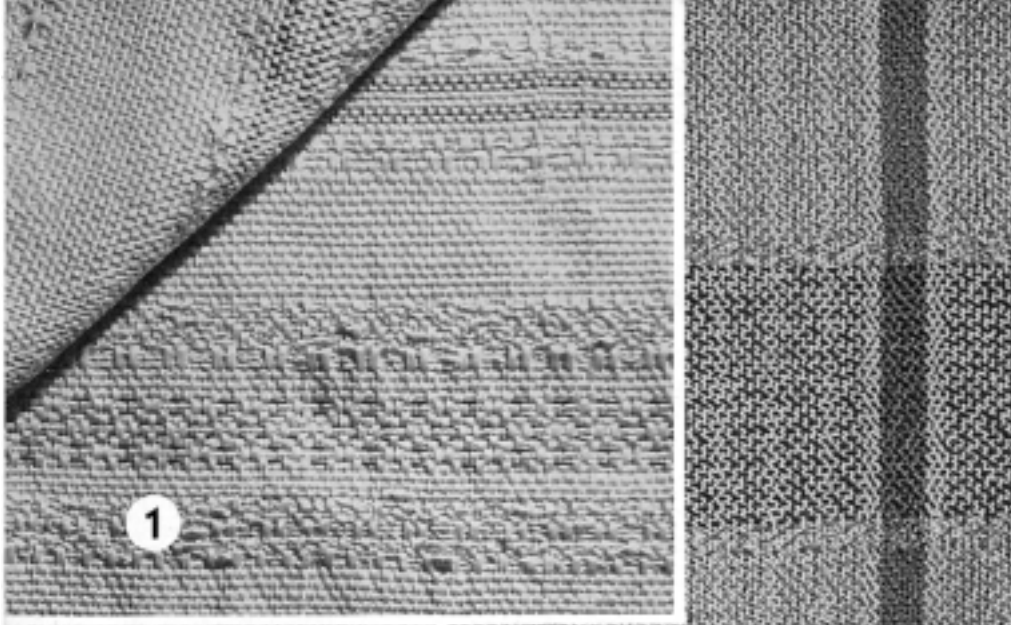

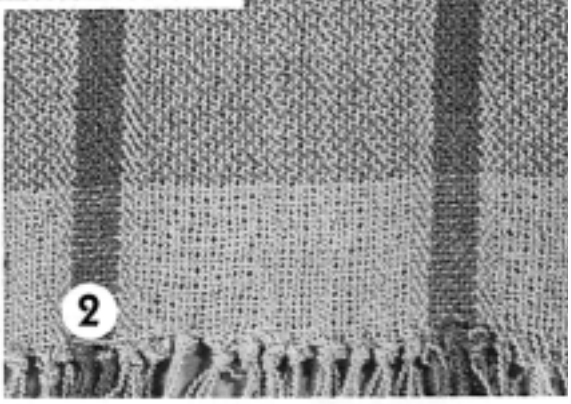

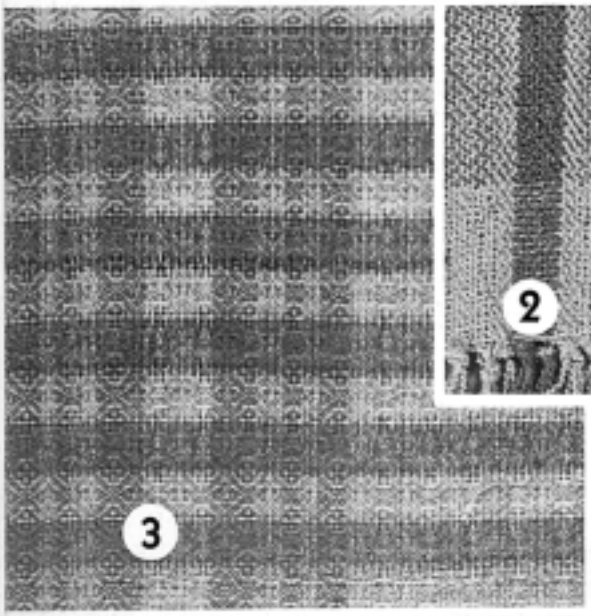

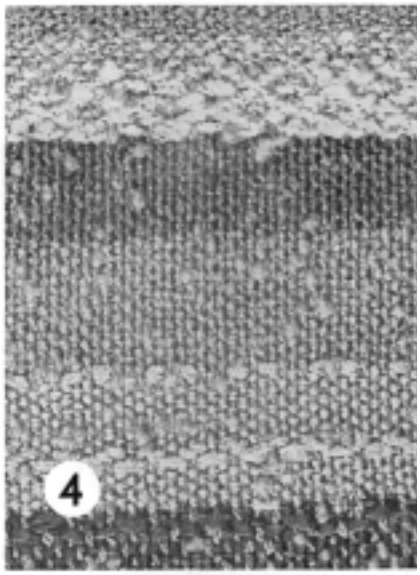

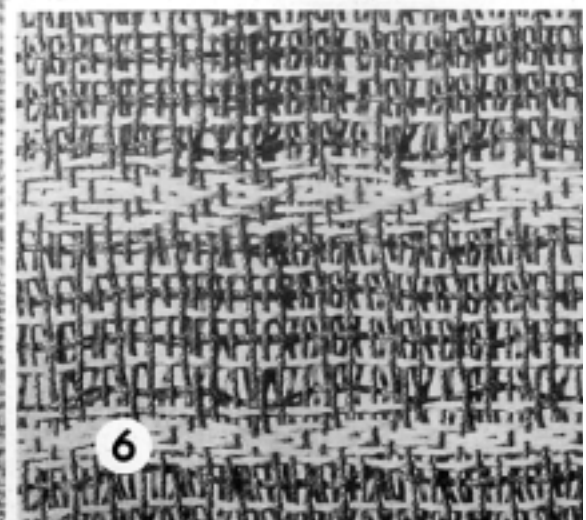

WHAT KINDS OF YARNS FOR HANDWEAVING ?

More than one might think

By MYRTLE A. BROWN

THE FIRST and most important question for the weaver involves the materials—what to use and where to get them. An obvious statement, but not so obvious to the weaver from another country who recently was buying yarns in New York which she could not get in her own country because of conditions arising from government trade restrictions. She was spending her entire traveler's allowance for purchases of yarns.

All over the world, craftsmen are subject to the vicissitudes of export and import quotas, the vagaries of exchange, government agricultural programs, and many other factors which also limit the activities of other groups. Craftsmen are not, however, limited in the use of their ingenuity and imagination. Perhaps the yarns the visitor wanted may not be sold in her country as weaving yarns—or even as yarns. String, however, is a cotton yarn, as well as a material for tying up packages, and most countries have string available.

Going back into history we find all countries had their weavers—noted for

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1. *Hanging, white ribbon and silver thread. Shown at 1949 International Textile Exhibition.*
2. *Hanging, rayon boucle warp, floss and copper metal weft, in tones of tan and brown. Woven by Marc La Roque, Universal School of Handicrafts.*
