

TORCHON LACE, AND HOW TO MAKE IT.

THE art of making real lace is regarded by most ladies as one that requires more time to acquire than they can give, in these bustling days, to one kind of employment. This is quite true with regard to Brussels, Mechlin, Honiton, and other fine pillow laces, which to be really well made involve a regular education; but there are other laces of a coarse nature that are made with coarse thread and with few changes of design, that can be quickly formed and learnt without so much labour. Of this description is the Torchon or Saxony lace, now so much used for trimmings, which is largely made in England for trade purposes, and is worked in Germany, from which country it originally came. This lace, as seen by the patterns of it, is formed almost entirely of three or four stitches, and its thicker parts connected together with threads twisted round each other, and as it is always worked with coarse thread and a limited number of bobbins, it is not complicated, only requiring a certain amount of patience to learn the stitches before attempting the patterns.

The implements for making the lace consist of a pillow with stand, pricked patterns, coarse lace thread, bobbins, pins, scissors, and knitting needle. The pillow is an oblong shape, 28 inches long by 17 inches wide; it is made with ticking, and stuffed with bran or horse-hair until it is quite tight. To keep this foundation clean, a cover cloth of white linen is made to fit it, and this latter is drawn together at the sides of the cushion with drawing tapes, so that it can be removed, washed, and put back whenever soiled. Round the centre of the pillow and over this cover a piece of strong linen, 5 inches wide, is placed and fastened tightly down; this is required as a support to the lace pattern, which is pinned down to the pillow upon it. Two extra white washing covers are used to keep the lace clean during its working; they are of linen, size 18 inches by 12. One is laid at the top of the work, and pinned over the completed part, and the other pinned underneath the bobbins that hang down towards the lower part of the pillow while the lace is in making, and between them and the pricked pattern that is not in use at the moment, otherwise the bobbin threads would catch upon the holes in the pattern and become entangled. When the

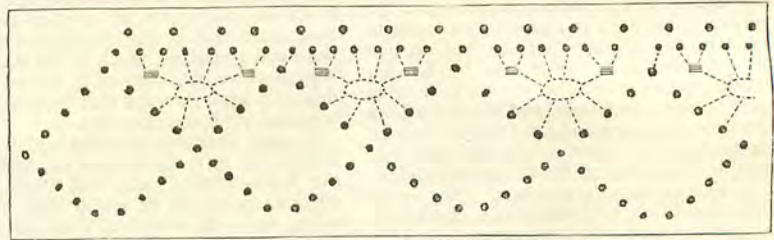
pillow is put away, this last cover is unpinned and thrown over it to protect it from dust. One of the duties of a lacemaker is to keep her lace clean and fresh-looking, which can never be accomplished if the bobbins are allowed to entangle together, and have to be constantly straightened, or if dust and dirt settle upon them. The stand to place the pillow on is not so much used in England as upon the Continent. It is formed with two upright pieces of wood, each ending in a fork resembling a crutch. These are secured into a strong, wooden foundation, so that the pillow is supported by the crutches. The height of the stand should be about 28 to 30 inches, so that when the worker is seated the pillow is easy to handle. The pricked patterns are made upon thin strips of parchment, or upon *toile cirée*; they are either bought ready or pricked by the worker, and are shown in details of figs. 1 and 2. To prick a pattern, take the lace to be copied, and place it upon a cushion with some cartridge paper below it,

and pass a pin through the lace and the paper wherever a pinhole is seen in the lace (these are clearly visible, as the twisted threads round them mark out where the pin has been). The prickings include the width of the lace, but not more than 5 inches of its length. When the pattern is taken, examine the paper and see that the holes are made in straight lines, and evenly apart when required. After any mistakes, and lay the paper upon a pincushion and over a narrow strip of *toile cirée*. Prick the holes on the paper through to the *toile cirée* with a large darning needle. Prepare two strips in this way, and be careful to make the design run from one to the other without a break. When working, and the lace covers one pattern, take out all the pins that secure it except the last three rows, slip under the second strip, pin it down and work upon it, releasing the first strip by taking out the last pins as soon as enough lace is made on the second to be firm without the support of those pins.

