

THE FINISH OF EDGES

By MARY M. ATWATER

How to finish the edges of a woven piece is one of the minor problems of the textile craftsman, but it is often a troublesome detail. And important, too, for nothing detracts more from the final effect than a poor or unsuitable finish.

Most familiar forms of finish are the plain hem, the rolled hem cross-stitched in color, and the hem-stitched hem—all finishes made with the needle—and fringes tied in an ordinary overhand knot, as is the common practise for rugs. I shall say nothing about these forms of finish in the following notes, as they are too well known to most people to require comment.

To fringe or not to fringe the ends of ones runner, scarf, rug, girdle or what-not—this is the problem that many people find hard to decide. It is first and foremost a question of style. There are elaborately fringed years, and years in which all fringes are taboo. That simplifies matters. Unfortunately there are also other years when one may fringe or not as one chooses, and that's when the matter becomes a problem. In a general way it may be said that if the warp is much finer than the weft, and is spaced fairly far apart, the skimpy warp-fringe that results is anything but handsome and an unfringed finish is desirable. If one feels the necessity of a fringe on such a piece it is necessary to use an applied fringe, separately woven, or to tie in fringe material along the edges.

On the other hand, in the case of certain warp-face fabrics—the popular belt-weaves, for instance—the warp-fringes are rich and handsome and add a great deal to the effect.

Fringes, of course, are not a complete finish in themselves. That is to say one does not simply stop weaving and cut a length of unwoven warp. The edge of the weaving must be held in some fashion to prevent ravelling.

For the fringed ends of a fine linen piece, such as a table mat, the finish may be made in the loom. Weave across in the manner of the Spanish open-work weave. That is to say, open a tabby shed and take the shuttle from right to left under eight of the raised threads. Change the shed and weave back from left to right under four threads. Change the shed and weave forward under eight; change the shed and weave back under four. This has somewhat the effect of a hem-stitch done with the needle but does not hold the edge as firmly. However, if two or three rows of the Spanish stitch are woven, with care to make the turns at a different place on each row, this will hold well enough. It is a good

idea, however, to weave in several shots of tabby after the finish, and beat them up well. Leave these shots in place till after the piece has been washed, then take them out.

Coverlets in wool and cotton, in overshot or summer and winter weave, are not as a rule finished with fringes,—the pattern borders giving a satisfactorily finished appearance. If a fringe is desired this should be woven separately and applied, as the warp in such pieces makes a very skimpy fringe. The coverlet illustrated on page 214 of my Shuttle-Craft Book shows an applied fringe of this order.

Fringes are easy enough to weave by several different methods. Illustration No. 1 shows such a fringe as made on an "inkle" loom. In a similar manner the thing may be done in card-weaving or on any ordinary harness loom. Simply set up the warp for a narrow heading in warp-face effect. That is, set the warp-ends close enough to cover the weft completely. The heading may be plain, as in the illustration cited above, or may be in colors and in a simple pattern. Weave the heading with a small shuttle carrying material like the warp, and lay in the fringe material through each shed, or through every other shed. The fringe material should be coarse or in strands of several ends. It may be cut the desired length by winding over a book or other suitable gauge, and should be made twice the length of the desired fringes. Take a strand through the shed and on the following shed double it back. If a picot edge is desired, tie an overhand knot at the center of each strand of fringe material and permit these knots to protrude along the unfringed edge of the heading. The weaving with the shuttle holds the heading, and fringes made in this manner need not be knotted unless one wishes.

Another way to make a woven fringe—but only on a fairly wide harness loom—is to set up the little warp for the heading at one side of the loom, and at the other side of the loom set up four coarse threads to serve as guides. The distance between these threads and the heading should be spaced for the length of fringe desired. Weave with two shuttles—a small shuttle carrying material like the warp and a large shuttle carrying the coarse fringe-material. Weave back and forth across the heading with the small shuttle and take the large shuttle all across to engage the spacing threads. When the fringe has been woven these threads may be taken out and the ends of the fringe may then be cut or left in loops as preferred.