3. *Table mat, Tensolite (plastic covered fiberglas). Red and clear glass.*
4. *Wool warp, ribbon weft, pastel tones, blue predominating. Rose path threading.*
5. *Curtain, Linen, 40/2, warp, slub rayon weft. Woven in M's and O's.*
6. *Brown navy cord warp, fiberglas and navy cord weft. Twill weave.*

Photographs by EDWARD SCHWARTZ

Mrs. Myrtle A. Brown is head of the weaving department at the Universal School of Handicrafts, New York City, and president of the New York Handweavers Guild. Formerly a professional singer and business woman, she took up weaving as a hobby in 1937 when she was working as a saleswoman for one of America's best known cosmeticians. She traveled by car, taking her 12-inch loom along. When she was settled for the night or for a weekend, the loom went into the hotel along with the luggage. She spent her evenings practising weaving. Upon retiring as a saleswoman, Mrs. Brown found that her hobby had developed into a thriving personal business.

silk and ramie in China, linen in Egypt, cotton in India, and metal threads in Persia. The Europeans used the wool from their sheep, grew their own flax and retted it, then spun it into linen. All these people had to process their own threads by hard labor while we, the weavers of today, may go a few steps from our homes to procure all these natural threads already processed, each for its own special use. Added to these are all the new synthetic yarns such as viscose rayon, acetate rayon, protein fiber yarns, nylon, vinyon, as well as numberless other materials.

