

## Macramé Lace.

MACRAMÉ is specially interesting from the fact of its being the forerunner of all the many varieties of pillow-lace. To the difficulty of disposing of the long, loose threads left along the edge of any unhemmed fabric, may be ascribed the origin of knotting them into rough patterns, in which the fringe, if not altogether dispensed with, is at any rate weighted and kept in order by the heavy network of knots above it. As a finish to the edges of veils, towels, and scarves, knotted lace was common in early ages amongst dwellers in the East, and the very word "macramé" points to its Arabic origin. It is supposed that the formal designs in which it is usually made were originally copied from the carved arches, screens, and lattices that are characteristic of Arab houses. It was not until the fifteenth century that any attempt was made to produce more elaborate patterns, and even then it was rarely that designs for it were introduced into the pattern-books. The common name for it in Italy and the adjacent countries was "punto a gropo," or knotted point; but it remained only a short time in vogue, owing probably to the vast and rapid strides made about that period in the production of more delicate pillow-lace. The somewhat firm and rigid nature of macramé too, has influenced its position in popular favour, and we now consider it better suited to the ornamentation of furniture than for any of the other purposes to which lace is applied. This objection has, however, been partially removed by the very great improvement that has taken place of late years in the macramé cords and twines. Some of these are to be had in the most artistic of colourings, and are so soft that the worker's fingers are no longer bruised and bleeding from the stiffness of the string, as was frequently the case when the work was first revived.

Macramé lace is particularly pretty, if made in knitting

cotton, as a trimming for quilts, toilet-table slips, and bedroom hangings; in the finer makes of cord it is a handsome finish to linen blinds or brackets, while in silk it may be used wherever passementerie and gimp find a place. Nothing could be more appropriate for ecclesiastical linen than macramé, but it needs working in finelinen thread and in suitably chosen designs.

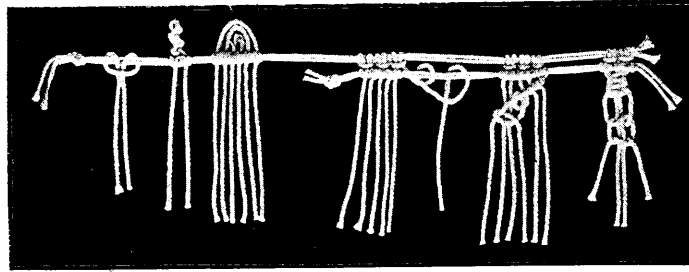
The lace now-a-days may be made upon a heavily weighted pillow, or upon a loom. If a pillow be used, it can be easily made by the worker herself.

It consists merely of

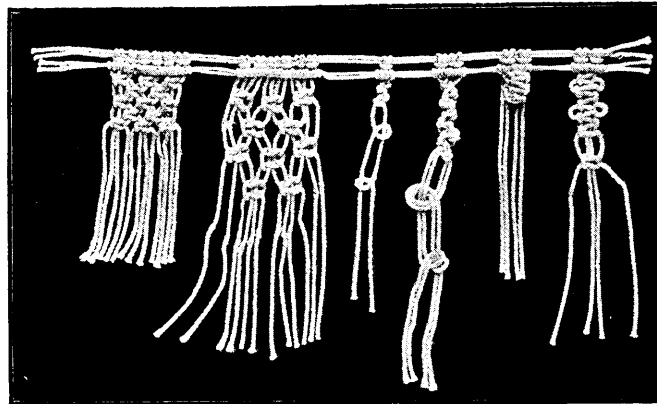
a strong, oblong bag, stuffed tightly, yet kept almost flat. The best stuffing is a mixture of bran and sand, and the sand must be thoroughly dried before it is put into the case, or it will rust the pins. An outer case should be placed over the cushion, made of some striped material

like ticking, as many people without this aid find a difficulty in keeping the lines of thread perfectly straight. The pins that are used to hold the threads down to the cushion are about two inches long, and have glass heads of various colours. A few still longer ones are useful to fasten down the horizontal strings. Pins are not needed if a loom be used. This consists simply of an oblong

deal board with cross-bars at each end, and staples to hold the threads, which, by an arrangement of screws, can be either slackened or tightened. At the back is an iron rest, by which the board can be placed upon the table at any slope that best suits the convenience of the worker. It is useless to recommend either cushion or loom; each worker must decide upon whichever she prefers herself; one whose eye is perhaps not very exact will miss, upon the loom, the guiding stripes of the cushion, while she who speedily gains proficiency in the work will find the manipulation with pins both fidgety and unnecessary. When macramé is to be worked as a square, a cushion is essential, as the



SAMPLER OF KNOTS.