Still another method, on a loom of sufficient width, is to set up two headings, one on either side of the loom, with a space between them equal to twice the length of fringe desired. Weave with three shuttles—a small shuttle for each of the headings and a single large shuttle for the fringes. The small shuttles weave back and forth across the headings only, while the large shuttle weaves through both headings, all across the loom. In this manner two lengths of fringe may be woven at the same time, and are cut apart later through the center of the unwoven space between the headings.

These fringes should be woven very firmly, the headings beaten as close as possible.

The fringe material may be all in one color, or may be in bands of different colors, as shown on the illustration.

Whether such applied fringes are desirable or not is a matter of style and taste. To me they always have an artificial appearance, as they do not result directly from the weave, but this is no doubt nothing but a personal prejudice.

Extra fringes may be added to a woven piece by drawing strands of fringe-material through the selvages or the heading, using a crochet hook. Cut the fringe material twice as long as the desired length of fringe, fold the strand over and draw the loop through the fabric for an inch or so. Now take the two ends of the fringe through the loop and draw tight.

The material for the knotted fringes seen on many old white cotton counterpanes is usually put in in the above manner, though a separately woven fringe may also be used. Illustration No. 2 shows a typical simple fringe of this type knotted in staggered rows of the "Solomon Knot" described in a previous article. This form of knotting is, of course, macramé, and very elaborate effects can be produced if one wishes. For patterns and details consult any of the books on macramé, or the book on knotting and fancy rope-work cited in the previous article. A heavy, soft, unmercerized cotton—in white, of course—is used for these counterpane fringes. The fringes should not be set too close.

It will be noted that at one end of the fringe shown in the illustration the strands from two knots are lashed or "seized" together to bring the fringes down into points. This makes a neat finish. The manner of making the seizing is shown at (b) on the diagram herewith. A separate piece of material is used for the seizing. Lay this in a loop, up and down, with the ends to be seized together. With one of the free ends, make several turns around the group and the ends as shown on the sketch, making the turns upward toward the loop. Finally draw the free end through the loop and draw up the loop and the lashings by drawing the two free ends tight. These ends may then be clipped off.

Braided fringes make a handsome finish for many pieces.

The long fringes of the Indian braided belts and also of belts in card-weaving and inkle loom weaving, are usually braided for the full length in the four-strand Indian braid. All the warp-ends may be braided in this fashion, or groups of braids may be made at either edge and in the center, the rest of the warp being either twisted or left "as is." These belts are usually made the exact length to fit the waist of the wearer and are fastened by tying the braids together, no buckle being required.

Mexican bags—especially those done in double weaving—are often finished with a braided top. The warp ends are made into little three-strand braids, and these braids are then plaited together, often in elaborate patterns. A simple finish of this order is shown on illustration No. 3. The border is finished by seizing the braids together in pairs in the manner described above. This may be clearly seen in the illustration.

A braided fringe of a different type is shown on Illustration No. 4. This is easy to make and has an interesting effect. Take nine or eleven strands of fringe and pick up a tabby shed across them; draw the two outside strands through this shed, one from either side. Pick up the reverse tabby shed on the remaining strands and again draw the two outside strands through. Continue in this manner till the braiding comes down to a point and knot the last three strands with an overhand knot or a Solomon knot to keep the braid from ravelling.

The tie commonly used for the fringes of rugs is a single overhand knot pushed close against the woven heading. This is an entirely practical tie, but is a bit lumpy and not very handsome. A much more attractive method of finishing the fringes of a rug is shown at (a) on the diagram. This is an excellent tie for any fringe except an extremely close-set one, as in the belt-weaves. It has the effect of a tidy little braid that holds the warp-ends securely and is not bunched. Work from the right side of the fabric and begin at the left. Draw the first two strands toward the right and make a tie around them with the third strand as illustrated at (a 1). Now drop the first strand and carry along to the right the second strand and the third one—the one just used to make the tie. Make a tie around these two strands with the fourth strand. Continue in this fashion all across. Just how many ends to use in each strand depends on the setting of the warp and a little experiment may be required to determine just how many to use. The braid should be pulled tight to hold the ends, but must not draw in the selvages.

