

1277 N. Ave. 1

Allanstand 
Cottage Industries



Woman's Board of Home Missions of
the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York City

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In a nook of Buncombe County, about nine years ago, a settlement was formed with a day school as its nucleus. The two or three women who made a home together in the little cottage near the school-house found many avenues of approach to their neighbors, but a problem faced them such as meets every one who sets himself to social service, namely, how to bring material help to the poorer among these neighbors without hampering them, or injuring their self-respect. It was through a gift from a well-to-do woman in the Cove that the end of a clew was found which

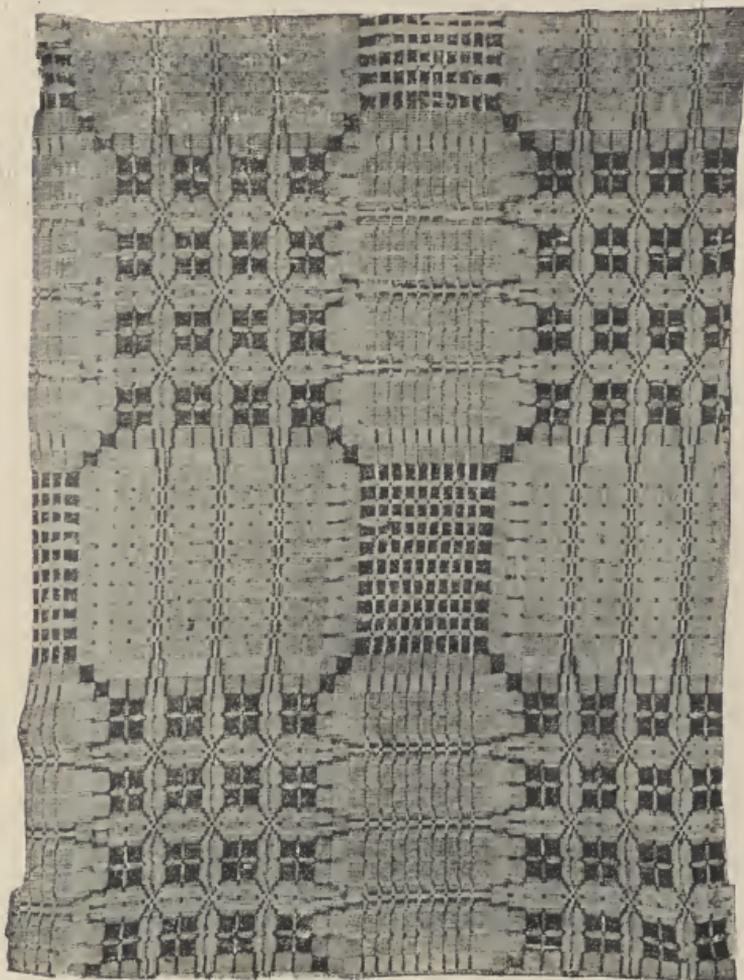


THE BLUE POT

has lead to a partial solution. This gift was a home-woven coverlet, forty years old, slightly faded, but still beautiful in its golden brown and cream white hues.

The art of making these coverlets has never been wholly lost in the Southern mountains, though in many places like the cove in question it had been abandoned, and very few of the younger women in any locality understand this more intricate kind of weaving. But though the looms had been burned as rubbish, the spinning-wheel still held its place on the

porch of the homes, and we determined to make a beginning by having the yarn prepared for a few coverlets. Wool was purchased of farmers in the next valley and given out to spinners to be carded and spun by hand. The coloring was the next business. Diamond dyes had been adopted for the linsey and for the stocking yarn made at home, and it was a matter of time to learn from the older women the secrets of the indigo pot and of



THE SEVEN STARS PATTERN

the coloring with barks and leaves. We learned that for the best results the indigo dye should be used before the wool was spun. Whence the old phrase, "dyed in the wool." The formula for a blue pot demanded, besides the indigo, bran, madder and lye, patience, till the pot set beside the hearth to keep it at the right temperature saw fit to "come." Then the dipping of the wool began. For a deep blue this dipping must be repeated five or

six times, and the pot "renewed up" between times, as the strength of the color was exhausted. The coloring with madder was less of a circumstance. Gradually we learned of many other dyes, of leaves and barks and flowers, giving us a variety of soft hues—browns, yellows, greens, orange, and also an excellent black. The true green is obtained by dyeing first with a yellow dye, and then dipping in the blue pot, but a good olive green is given by using hickory bark. Every year we have the "yellow dye flower" gathered and the "bay leaves" dried and kept for winter use.

