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This book is from the collection of Judith Combs

PRISCILLA
Colored
Cross Stitch
Book

Nº2

Published by
The Priscilla Publishing Co.
Boston, Mass.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR CROSS STITCH

Cross-stitch Embroidery may be done on any fabric which has a regular square weave—which has the same number of threads to the inch both ways—provided the threads are heavy enough or far enough apart to be easily counted. Among the most popular materials for this work are scrim, Aida canvas, Mosaic canvas, Hardanger cloth, Java canvas, and Penelope canvas. Some of these are much coarser than others, consequently the design will appear larger on the coarse than on the fabrics of fine weave, and necessarily this must be taken into consideration when selecting the pattern.

The Penelope canvas, being of a very loose, open weave, is often used simply as a guide for cross-stitch on plain linens or other fabrics which are not naturally suitable for the work. This is done by basting the canvas on the linen, then working over the canvas and through the linen, using the regular weave merely as a guide. After the work is finished, the threads of the canvas are drawn out one by one, leaving the design embroidered on the linen. This method is especially useful in embroidering towel ends, it is also used on velvet and cloth and similar fabrics, which could not possibly be worked by the weave.

In selecting thread for cross-stitch, the mesh of the fabric determines the size of the thread. It should be coarse enough to fill the space nicely without overcrowding and pushing the threads of the material out of place. Silk, cotton, linen thread and crewel, are all used for cross-stitch, depending upon the purpose for which the article is to be used, and again upon the fabric. A needle just large enough to carry the thread easily should be used, preferably one with a blunt point, which will pass through the meshes without sticking into the threads.

All the top stitches in Cross-stitch Embroidery should have the same direction, as this gives a uniform and pleasing appearance to the work which cannot be gained otherwise. Do not tie knots in the thread; simply bring the needle through to the right side, leaving about an inch of thread on the under side, which is held in place with the finger of the left hand until it is worked over by several stitches as the cross-stitch proceeds. This secures the thread sufficiently so that it will not pull out.

It will be found easier, in ordinary cross-stitch, to make the stitches in one direction entirely across the row, then go back, putting in the top stitches, rather than to complete each cross separately. Of course, this applies to designs in which masses or lines of color appear and not to individual separate spots, these necessarily must be completed one at a time. Sometimes, in commencing a new row, it will be found more convenient to make the top half of the cross first, then pass the thread under this for the other stitch.

The easiest and best ways of overcoming many little problems will be learned by the worker as the difficulties occur. In passing from one spot to another where the spaces are not too far apart, it is not necessary to fasten off the thread, but where possible it is better to run the needle under stitches which have already been taken and not have any long, loose threads on the wrong side.

In plain cross-stitch, two threads crossed at right angles complete the stitch, but on some fabrics which have an especially large weave, as the Mosaic canvas or Berlin canvas, it is necessary, to get a close effect, to fill in the space with four stitches instead of two, letting them cross at the centre and having two shorter than the others, the whole forming a square. This double cross is called the Leviathan stitch; it really gives the impression of a star. It is particularly pleasing on Mosaic canvas, which has a heavy thread separating it into one-quarter-inch squares. These threads are left uncovered and appear as white lines through the design, separating the individual squares in Mosaic effect.

Often, combined with cross-stitch, the Holbein stitch is used to give a more delicate appearance. This is a single stitch used either diagonally or with the weave of the canvas as the design may demand. Sometimes these single lines entirely enclose a square, which may be left open or filled with a cross.