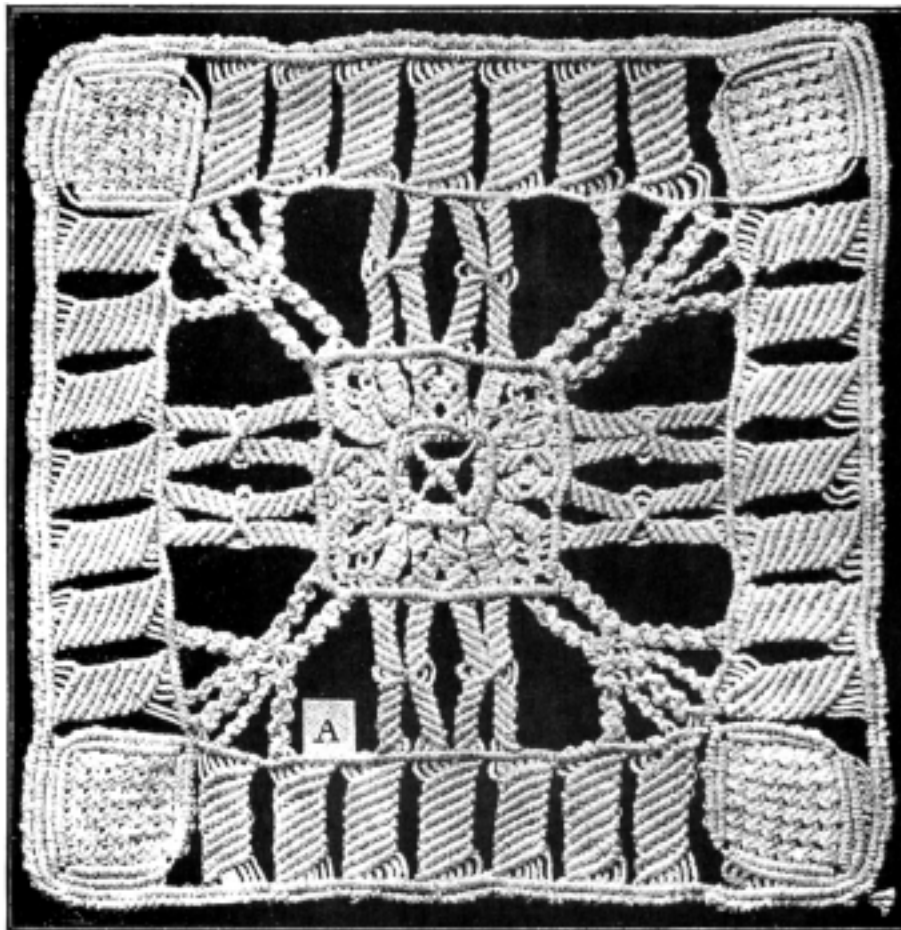
SAMPLER OF KNOTS.

board provides for the leaders to run in one direction only.

Whether loom or pillow be chosen, the first thing to do is to stretch the horizontal strings. These are cut as long as the piece of lace that is to be made, and are generally used double. They must be stretched perfectly straight and as tightly as possible. The threads, of which the pattern is made, are next strung upon the first foundation thread, as shown in the first of the two samplers on page 99. In these are given all the principal knots used in macramé lace. At A is shown the

wise, and they are all looped into it in turn, exactly as the cord is made in the foundation row. These bars may have any number of threads, according to the pattern, and may slant either to right or to left.

Very pretty, though of course simple, designs in macramé may be worked with merely a knowledge of these few knots. At F is shown that particular tie known as a Solomon's knot. Four threads are needed for these knots; the two centre ones taken together form a leader, or foundation upon which the others are looped. This is also a double knot, each portion of which is drawn into



A SQUARE.

