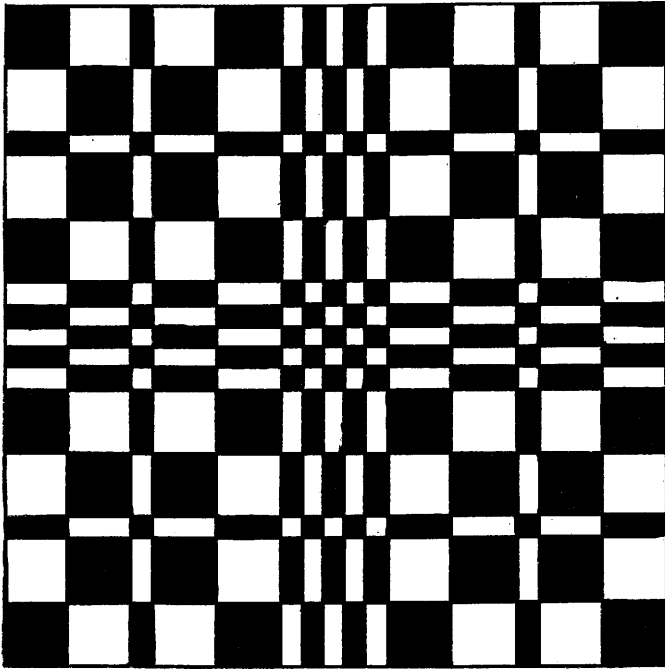


Figure 2

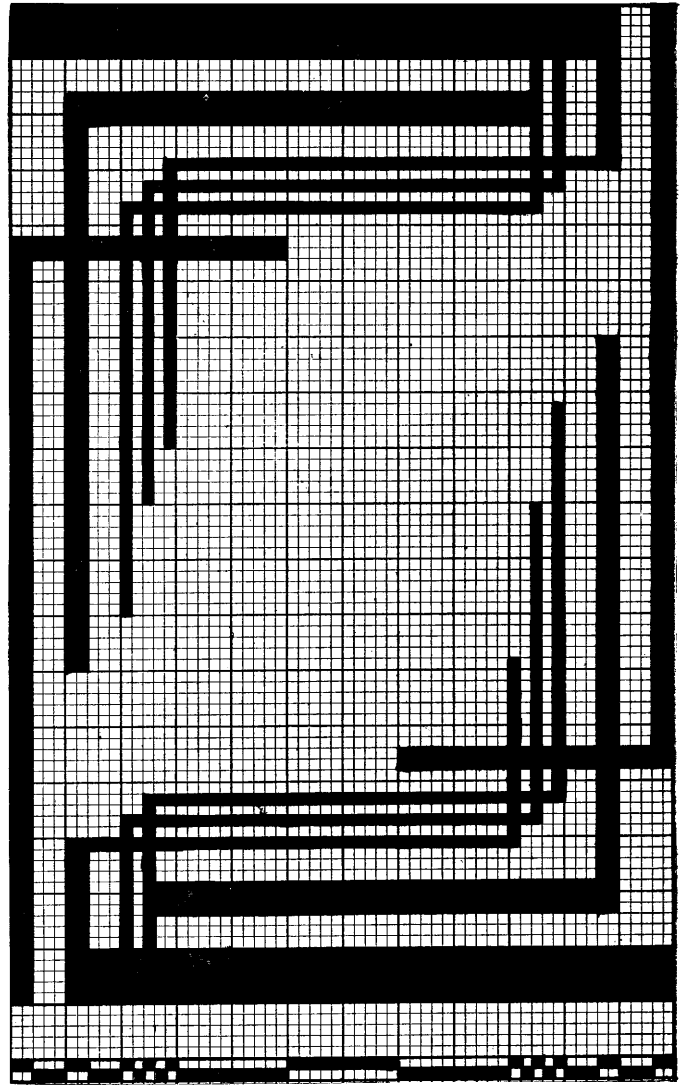


Figure 3

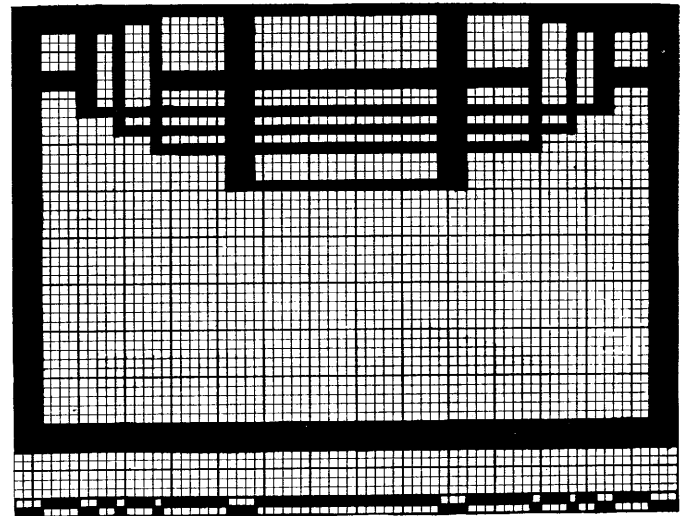
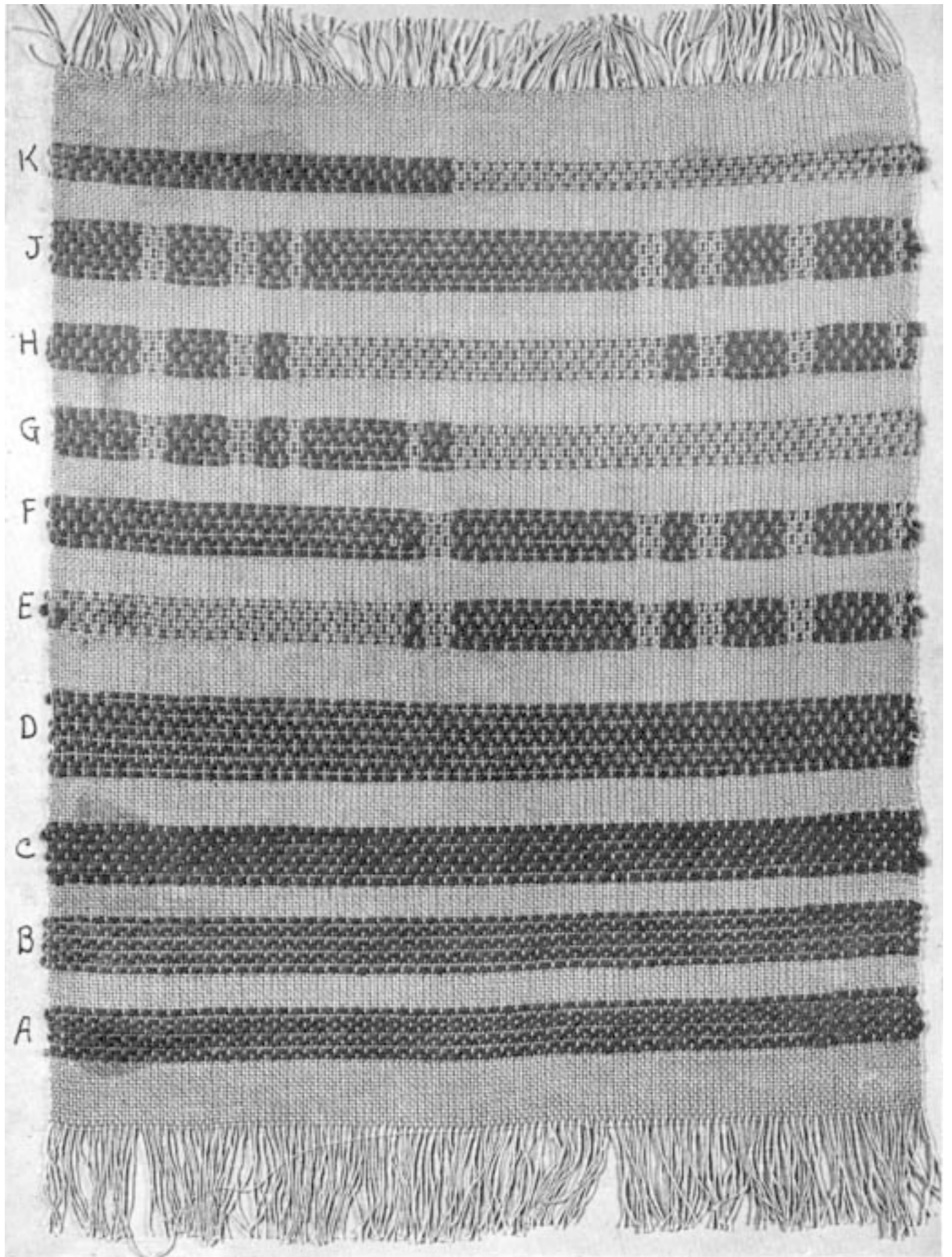
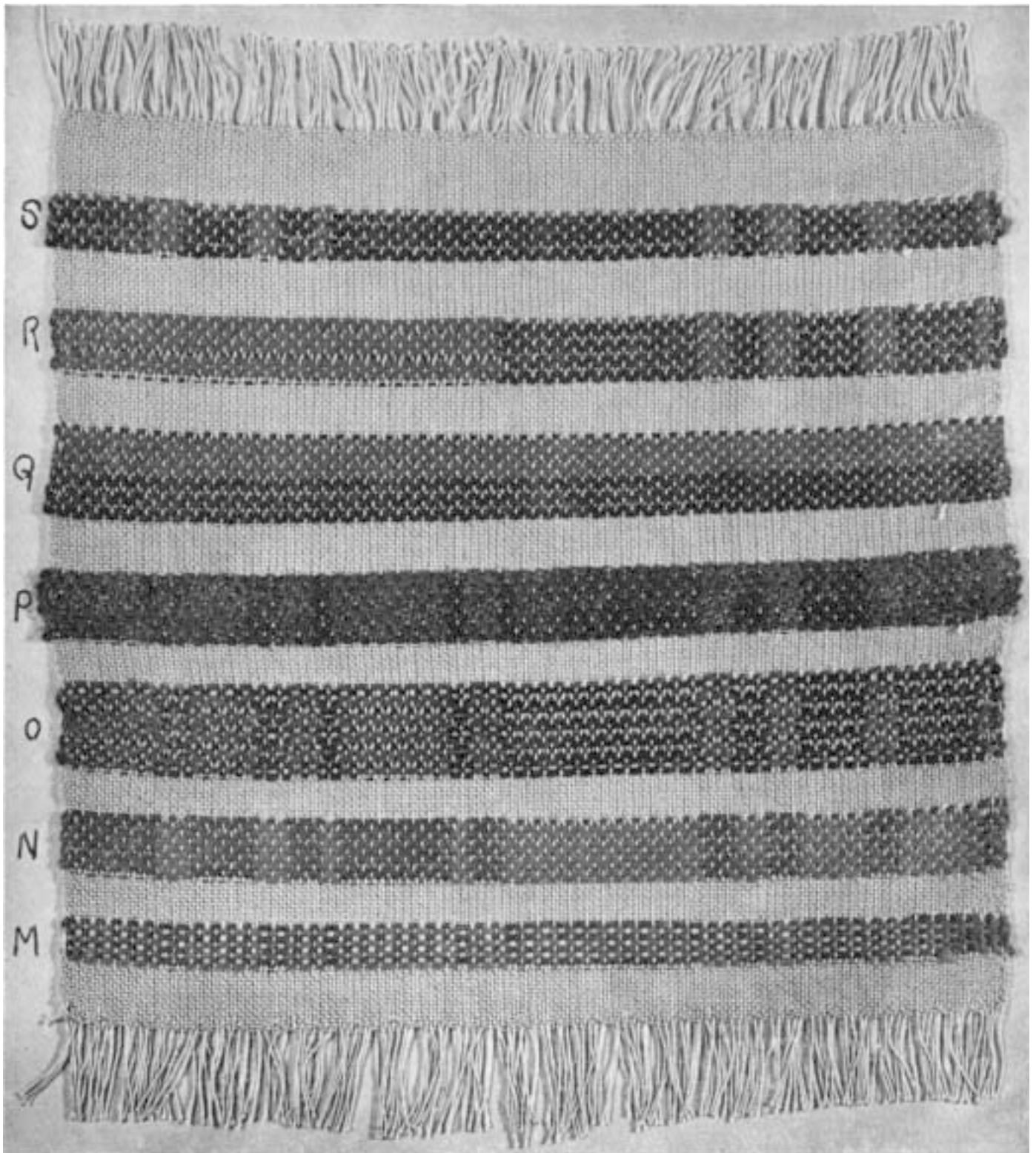


Figure 4





For luncheon sets, the usual 40/2 Linen Warp at thirty or thirty-two per inch may be woven with the same weft yarns as are used for any linen weave. If the wefts are nicely balanced, the weave is more attractive when done in pairs. A tabby binder is always better with linens than a binder on opposites. A very formal and gorgeous luncheon set was done in white silk and silver. 20/2 white silk was used for both warp and weft, — thirty-two per inch. The “silver”

was a very narrow flat cellophane which, according to the manufacturer, “won’t tarnish in a hundred years”.

This “new” method that isn’t new at all, has kept several students as well as their teacher vastly entertained and very busy during the past several weeks, and every week something new and interesting about it develops. Here’s hoping that many more will find as much pleasure in it and that more steps in the evolution will be found.