One has only to go on a foraging tour of any town or city to find both exciting and useful materials. In the millinery section we find braids, velvet ribbons, and all other kinds of ribbon. The dressmaking suppliers also carry braids, cords, soutache and metal threads of all kinds. Visit a sporting goods store and you find strong, flexible, fine silk cord otherwise known as fish-line. These cords range up to quite heavy types and are very useful in shade making. If you are looking for a still different kind of cord, visit a

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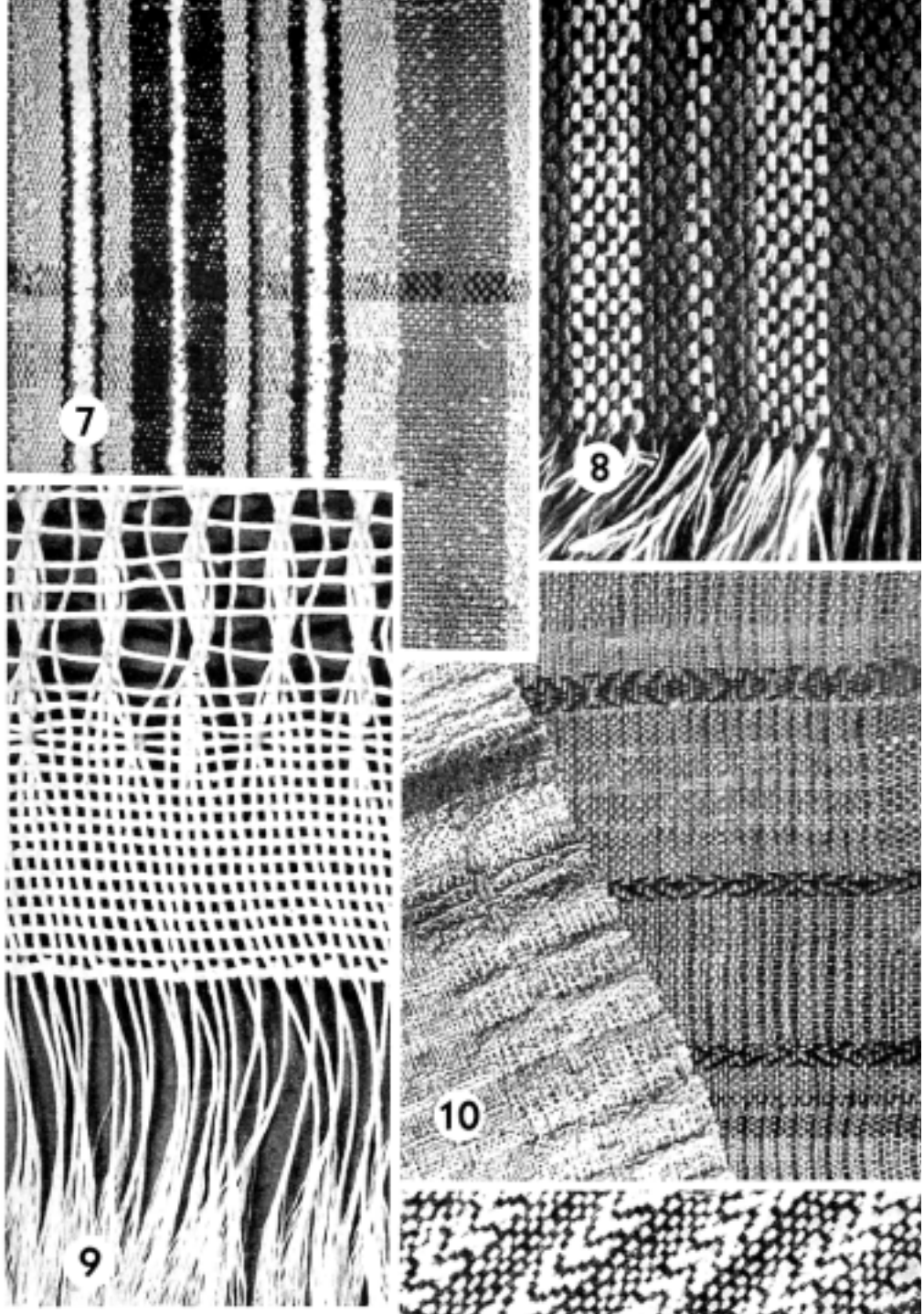