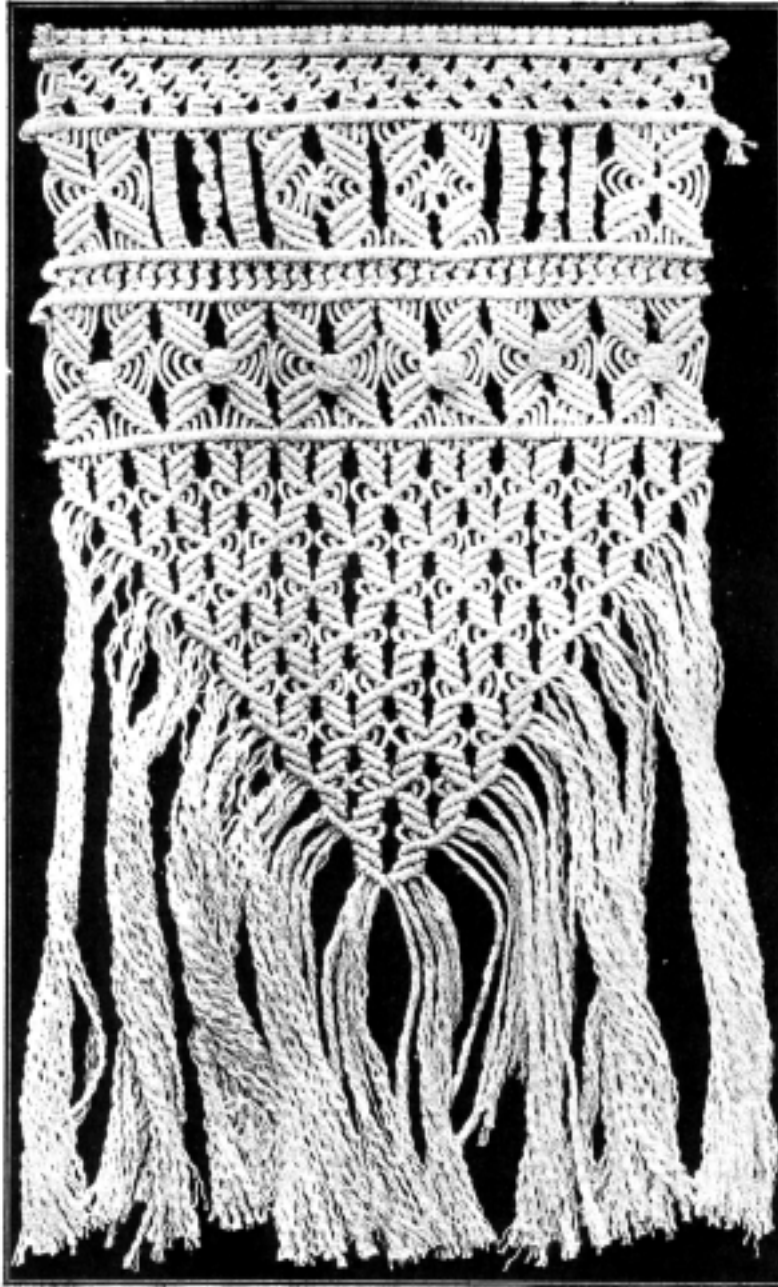
way in which the threads are doubled exactly in half and looped on to the foundation. Other and more elaborate ways of doing this are shown at B and C. When a sufficient number of threads has been looped on, they are worked into a cord with the double knot shown at D. This is known as a macramé knot, owing to the prominent part it plays in the lace, and a cord such as this is usually worked directly after the strings have been fastened to the foundation thread. The same double knot is shown again at E, where a certain number of threads is taken to form a slanting bar. In our sampler this bar is made of six threads, the first of which, on the right-hand end of the work, is called the leader, because it is the foundation, as it were, of the whole bar. It is held with the left hand across the other five slant-

position before the next one is made. In the illustration, for the sake of clearness, the first part of the knot has been left loose. Solomon's knots may be worked either as an open filling, or as a bar. One double knot, used by itself, is often useful for filling a small, open square that is left in the middle of four slanting bars. In this position it is shown in the outer part of the insertion above the vandyke on page 102. If Solomon's knots are to be used as a filling they are worked in rows, the knots being alternated in successive rows by being made of two threads from one knot and two from the next. A very different effect may be gained, as seen at G and H in the second sampler (page 99), by working the knots either close together or far apart.