The thread to use is coarse linen lace thread, sizes from No. 30, 50, to No. 60, unless a fine lace is to be made, when No. 200 is required. Wind the thread from the bottom upwards on to the bobbin, and fasten it with a slip-knot close to the top when the bobbin is nearly full. The slip-knot prevents the thread becoming uncoiled when the bobbin hangs down upon the pillow. As the piece of thread becomes used in working, raise the slip-knot, untwist more thread, and again secure it. Keep the lengths of thread between the bobbins and lace of the same length, and let each thread be separate from the others, and disentangle them at once when they become at all mixed. Straightening and keeping the bobbins in their right order is one of the chief difficulties in making lace, and can only be learnt by constant practice and great patience. When making a narrow piece of lace, attach the bobbins to the pillow by



FIG. 1.



PRICKED DESIGN OF FIG. 1—DETAIL A.

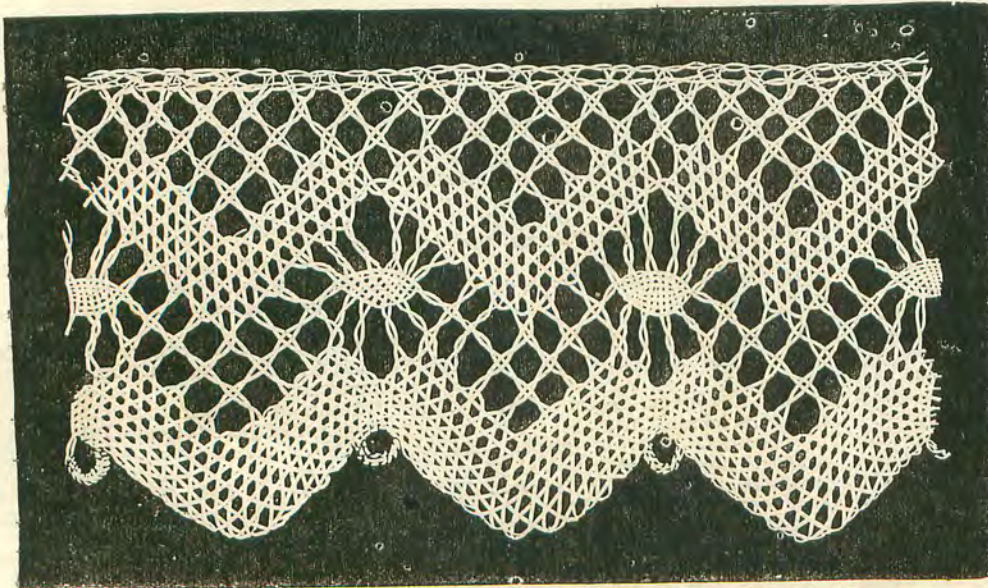


FIG. 2

tying all their ends together in a knot, and pinning this knot firmly on the pillow just above the place where the pattern is affixed. When the lace to be made is to be broad, take the knitting-needle and run it into the pillow above the pattern, so that it makes a firm bar across it. Upon this bar, in the space above the pattern, fix each bobbin thread separately, and fasten it with a Macramé knot. When a thread breaks while working, or comes to an end, tie it up with the thread nearest to it, and in a secure knot, and pin these two out upon the pillow well away from the pattern and the other bobbins. Replace the threads thus taken away by two new ones, which tie together with a weaver's knot, and hang upon the pin above where they are required, and work in these threads when that part of the lace is reached. Make an inch or two of lace, and then cut off the threads pinned out upon the pillow. Extra bobbins can always be added to the lace whenever a greater number is used in one part than the other by putting them up in pairs and inserting them into the work as described for replacing bobbins, and they can always be taken away so as to decrease the number by being tied together, pinned out of the way, and cut off closely when the lace has been carried on some inches beyond them. In working broad laces with wide scalloped edges, bobbins have often to be added and decreased, but with the ordinary edgings and insertions this manoeuvre is not required.

The movements in making Saxony or Torchon lace consist in weaving the threads together to form the broad thick lines, twisting two threads together to make the bars that cross the open parts, and connect the lace together, plaiting threads together to make wider bars, crossing the threads for groundwork, and making lozenges.

