

Weaving in Canadian Homes

By M. E. DIGNAM

AMONG the pioneer industries that have sprung up out of necessity, none was more important than weaving. Each province had its distinctive development. In Quebec, in the production of homespun, French traditions were strongest. In some places along the St. Lawrence, however, Scotch influence was also evident.

In Ontario, in early days, there were many looms, and homespun was well known in the country homes. German thrift was an element in the industry, having no small influence in preserving interest in hand work.

In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island there were French and Scotch settlements where good weaving was done and where the home workers aimed at something more than mere necessity required. Considerable skill was attained in dyeing, spinning, in the combination of colours and in workmanship.

These industries never quite died out but there came a time when no interest was taken in them, and spinning and weaving were only done in the homes where strong warm clothing was needed and there was no other way of procuring it. To-day, throughout the world, there is a revival of interest in handicrafts and Canada must have her part in that awakening.

In Quebec the wheel and loom are again in more general use. A slow but steadily increasing demand is arousing an impulse in the Maritime Provinces.

Through the many exhibitions of the Women's Art Association of Canada, public attention was first drawn to the fact that there existed conditions which might be worth cultivating. In the strenuous efforts made by the Association to create interest in art it was found that Canada was behind in the development of handicrafts and home industries. In other countries people were being helped by the revival of lace-making, spinning and weaving. In Italy, beautiful antique designs were being adapted to modern requirements and again brought

into the market. In England and Scotland the homespun were being used by both men and women for rough dressing in the country. In Ireland a similar revival was being brought about, furnishing great resource to the people. In Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Switzerland, equally good results were being obtained.

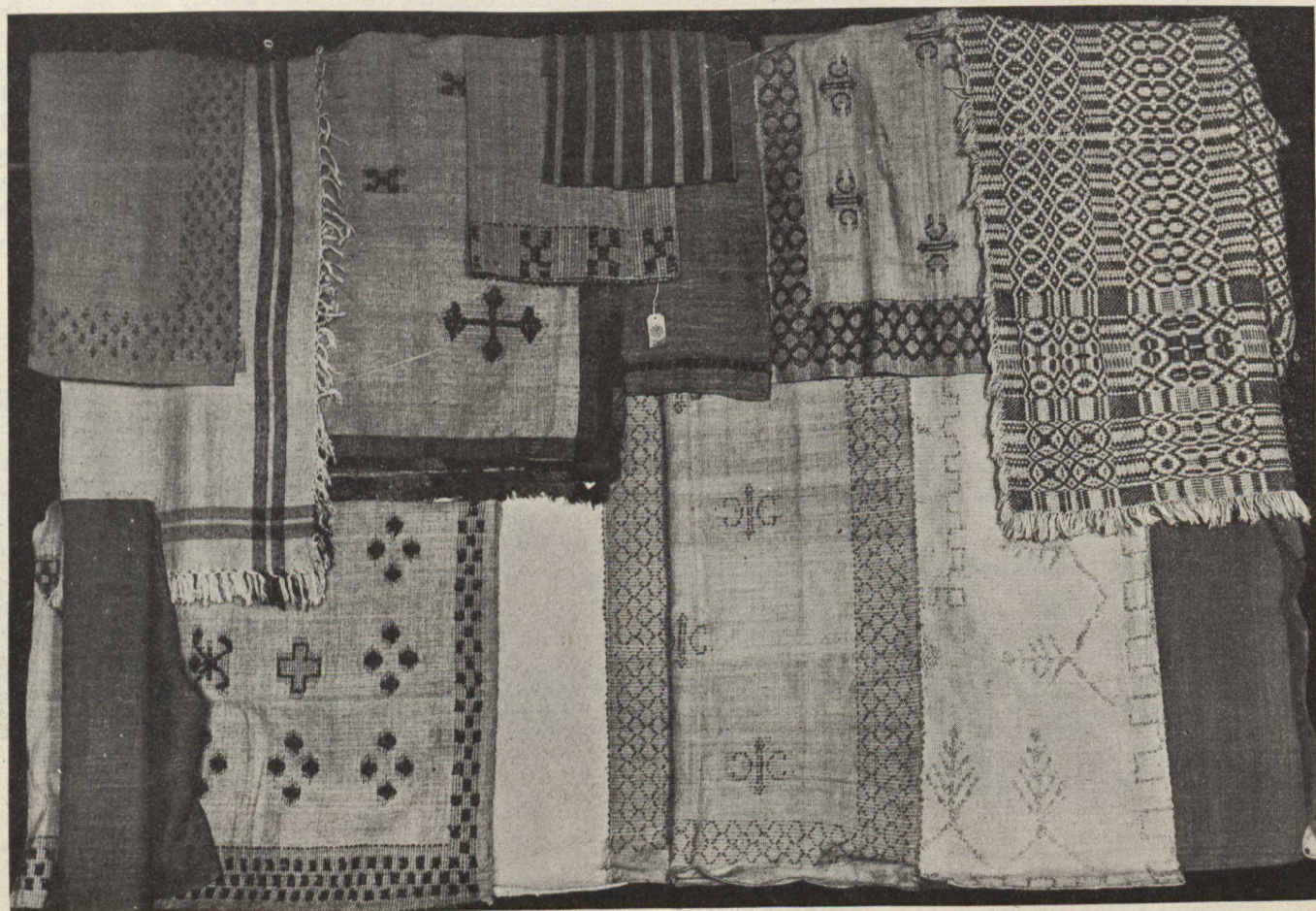
The Association found an open field in Quebec, the women responding readily to the interest taken in their weaving and to directions given them, with the result that now they do better work in dyeing, spinning and weaving than they had ever done before.

During the last ten years the Association has held exhibitions of home industries—a large part of which was the work of the women of Quebec, in the chief cities and towns of Canada, from New Westminster, B.C., to Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Exhibitions and sales have been arranged in many places in Europe, and a depot has been established at 52 New Bond Street, London, England, for the sale of Canadian "Homespun." Orders have recently been received from Italy Sicily, Holland and France.

The Canadian "Homespun" are well known in the United States, where keen interest is always taken in good distinctive work, and notwithstanding the almost prohibitive duty, since the large exhibit made by the Association in the Canadian Building at the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, a considerable and increasing quantity finds its way to the United States from the Association. Many thousands of dollars' worth of orders are sent to the workers by the Association each year, giving directions for dyeing and weaving combinations of colours and spacings, with the result that not only has a revival been brought about but great progress has been made over the work of pioneer days.

The "tufted" portieres and couvertures of Quebec—a tradition of Brittany—have become almost endless in



Some Linen Articles Woven by French-Canadian Women in their Homes.