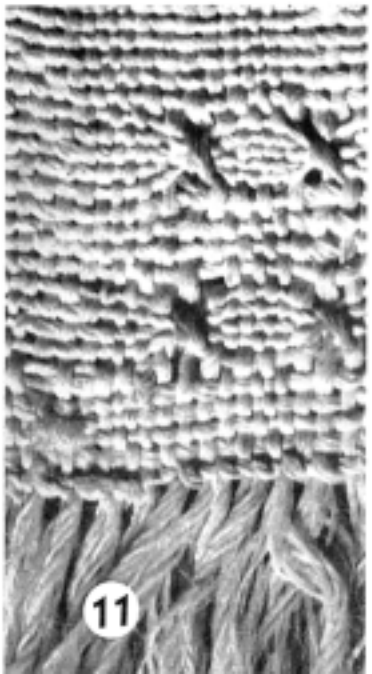

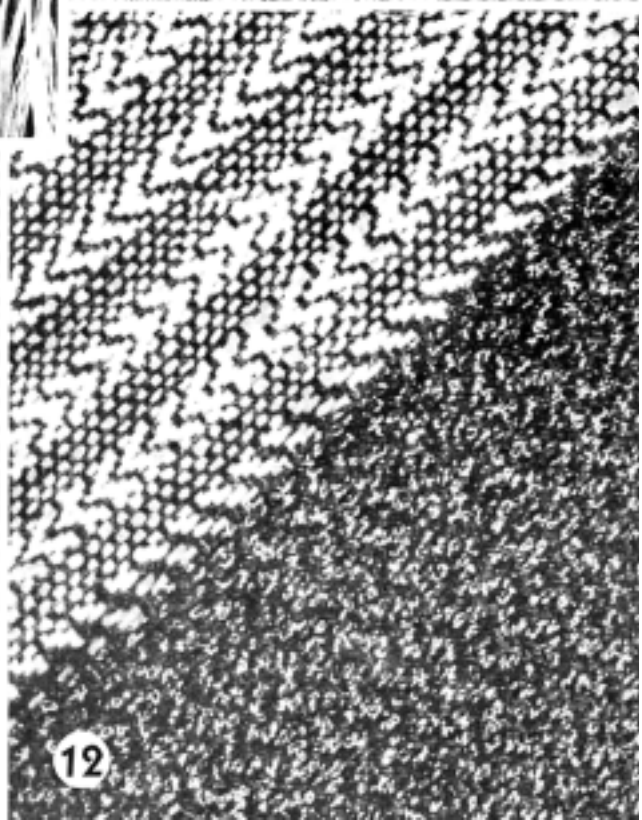

7. *Upholstery fabric woven from eight kinds of knitting yarn, usually used for various apparel fabrics.*
8. *Place mat, deep blue, green and yellow stripes, 10/5 linen and flax embroidery yarn.*
9. *Place mat, Fiberglas in Brooks bouquet pattern. Woven by John Berg of Universal School of Handicrafts.*
10. *Table mats — left, rayon, cotton, chenille, and viscose. Right, linen slub, cellophane, and straw (washable).*
11. *Mat of crochet straw, pale yellow, color in border. Rosepath threading spaced in reed.*
12. *Upholstery fabric. Black boucle de laine, white afghan wool. Twill threading.*

all the patterns illustrated here will be displayed, together with smaller items like handbags, pin cushions, foot stools, and others, made up from handwoven fabrics especially designed for these types of articles.