But to return to the beginnings. When yarn enough for three coverlets had been prepared, the next step was to find a weaver of the double draft—that is, of the coverlet material with shotover designs. This requires four sets of harness in the loom, instead of two as for plain cloth, and four treadles as well. The warp is "drawn in" and the weaving "tramped" according to a paper pattern which is pinned up on the front of the loom. A number of women in the Cove knew well how to weave plain linsey and jeans, but no one could weave the coverlets. Sixteen miles away, and further from the railroad, we found a family where mother and daughters had great store of spreads, old and new, to which they were continually adding. As they showed these treasures to us, the variety of designs was bewildering. At last we chose two patterns, and the women undertook to weave our yarn for us. It was an exciting moment when, two weeks later, our messenger returned, carrying across his horse's back the long roll of weaving. Now came the question whether there was a market for such work. This was soon ascertained. Our first coverlets were sold in a few weeks, and the demand for more was enough to justify at least a small start in business. So an enterprising young woman near us volunteered to learn the double draft. A loom was found for sale in the Ivy country, and hauled to us, more wool bought, and more spinners set to work.

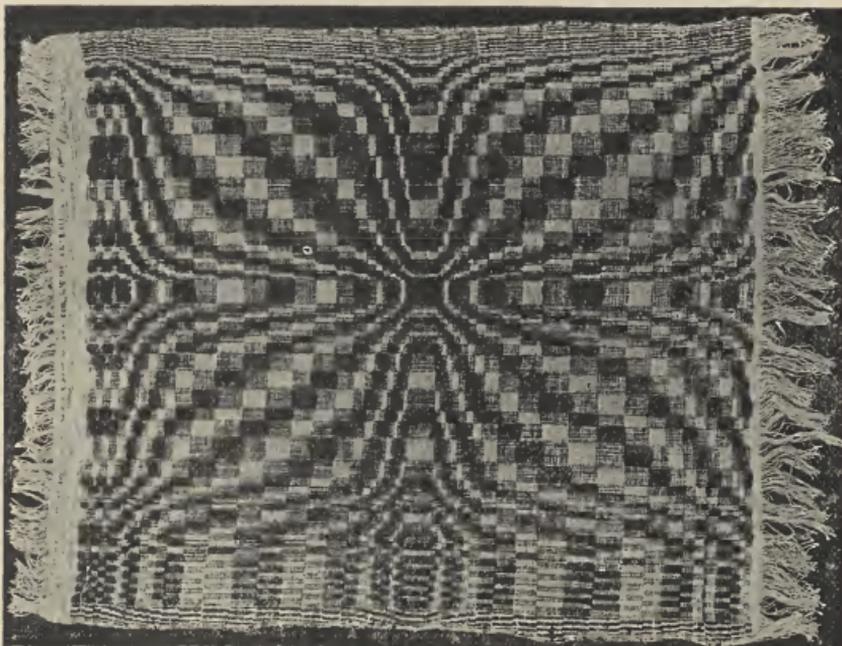
Soon after this the Cove was left to the care of others, while I went to a part of the country more remote from towns and railroads, and where the people were begging for schools. The first settlement was made at Allanstand, and four others have sprung up around it on the waters of Laurel. It is in this part of the mountains that most of our knowledge of dyes and weaving has been gained, for more of the thrifty old-time ways have been kept. The work is still carried on in Buncombe County, but Allanstand has become the center of our cottage industries.

Among these the coverlet weaving holds the first place. The material in 27-inch and 38-inch widths is woven, not only for bedspreads, but for couch covers, tablecloths, portieres and other hangings. Orders have never been wanting. On the smaller table covers three inches of the white cotton warp is left as a fringe on either end. A handsome fringe of cotton yarn is knotted by hand to border the spreads when such a finish is desired. For a bedspread two or three breadths are carefully matched in pattern by the weaver so as to be joined—as were the old New England spreads. It is often thought that those spreads were woven in one piece, but all that I have examined were woven in strips. The hand looms in use here do not allow of a web wider than 38 or 40 inches, and this is as far a reach as the weaver can make to throw the shuttle in from each side.

The background of the cloth is of white cotton in which the colored

woollen yarn forms the pattern. As some of our customers asked for an all-cotton fabric, we set a lowland woman spinning the raw cotton into a soft yarn, and this, colored with vegetable dyes, takes the place of the wool in some of our webs. The result is pleasing, the pattern more clear cut, not blurred, as with the heavier woollen threads. For some uses it is more desirable than the wool and cotton material, but it must always remain a matter of taste as to which gives the better effect.