Pretty, crinkled bars are given at I and J, which are

made of simple and double knotting respectively. The single knotting is worked thus :—Take the second thread as a leader, hold it out straight as it hangs from the foundation, and work upon it with the first thread the first half of a macramé knot, then hold the first thread as a leader, and work the first half of a knot upon it

which are worked five or six Solomon's knots. Many workers like to stretch the two centre strings very tightly, and often tie them to a large button or stud in the front of the body of the dress. It is, however, quite unnecessary to do this after a little practice, and anyone whose fingers are ordinarily supple will find no difficulty



VANDYKED EDGING WITH FRINGE.

with the second thread. Continue to knot with these two threads alternately until the bar is long enough. Double knotting is worked in exactly the same way with double threads instead of single ones. At *k* is given a raised knot that is often useful as a centre to a group of close bars. Thus worked, it forms an important feature of the macramé fringe on this page. It is made with four threads, the two centre ones being the leaders, upon

at all in holding the two leaders taut between the second and third fingers of the left hand, while the right hand and disengaged fingers of the left are busily forming the knots. When these are finished, the picot is drawn up thus :—Thread the right-hand string upon a carpet needle, and pass it through a small opening that will be found just above the first knot; do the same with the left-hand thread, passing it of course through the

opening at the left-hand side of the bar of knots; then pass the two middle strings through the larger opening above the bar, and draw all four down until the last knot rests firmly upon the first one. This is a very effective arrangement of knots, as it is well raised above the otherwise flat surface of the lace. Another style of bar, consisting alternately of open picots and Solomon's knots, is shown at L. This also requires four threads, and the knots are worked upon them as shown at F. Instead, however, of their being drawn up tightly over the leaders, the interval of nearly half an inch is left between each knot. Then, when they are pushed up along the centre, the two side strings will form a little loop or picot between each knot.

Upon a judicious use of these few knots, and the careful and regular tying of them, depend all the many handsome designs that can be worked in macramé lace. The vandyked edging given on page 101 is a characteristic pattern entirely made up of the knots I have described. Thirty-six double threads are required for each point, and these, when bent in half and looped into the foundation, make seventy-two working strings. Each thread before it is doubled should be two yards and a quarter in length. This measurement is for the coarser makes of macramé twine, the finer sorts needing shorter strings. After the first cord, three rows of Solomon's knots are worked as described and figured at F and G. Then there is another cord, and an insertion containing various patterns. (\*) First, a cross made up of four sets of triple bars knotted as described at E, three close bars of Solomon's knots, the middle one of which is twisted three times before the threads are knotted into the third cord. Then another set of close bars, arranged so that they slant in the opposite direction to those of the first cross, the open square in the middle being filled with a single Solomon's knot. After this, the three bars are again made, another cross, and then the pattern is repeated from (\*).

After the third cord is worked, a narrow insertion is made of short bars of single knotting (see i), the threads being knotted twice upon each leader. Between the fourth and fifth cords is a row of crosses, made of bars in the same way as those at the beginning and end of the second insertion, but finished in the centre with a raised picot, as shown at K. The

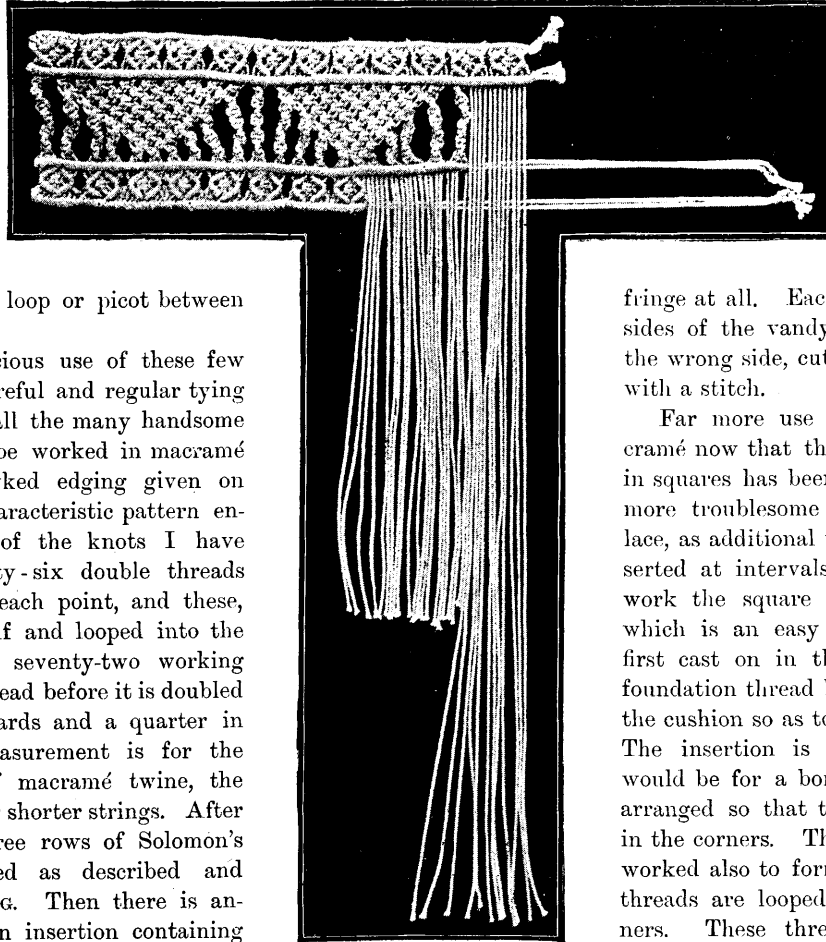
vandyke itself is worked entirely in bars of macramé knots slanting alternately from left to right. It will be seen that these are arranged in a series of crosses like those in the first wide insertion, but made up of four threads instead of six. The cross at the end of each row is worked with three divisions, instead of four, thus giving the proper slope to the vandyke. The ends of string left below the vandyke are unravelled to give a fuller appearance to the fringe, and are then cut off as evenly as possible. Sometimes each strand of fringe is