As far as the finishing of cloths woven from these yarns is concerned, it is recommended that only high quality soap flakes are used.

The addition of a small amount of ammonia (not more than four tablespoonsful for 5 yards of cloth) when rinsing will not only help to neutralize the fabric and remove all soap, but also will brighten the colors. Care must be taken not to add too much ammonia, because it is dangerous to both colors and texture of the cloth if used in large quantities. All the colors in these yarns are said to be completely fast to washing and milling under normal commercial conditions.

These yarns were first introduced to craftsmen at the Gatlinburg Fair last year when handwoven fabrics by well-known weavers were displayed, and Miss Berta Frey of New York demonstrated on a handloom. The exhibit also was shown at the Southern Highlands Workshop held at the Penland School of Handicrafts in September, 1949.

TWEEDS FOR SUITS AND COATS

No. 1—Oxford Gray, predominating, with natural and pale orange in both warp and weft. Flecks of red and green enliven the pattern. Beehive "Tweed" and "Woodpecker" yarns. Woven by Lilian Hunter of Bethel, Vermont.

No. 2—Soft beige and tan combined with checking threads of blue and green, woven with Tam O'Shanter "Worsted" and Beehive "Tweed." Weaver—Winogene Redding, Wollaston, Massachusetts.

No. 3—Stripes in muted heather shades with brown and green predominating in Beehive "Tweed" yarn. Woven by Lilian Hunter of Bethel, Vermont.

No. 4—Handsome stripes in shades of blue with a soft tan and fine black line. Beehive "Tweed" and Tam O'Shanter "Worsted." Woven by Winogene Redding, Wollaston, Massachusetts.

No. 5—Striking "Glenurquhart" check of royal blue and tartan wool separated with checking threads of red and green. Tam O'Shanter "Worsted" and Beehive tartan yarn. Woven by Berta Frey of New York.

No. 6—Plaid in checks of soft heather shades—tan, rust, green, and beige of Beehive "Tweed" yarn. Also by Lilian Hunter.

Detailed directions can be obtained by writing HANDWEAVER AND CRAFTSMAN.

What Yarns . . .

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twine shop where you may procure twine and hemp cords of all sizes and description.

Now come the unfamiliar materials used by weavers in the cities. By unfamiliar sources of supply I mean the lumber yard and knit-wood companies where one purchases rounds, half-rounds and flats in walnut, mahogany and dowels of all sizes in all widths and lengths, used in luncheon sets and shade making.

All craft suppliers have an infinite number of materials in jute, raffia, reed, cotton novelty yarns and leather lacing. On the very new side we find suppliers of plastic yarns, tubing, tapes, and extruded materials. Then we have Fibreglas and Tensolite, a plastic-covered glass.

Since texture as well as pattern is now the vogue, these wonderful threads give us every advantage to create materials suitable for all purposes. The following list gives the sources from which the threads are made:

Vegetable: Linen, cotton, ramie, grasses, reeds, sugarcane, hemp, sisal, wood, raffia, banana palms, pineapple palms, maguey.

Animal: wool (from sheep, goats, llamas, vicunas), hair (from horses, cows, angora rabbits, cats, and dogs), silk, aralac, lanitol.

Mineral: asbestos, metallics (lamé), slag wool, Fibreglas, tinsel.

Synthetics: cellophane, nylon, rayon, and others.

To break down the broad classifications let us consider wool. Knitting wool, for instance, is not generally considered a suitable yarn for weaving. It is heavier than weaving yarn, more loosely twisted, and designed to be formed into a garment on needles. However, many knitting wools can be used also for weaving. In the drapery fabric shown here, eight kinds of knitting yarn were used. These are the yarns commonly used for a wide variety of apparel fabrics, sports to fine daytime weaves. This fabric can be used for upholstery also.

Crochet cottons also provide materials for handweavers. For place mats and other dainty articles, 10, 20, 30 or finer weights are desirable. "Bedspread" cottons and candlewick work well for heavier mats. Varied textures can be produced with these cotton yarns, by mixing the so-called knitting and crochet threads. The old favorite type of string, made of bright-colored twisted cotton, now used by many specialty shops, would be interesting to experiment with.