The thick stitches are made in two ways and closely resemble the cloth and half stitches of other pillow laces, the cloth or thickest stitch resembling close weaving, and the half or more open stitch an open network. The thick stitch is made by arranging a certain number of bobbins so that they hang down upon the pillow and remain in that position (these are called hangers), and taking two other bobbins across these and working them in alternately over and under the hangers; these last bobbins are known as workers, as they really make the stitch. Before commencing to make a lace pattern, practise making cloth stitch, as follows:—Prick two close lines of pinholes an inch apart, as a pattern, and pin the pattern on the pillow so that the lines are perpendicular. Hang on six pair of bobbins, and let five pair be the hangers and one pair the workers; arrange the workers on the right hand of the hangers; Take up the workers, twist them twice together, put up a pin at the edge so that the twist is upon it, leave one of the workers there; take the other in the right hand and the nearest pair of hangers in the left, and pass the worker over the first and under the second hanger, keeping them well stretched; repeat the over and under motion with the first worker until the left edge of the lace is reached, and keep the hanging bobbins straight and well stretched. Now take the second worker from behind the piece and work it under and over the hangers until it reaches the

left edge, here put up a pin, twist the two workers twice together, leave one behind the pin, and work back with the other, reversing the over and under of last row; return for the second worker and put up a pin, and twist both together as before, when the right hand edge is reached, and repeat until the stitch is learned. A straight braid is thus made. For lace the stitch is the same, but as an even line is not always required in it, the pair of working bobbins are frequently left behind at the pinholes and others brought in as the pattern indicates.

The half stitch is rather more difficult than the thick stitch, but it is more used, as it forms a light and yet strong network. The working of it is similar to the thick stitch, except that

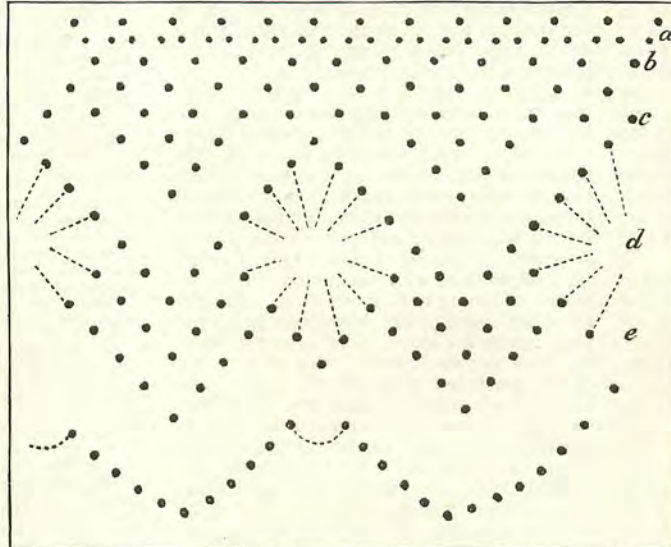
the edge is reached, put up a pin, twist the worker and the first hanger once together and round it. Then cross all the hangers over each other, and work back over and under them as before with the same worker bobbin. Cross the bobbins all the same way down the lace, and keep the lines made across them at even distances apart so as to make an even network.

The bars in Torchon lace are made with two kinds of twists—simple and double twist. The simple twist is made by twisting the second bobbin once over the first, the double by twisting the second bobbin over the first and then the first over the second. The plain bars connecting one part of the lace with the other are formed by repeating the double twist until the length of the bar is made.