Every old weaver has her set of "drafts" or patterns, in which the number and position of the threads are indicated for her guidance. We have collected over 70 of these, some of which are similar or identical under different names. Counting out such duplicates, there are perhaps 50 patterns in our draft book. Twelve or more of the best of them are in



THE DOUBLE BOW-KNOT

constant use in filling orders. A few are very decorative, such as the Rattlesnake, and Double-bowknot. The names are a reflection of the lives of the people for more than a century. We may guess that St. Anne's Robe and Irish Chain were among the drafts brought from the old country by the Scotch-Irish settlers. Braddock's defeat is still commemorated by a stiff pattern, in which we can almost see the ranks of British regulars marching to their fate. Other patterns with names historic or political are "President's View," "Polk and Dallas," "Whig Rose," "Jefferson Davis," and "Abraham Lincoln's Destruction." The last two were given me by a weaver whose family must have been in the minority in this section, which was so largely Union in sentiment. The "Beauty of Kaintuck," "World's Wonder," "Wheel of Fortune," "Missouri Trouble,"

"Olive Leaf," "Noah's Wonder," "Philadelphia Pavement," "Pine Burr," "Pine Knot," "Rocky Mountain Cucumber," "Big Works of Tennessee," "Cup and Saucer," "Winding Vine," "Sea Shell," "Sea Star," "Stair Steps and Honeycomb," "The Flower," and the "Young Man's Fancy" are other names.

To meet a demand for floor rugs for country houses, or for bathroom mats, a heavier material is made in which the yarn is doubled and twisted. These have become very popular on account of their beauty and the ease with which they are cleaned.

Linsey, too, is made for sale, a material with cotton chain and wool filling. Black sheep's wool, with a touch of white wool mixed in, woven in the "600" full-sleyed or "thirderd" on a cotton warp dyed black with white walnut roots and sumac berries, makes a soft, thick cloth suitable for mountain skirts. Indigo blue wool, mixed with a little white or red, and woven on a blue warp, has a good effect, and there is a plain white, too, and madder red.



WEAVING THE COVERLETS

Something has been attempted in raising and working flax, but the processes of watering, breaking, scotching, hackling and spinning are so tedious by hand, and so expensive, that in the success and pressure of the coverlet weaving little attention has been given to this industry.

The weaving of silk scraps into tapestry has been carried on for some time, and good effects are obtained by choosing well the color for the warp and arranging the silks in irregular stripes with sharp contrasts or melting from one shade into another. A number of my neighbors are busy making shuck hats of the inner husk of corn. These find a ready sale, for they are light in weight and dainty as well as durable. The making of baskets after the traditional mountain shape is an industry that promises well, our specialty being the use of splints colored brown with a bark dye.

Places like Asheville offer a market to the product of local curiosities, and those who live within easy reach of towns may safely be left to find this opportunity for themselves. It has been our aim to revive the old industries, which were fast disappearing, and to bring interest and thrift and habits of self-help to those who, by reason of the conditions of their lives, shut in by mountains and streams, are unable to find a market for the artistic work they can produce.

ALLANSTAND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES.
PRICE LIST.

Coverlet material, light weight, for bedspreads, couch covers, hangings and table covers:

Wool and cotton, 37 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.50
Wool and cotton, 27 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.20
Cotton, 37 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.25
Cotton, 27 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.00

Coverlet material, heavy weight, for rugs:

Wool and cotton, 37 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.60
Wool and cotton, 27 inches wide, per yard,	\$1.25

Linsey, 36 inches wide, from 85c. to \$1.25 per yard, according to color.

The coverlet material in both light and heavy weights is made to order in any length or number of lengths desired. The breadths are matched in pattern as well as is possible in handwork.

Owing to the conditions under which the work is done, orders cannot be promised for a definite time, but are filled as early as possible.

Bedspreads embroidered in homespun cotton, blue, red and green, on hand woven cotton material, cream white, designs original, price from \$7.50 to \$9.00. Fringe for bedspreads, handmade, light weight, per yard, 20c. Heavy, knotted fringe, per yard, \$1.00.

Silk tapestry, 36 inches wide, from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per yard. Those who wish their own silks cut and woven can have this work done for 75c. per yard, but we do not in such cases pay express charges either way.

For rugs the following patterns are among the most suitable:

Double Snow Ball.	Wheel of Fortune.
Troublesome Knot.	Chariot Wheel.

For the lighter weight, for hangings, etc.:

Double Bow Knot.	Seven Stars.
Four Wheels.	Beauty of Kentucky.
Wheel of Fortune.	Pineburr.
Rattlesnake.	Whig Rose.
Double Snowball.	Orange Peeling.

Hats from \$1.00 to \$1.25, according to size and the fineness of braid.

Braid for hats, 5c. per yard.

Baskets sent only in lots of ½ doz. or more to one address:

Large size,	80c. each
Medium size,	65c. each
Small size,	50c. each

These prices include express charges or postage to consumer in any part of the United States.

For further information address

MISS FRANCES L. GOODRICH,

Allanstand, N. C.