Embroidery flax can be used effectively in combination with linen or other yarns, or linen and embroidery floss, such as the mat illustrated here. In this piece an almost iridescent effect resulted from the combination.

The straw mat pictured here, in soft yellow with a blue border, is a practicable piece, which has been washed many times. The material was picked up in a junk shop.

Although plastics are attracting many weavers, they are not yet, in my opinion, practicable. Difficult to clean except with a damp cloth, and expensive to make, they are still only an experimental material for the handweaver. Fiberglas Corporation, however, is now developing textured yarns, such as boucle, either in all glass or plastic coated glass, which will be especially suitable for handweaving.

While nylon threads are scarce, other nylon materials are obtainable such as nylon parachute cord, to be found in Army surplus stores. For weaving, the center cord is removed. The material dyes well and has been used satisfactorily for place mats, bags of various kinds, and rugs.

Silk is again becoming available and can be employed in many ways, either by itself or with other materials. Sometimes it can be substituted for metallics, giving somewhat the same effect, or even a more interesting texture. Ribbons also give delightful textures. In weaving ribbons, remember that the ribbon must stand straight on edge in the heddle.

The inventive and the experimental weaver is in demand now. He gets that way by actually experimenting—collect-

[*Continued on Page 56*

cludes a list of fifty such members, together with a tabulation of the types of articles they weave to sell. This information will be utilized in an expanded sales program of the League, now under consideration.

Functioning as a League guild, the New Hampshire Weavers plan the demonstrations and exhibits for the weaving and spinning at the summer Fair. Last summer, this activity attracted many visitors and much favorable comment. Various types of looms were used and different stages of the weaving process were demonstrated, including the warping of a loom. • • •

What Yarns . . .

Continued from Page 41]

ing all kinds of samples of yarns, designing his fabrics to use his materials to the greatest extent of their possibilities, and then working them out on his looms. These samples, moreover, should be attractive in themselves—properly finished on the edges and nicely mounted when shown. Nothing brings out the quality of his idea more than a properly prepared sample. And he never knows who is going to come around to see what he is doing. There are alsc many uses for samples which imaginative weavers can develop, to help pay for the materials required. • • •

Personal *Mention*

EDMUND A. LUCEY

Edmund A. Lucey writes with professional authority on the subject of finishing handwoven materials. He is a consultant engineer of Manchester, Connecticut, engaged on problems of dyeing and finishing and in conducting research on dyes.

Mr. Lucey is intensely interested in handweaving. He says there is no better way for anyone in the textile industry to improve his knowledge of fabrics than to work on handlooms at home. And this advice is meant for those already in executive positions as well as for workers in minor jobs.

A graduate of the Lowell Textile Institute in the woolen and worsted manufacturing course, Mr. Lucey was trained in the analysis, design and construction of cloth and their tie-up with handweaving and finishing.

His professional career covers a wide textile field. Starting at a large cotton mill, he worked through all departments and on all operations, finally becoming superintendent. He did special work at a linen thread mill and later superintended two cotton finishing plants—one on light fabrics, the other on sheetings and shirtings.

As a consulting engineer on full-time he has worked for a big worsted mill making women's dress goods and for the largest silk mills in this country. On part-time, he has been consultant to a silk mill manufacturing sewing and embroidery threads and also to about a dozen small woolen and worsted mills.

MARION CLEMENTS

Despite the handicap of 50 per cent hearing, incurred when she was 19, Marion Clements does a full time job as the head of the hospital laboratory in her home town of Abingdon, Virginia, runs a weaving room as a hobby, has just completed a term as president of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, and recently opened her own gift store featuring handicrafts.

Some 10 years ago Miss Clements decided she needed a hobby in handicrafts and after careful research she started weaving. Hours were spent learning from a book and correcting mistakes. Local women became interested in her work and asked for instruction. Soon she was in the business of weaving. She

Marion Clements (standing) working with a student in her studio at Abingdon, Virginia.