More complicated grounds than those made with single or double bars are formed by twisting the bobbins together, crossing them, and making a stitch with them over a pinhole, so that the threads form either a honeycomb or diamond network over the space to be filled. These grounds are the same as those worked in Brussels, Mechlin, and other laces, but being made with coarse threads in Torchon lace are not so difficult to execute. There are many varieties, but the two following are the easiest and best:—

To make a diamond ground, prick pinholes upon the pattern at even distances apart and in diagonal lines across the space to be filled, and arrange the bobbins, calculating a pair to each pinhole in the diagonal line made by the prickings. Take the first four bobbins, twist Nos. 2 and 1 together twice, also Nos. 4 and 3 together twice, cross Nos. 3 and 2 over each other and put a pin in the pinhole beneath them, leave Nos. 3 and 1 on the left-hand side, twist twice together Nos. 2 and 4, and take two fresh bobbins, which twist together, cross the two inside bobbins over each other and put up a pin beneath them as before, and leave the two left-hand bobbins; take up two fresh ones and repeat the crossing, pin-sticking, and leaving to the end of the line, return to the left side, twist the two bobbins left there together and work them into the edge, and take them down to the first pinhole on the next line and repeat, always working in a slanting line across the lace.

To make a honeycomb ground, prick pinholes upon the pattern in diagonal lines and



PRICKED DESIGN OF FIG. 2 - DETAIL A.

the hangers are crossed over each other each time the workers pass through them; and that fewer bobbins are required to make the same width of lace, as they only interlace each other like lattice work, not like close weaving. To practise this stitch, prick two perpendicular lines of pinholes an inch apart and each pinhole half-an-inch from the next. Hang on five pairs of bobbins, let the last nine hang down the pillow, and use bobbin No. 1 as the worker. Cross the bobbins in pairs one over the other, and twist the worker and the first hanger once over each other and put them round the first pin. Then take the worker across the lace over and under each hanger, which keep crossed by holding them in between the fingers of the hand all the time. When

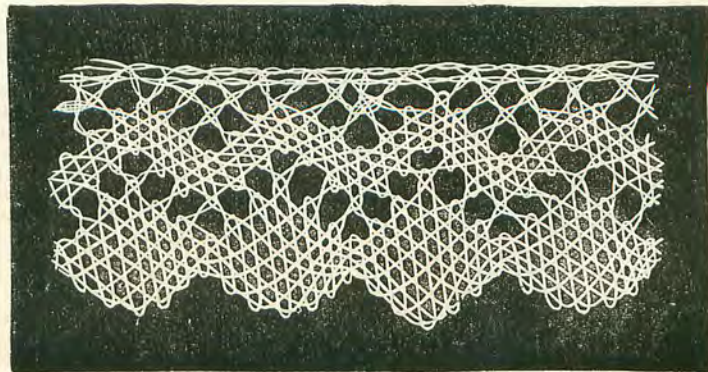


FIG. 3.

put up the bobbins as before. Single twist bobbins Nos. 1 and 2 together and bobbins Nos. 3 and 4, cross the two centre ones and put up a pin, single twist each pair of bobbins on each side of the pin, and take one inside bobbin from each side and cross it beneath the pin. Leave the two bobbins on the left-hand side, twist the two on the right hand down to the next pin and take two fresh bobbins on the right hand down to the same place, cross the two inside bobbins over each other, put up a pin, single twist on each side of the pin and cross the two inside bobbins beneath the pin, and repeat the whole movement until every pinhole is filled on the diagonal line and a pair of bobbins left at each of them. Return to the commencement, twist the two first bobbins into the edge lines and down to the first pinhole on the new line and repeat. An edge to these grounds is made by adding an extra pair of bobbins to each side and using these as hangers. These make a stitch by crossing with the first pair of workers, which are then twisted together, an edge-pin put up, again crossed with the hangers and twisted to the first pinhole of the new line. Double lines of edging are formed by working two pairs of bobbins as hangers down the sides and making a stitch with each pair and the workers. These edge-lines are described and shown in the patterns of lace given.

Thick bars called lozenges are much used in this lace, as a number of them together form stars and other devices. They are made by interlacing the bobbin threads, like the threads are interlaced with the needle when forming Genoa stitch in guipure d'art. To make a lozenge, take two pairs of bobbins and tie them together, hold three of them apart, but all in the left hand, and pass the fourth first over, under, and over through them, and then back under, over, and under. Repeat working one bobbin backwards and forwards, keeping the other three tightly stretched out. Stars are made in this way with any number of even points. Half the points, each made with two pairs of bobbins, are started at set intervals from one side of the star, and worked to the centre; here the bobbins are crossed or tied together, and the other half of the star worked with the same bobbins and fastened into the opposite side of the lace.