I found this braided finish on a piece from the Mountain Province of the Philippines. The finish was made across the ends of the piece on both sides of the fabric. For a rug it is usually sufficient to tie it only on the right side. The effect of this tie is shown on Illustration No. (5).

Three forms of finish used by Maori weavers are shown at (d) (c) and (e) on the diagram. The one at (d) is from a piece of "taniko" weaving. A two-strand twining is made, starting from the left, and the warp-ends are taken upward and secured by the twining as indicated on the sketch. The ends may later be clipped off or covered with a facing as is customary on the taniko head-bands. This finish makes a rolled edge, and holds satisfactorily if the warp is coarse and somewhat stiff. I have also used it successfully on blankets made with a warp of Germantown yarn. The similar edge shown at (c) is, however, more secure. It will be seen that the warp-ends are taken first from above downward through the twining and are then turned upward again through the twining before being clipped off.

Both these finishes should be made from the wrong side of the fabric.

The finish at (e) is the most practical of the three, and is easy enough to make after one gets the "hang" of it, though it may seem difficult at first. This should also be made from the wrong side of the fabric, and started at the left. The finished effect is a double rolled braid, and is very firm and good looking.

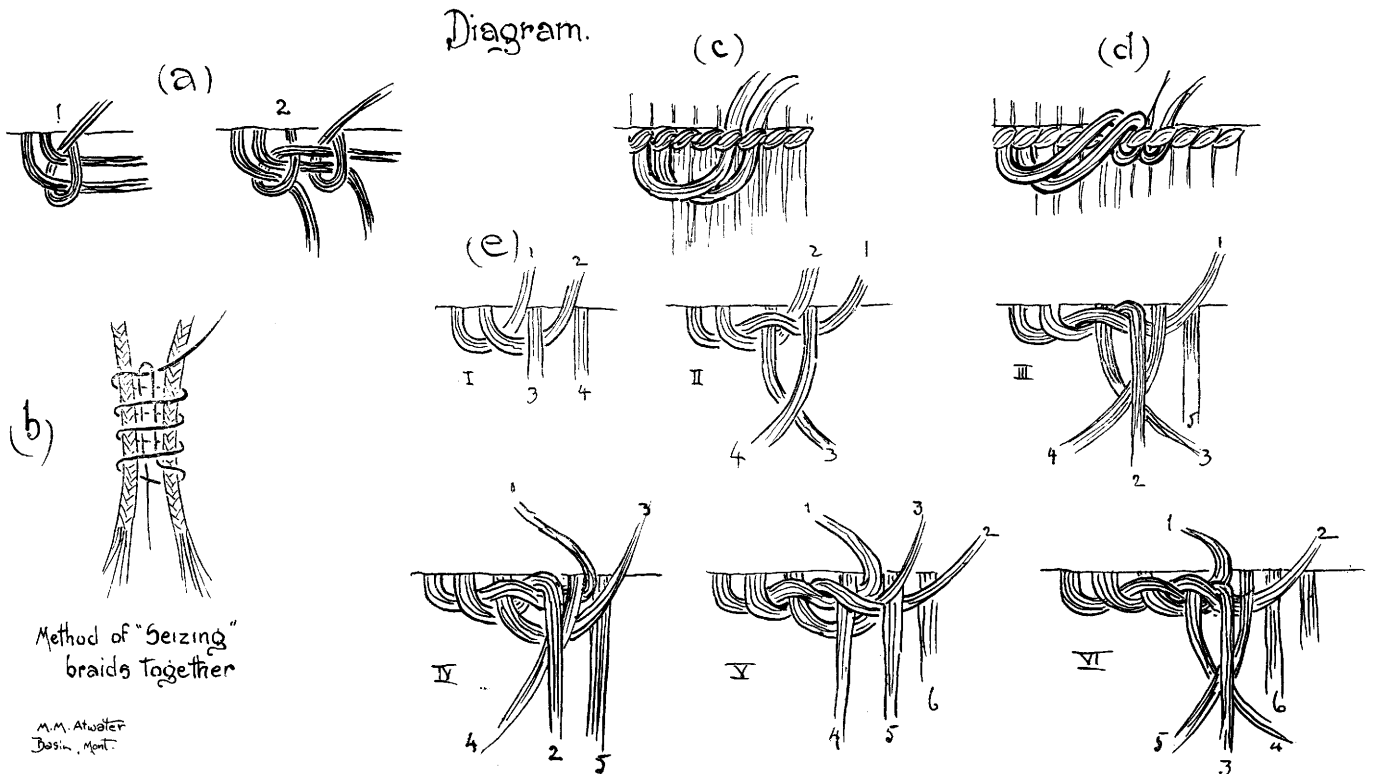
I have made the process as clear as I am able in the sketches. The start is simple: take the first strand to the