knotted at intervals along its length, and in some patterns the strings are tied together to make tassels. It is quite possible to finish such a pattern as this without any

fringe at all. Each string left along the sides of the vandyke is turned over to the wrong side, cut off, and caught down with a stitch.

Far more use may be made of macramé now that the secret of working it in squares has been discovered. This is more troublesome to manage than the lace, as additional threads have to be inserted at intervals in the corners. To work the square shown on page 100, which is an easy one, the strings are first cast on in the usual manner, the foundation thread being pinned down on the cushion so as to make a small square. The insertion is worked exactly as it would be for a border, the knots being arranged so that they set perfectly flat in the corners. The second cord is then worked also to form a square, and extra threads are looped on to it in the corners. These threads are managed in a manner slightly different to that in which they are generally knotted. A

large pin is passed through the exact middle of one of the extra threads, and this fastens it firmly down to the cushion. A double macramé knot is worked with the first half of the string into the foundation, then the pin is taken out and the second half of the thread is also knotted into the foundation in the usual way. By this use of a pin the double row of foundation threads is done away with, and when the work is finished it is almost impossible to discover which are the extra strings. In the last and outermost insertion, threads have been added at all the spaces like that marked A in our square, while in the corners as many as eighteen or twenty have been added upon the double cord which is carried along the top of the Solomon's knots, all of which are worked with the extra threads. A double cord is then knotted along the edges of this



INSERTION.

insertion, and it is in the second row that the threads are all worked in and cut off. When the first double macramé knot has been worked for the second cord, take the string and hold it with the foundation as a leader, work the next macramé knot over the two together, then cut off the end of the thread. The thread which worked this macramé knot is held with the leader, the next knot worked over it, and then cut off in the same way. Proceed thus until all have been worked and cut off. The small hole left in the centre of the square must be filled in with a few small bars or knots, after all the rest is finished.

After the minute details I have given of the various knots and patterns, no difficulty should be found in copying the insertion on page 102. It illustrates another way of finishing off without a fringe, and the edges are managed simply by tying one double knot, as shown at *d*. The ends of the strings are then turned over to the wrong side, sewn down, and cut off close to the work.

An insertion of this sort is often useful to add to the width of a piece of lace, and much improves the appearance of linen blinds if sewn about three inches above a lace edging, the linen of course being cut away behind it.

An inexperienced worker will find some difficulty in deciding what length her working strings should be cut, in order that any particular pattern of lace may be made. As a general rule, it may be considered that each thread, after it has been folded in half, should be four times as long as the lace is wide. This length is an ample allowance for any but the most elaborate pattern, but it stands to reason that the worker must use a certain amount of her own judgment in the matter. It is best to cut at first only so many strings as are required for one division of the pattern, and to make a note of their length. Before cutting off future strings, after the first set is used up any superfluous thread left below the pattern must be measured, and its length deducted from those that are cut for the rest of the lace.

ELLEN T. MASTERS.