To work the pattern shown in fig. 1, prick all the round spots marked in detail A upon a piece of *toile cirée* and trace the lines upon it with white paint. Hang on ten pairs of bobbins—thread No. 50—by tying them together in a knot, and pinning that knot on the pillow, and commence to work in a slant from the straight edge to the scallop. The pair of bobbins at the extreme edge of the straight edge, and the pair making the inner line, are the only pairs that are hangers, and work straight down the lace: the rest work across simple. Twist the first pair, and take them down to the first pinhole and here make a stitch with them, and the second pair thus. Pass the third bobbin under and over second and first, and fourth bobbin over and under the second and first; third and fourth bobbin will now be at the outside edge. Put up a pin in the pinhole there, and bring them back, twisting them once round themselves and over and under bobbins 1 and 2, as before. Twist bobbins 5 and 6 down to the next pinhole, and pass 3 and 4 over and under them, and leave bobbins 1 and 2, 5 and 6 as hangers to work the straight lines; with that go down the pattern. Work the scallop with half-stitch with the remaining bobbins, taking in with them bobbins 3 and 4, and leaving at each pinhole in the centre edge a pair of bobbins to work the spot with. The scallop in the half-stitch is made by stretching the bobbin threads in the wide part over a wide space, and drawing them close together at the

points. The shape is indicated and formed by the pinholes. The outer edge to the half-stitch is simply made by the threads being passed over the pins; no twistings are required. To form the spot and complete the lace, take the pair of bobbins left at the extreme inner point of the scallop back to the straight edge, twisting and making a stitch with it, and the pair of the inner line; and also with the pair at the edge, where put up a pin, twist, and return to the pair of the second line, and make a stitch with them. Simple twist, and take up the next pair left at the inner edge of the scallop. Simple twist these, and plait a four plait the length of the dark markings on the pattern, divide the bobbins, take back two of them to the edge with twists and stitches as before, and twist the other pair up to the centre spot, where make a stitch with them and the next pair left by the half-stitch, which double twist before using. Bring back the pair taken to the edge across the straight lines with twists and stitches as before, double twist them and work them into the spot, also the last pair from the half-stitch, which double twist before using, then work out all the bobbins in pairs from the spot, double twisting two pairs ready for the next half-stitch scallop at the outer edge and two pairs upon the opposite side for the straight edge; work the first of these pairs to the edge and back again through the straight lines with twists and stitches as before, and bring it back ready to make the four plait shown by the dark markings on the pattern with the second pair, after the latter has been double twisted. The plait made, double twist and carry the first pair to the scalloped side ready to make the half-stitch, and take the second pair through the straight lines with twists and stitches to the straight edge. The bobbins used for making the straight lines are twisted over each other between every pinhole, and before they make a stitch with the threads that work across them.

To work fig. 2. The prickings required for this pattern are shown in the detail; twenty pairs of bobbins are used, and thread No. 30. The stitches are half-stitch, diamond ground, and twisted bars.

Arrange the bobbins in pairs upon the knitting needle, and commence the lace across the centre spot. Arrange three pairs of bobbins at the straight edge marked *a*, two pairs over the next pinhole marked *b*, two pairs over the next marked *c*, six pairs at *d*, and the rest at *e*. Of the three pairs at *a*, use two pairs as hangers to form the two straight lines down the length of the lace, and twist these between each pinhole and make stitches with them and the workers as described in the edging of fig. 1, leaving out the plait. Make a diamond pinhole with the pairs at *b*, and simple twist them and make another diamond pinhole with the pair from *b* and the worker pair of *a*; then use a pair from each and the pairs at *c* and three pairs at *d* to form the vandyke half-stitch, double twisting the three pairs from *d* and simple twisting the others before commencing the vandyke; work half the vandyke and then take the bobbins at *e*, and the three pairs remaining at *d*, and work the outer scallop with half-stitch and the line of diamond pinholes between the two thick parts of the lace, and then work the vandyke line and the diamond ground to a level with the scallop. The work once started there is not much difficulty in reproducing the pattern, as the direction of every thread is clearly visible on reference to the illustration. The spot in the centre of the long twisted bars is formed by interlacing the threads, keeping the first two pairs used as the outer threads, and carrying the outer pair from the left out at the bottom of the spot and working it to the right part of the lace, and reversing the other pair in the

same manner. The little loop at the depressed part of the scallop is made by plaiting four bobbins together where the half-stitch decreases, and working them again into the scallop where it begins to widen.