right under the second strand and up; then the second strand in the same way under the third and up as shown at (I). You now have two strands pointing upward and two pointing downward, which is the position at the beginning of each "tuck" of the braid. Now cross the two lower strands taking the one from the left under the one on the right. Bring down the left hand upper strand over this cross as illustrated. Turn back over it the strand that projects to the right and take the strand brought down from above under the turned back strand and under the next free strand to the right. This completes the tuck of the braid. You now have three strands pointing upward. Discard the one furthest on the left, which is not used again, and make the next tuck with the other two upward strands and the two downward strands.

I suggest practising this with very coarse material before attempting to finish a rug or other piece in this manner. It is a bit confusing at first. At least I found it so.

These three Maori finishes are shown in an interesting book, "The Evolution of Maori Clothing" by Te Rangi Hiroa (P. H. Buck), which contains many other fascinating things. I did not find the diagrams in the book entirely clear, so I have ventured to modify them a bit to make them easier to follow, I hope.

Of course a great deal more might be said on the subject of fringes and edge-finishes. At some other time, perhaps.



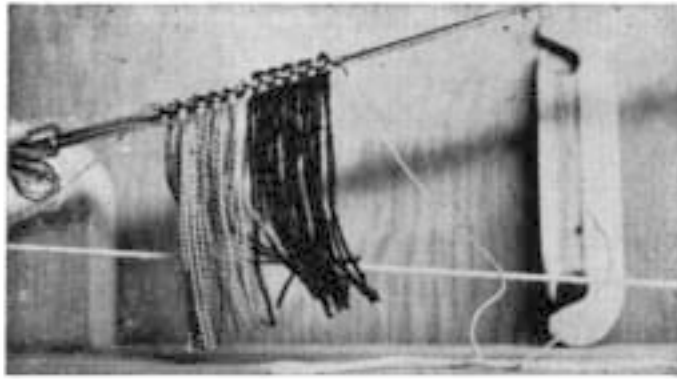


ILLUSTRATION 1

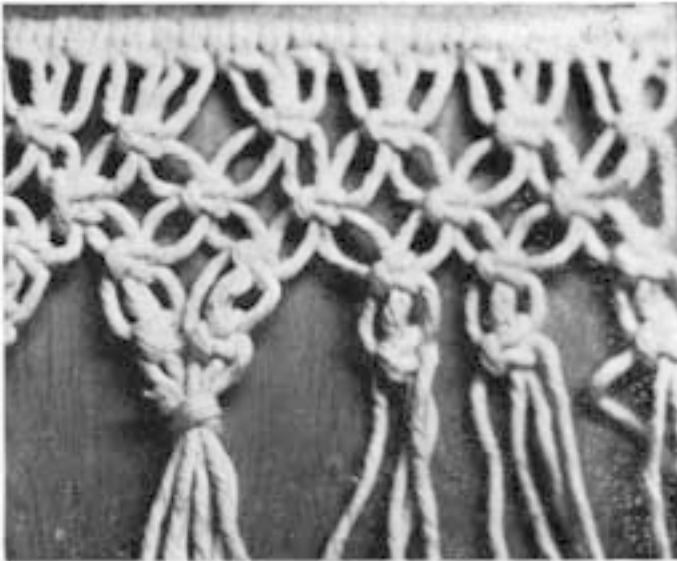


ILLUSTRATION 2

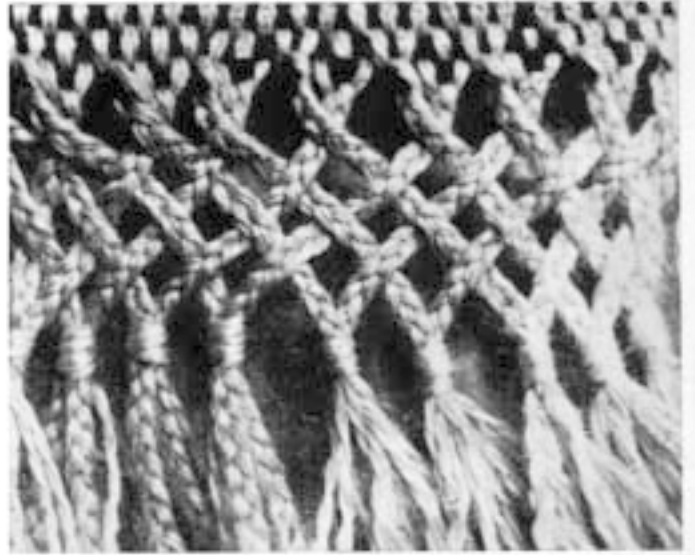


ILLUSTRATION 3

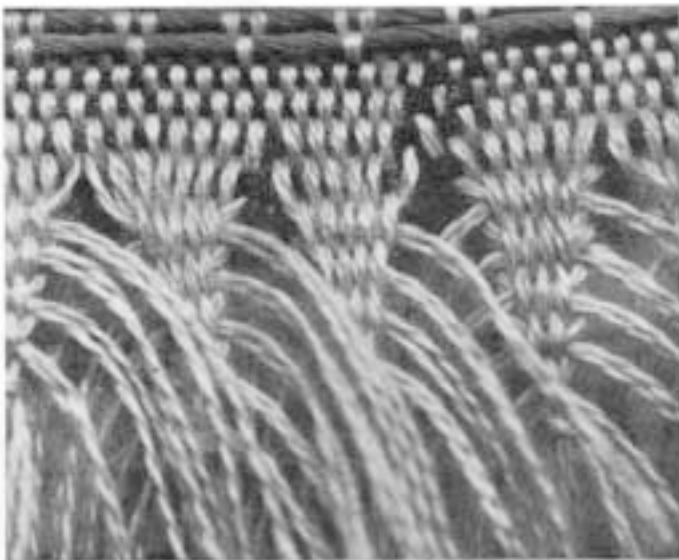


ILLUSTRATION 4

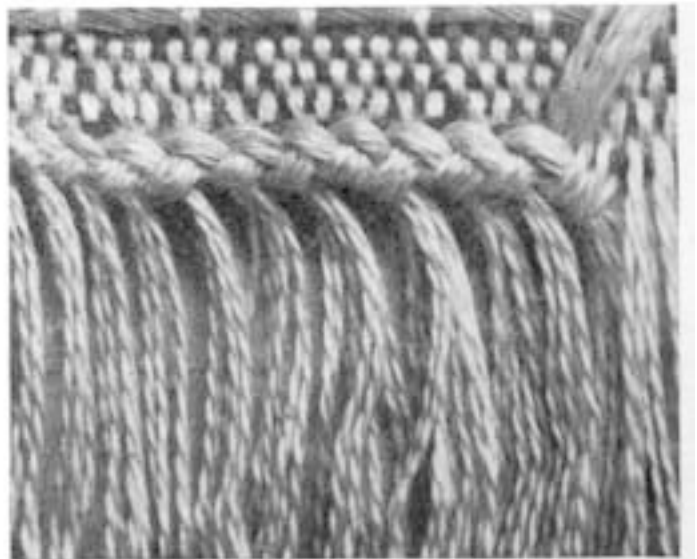


ILLUSTRATION 5