Fig. 3 is a narrow edging worked with fourteen pairs of bobbins and with thread No. 60. The design contains no stitches that have not been already described, and the lace can easily be pricked out and worked from the illustration without further explanation.

B. C. SAWARD.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

SOPHIE.—Read our article on "Female Clerks and Book-keepers," page 309, vol. i. You would do well to make inquiries at the office of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, 22, Berners-street, Oxford-street. All necessary advice as to books of instruction, classes, &c., will be given you there, we feel assured.

MATILDA DAVIES.—See "How to Skeletonise Leaves," page 582, vol. i.; also see page 64, vol. ii.

FLOSSETTA.—We have great reason to complain of the lack of consideration which multitudes of our correspondents exhibit in writing for information which has been already given by us over and over again. Why not take the trouble of looking through our several indices, and thus finding the advice, recipes, or instruction desired? Your own is a case in point. See page 543, vol. i. Write to the secretary, Civil Service Commission Office, Cannon-row, E.C.

JANIE.—You may obtain lessons in cookery—demonstrations given—at the College for Working Women, 7, Fitzroy-street, W. For each course of ten lessons the fee is 5s. Address, Miss Tegetmeier.

WALDENBURG.—1. Read "How to Form a Small Library," page 122, vol. ii. Also, "How to Improve One's Education," pages 637 and 794, vol. ii. 2. See, for the cure of the complaint from which you suffer, pages 319, 447, and 592, vol. i.; also page 14, vol. ii. We think you write English wonderfully well, and we rejoice to hear that "our girls" of other lands and nationalities find our magazine affords them both profit and pleasure. You write well.

SAXONY.—We draw your attention to our answer given to "Waldenbourg." We recommend the *Leisure Hour*. If you would like to take it in, write to Mr. Tarn, 56, Paternoster-row, E.C., and it will be sent to you. It is suited to educated people, and is an illustrated monthly magazine. It frequently contains notices of our poets and literary men and women. The January part gives an account of the chief American writers.

JESSIE B.—You may obtain private lessons at the City of London College for Ladies, 319, Camden-road; or 10, Finsbury-square. Write to the lady principal, at the former address, or you may have a personal interview with her on Mondays from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m.

COUNTRESS OF BEECH TOWERS.—1. Read our articles on the subject of study, *i.e.*, "How to Improve One's Education," pages 637 and 794, vol. ii.; and also, "How to Form a Small Library," pages 7 and 122, vol. ii. 2. Pronounce the name "Cedric" as if spelt "See-drik"; it would be pedantic and affected to pronounce it as if written "Kee-drik."

DAKKAR.—Write to the Rev. G. F. Browne, St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, for the papers respecting the Higher Local Examinations. For those of Oxford, write to the Rev. S. Edwardes, Merton College, Oxford. For the London University, apply to the Registrar, University College, Gower-street, W.C. We do not mind "taking trouble" to help our readers. We are glad to hear of your satisfaction with our magazine.

B. WILLIAMS (Matron).—We thank you for kindly supplying us with particulars (which we now give) very valuable to those who desire to become pupil nurses in St. Mary's Hospital, W. The term of a probationer's training is a "complete year," but they are bound to serve the second year as trained nurses in the hospital, making in all a period of two years. Lady-nurses may, however, be exempted from the second year's service by a payment of £30. No pupil nurses of either class are engaged for less than one year, and none are received under the age of twenty-five years.

SEMHRAMIS.—We could not accept the responsibility of recommending any particular locality nor any special school. There are several at Brussels, and patronised by English people; but the climate is far from satisfactory. Dresden is also famous for its schools, and is also in favour with our countrywomen. We advise you to procure a list of British chaplains in some large and healthy cities, and write to any of them on the question, and you will thus obtain the most reliable information.