The Priscilla Colored Cross Stitch Book

No. 2

A COLLECTION OF DESIGNS

BY THE

Priscilla Art Department

EDITED BY

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PRICE, 25 CENTS

PUBLISHED BY

The Priscilla Publishing Company

85 BROAD STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Patent Office

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London

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PLATE I

DAINTY wreaths of bright colored flowers are perhaps as pleasing, if not more so, than any designs we have for cross-stitch. They are very adaptable, both as to coloring and arrangement, and may be used on any of the cross-stitch materials with the most charming results. The larger wreath with blue roses, on the page opposite, is forty-five meshes wide. Count off this number of spaces on a coarse canvas and if they measure ten inches or more, then the wreath may be worked for a sofa-pillow. Separate roses or buds can be scattered in the corners, or a plain band of two or three lines of crosses, an inch from the edge, make a pretty border around the pillow, and helps, as it were, to hold the design in.

On a finer weave material, this wreath makes a nice motif for the end of a scarf, and on a very fine canvas, it is suitable for a work-bag, handkerchief-case, pincushion, and numberless other articles. Other color schemes may be substituted for the blues if preferred. Either yellows and browns or shades of red will be effective, but the arrangement of the tones given in the illustration should be followed if the flowers are to retain their forms.

The conventional little wreath to the right is especially appropriate for an initial on a towel end, and then to the left and right of it several of the stiff little flowers should be arranged in a border, simply repeating the flowers in line with the bottom of the wreath with about twelve spaces between. If one of the initials shown on another page is used in this wreath, it should be worked in some of the same colors that are used for the wreath.

This design can be admirably adapted for an all-over pattern by merely repeating the wreaths at regular intervals with a space of only a few meshes between, and to give variety to the pattern, the flowers in the alternate repeats should be worked in different, though harmonizing, colors.

The wide scattering border of bright berries and stems at the right of the page shows a corner and a repeat which may be continued indefinitely. This is a particularly pretty pattern for portières of either heavy or soft material, and it is capable of being worked out in a variety of ways. The first thought is to work the design in simple crosses, using rich colored threads of harmonizing hues, and this is very satisfactory, but a unique suggestion for developing this pattern is to work all the green lines in cross-stitch, then use the large bright-colored wooden or porcelain beads for the bunches of berries. Sequins used in the same manner are exceedingly effective, especially if they are on a soft material.

This design is good for pillows, couch-covers, curtains, lunch-cloths, and other square-cornered articles, or the corner can easily be omitted and the repeating portion used as a straight band.

The narrower borders on the page are adaptable for many purposes, the lower two being suitable for filet crochet, since they express much character in their form, but this does not mean that they are unsuitable for cross-stitch, for the full beauty of the designs are brought out only in colors.

The colors used for any of these patterns must depend more or less upon the color of the background which is to receive the pattern, for harmony is the key-note of success in decorating.



PLATE I

PLATE II

QUAINT little baskets of flowers or fruits enter much into the present-day cross-stitch designs, and they are used on household linen, wearing apparel, baby belongings, and novelty articles, such as cases, bags, and pockets in various color combinations, usually, however, rather brilliant colors are used for the flowers in these designs, the baskets being somewhat sombre browns or drabs.

The basket on the opposite page is thirty-nine meshes wide and will work up excellently on scarf ends or across the bottom of curtains. Pink flowers would be pretty instead of the blue ones, or soft lavender or clear yellow blossoms would prove effective with the slender green leaves. Also a combination of the different colors make a pleasing effect in this little basket, the shades being arranged to suit the worker's fancy.

To the left is a pretty "black-eyed Susan," or yellow daisy border, which is to be continued repeat after repeat, for any desired length. It is twenty-one spaces wide and on a canvas of medium weave makes a most graceful band of trimming. It is best worked in the colors illustrated if it is carried out in cross-stitch, but being such a decided design it also works up beautifully in filet.

To the right of the daisy border are sections of narrow conventional borders, thirteen and fifteen spaces wide, which are suitable for any narrow band trimming. The colors shown in the illustration or any other preferred colors are suitable for these patterns.

Below the basket is a wider border which is shown in a very pleasing color combination. This is suitable for either a horizontal or vertical border, as the flower forms are not dependent for their beauty upon the direction they are pointed. Being stiffly conventional they are good in any position. A single flower with its attendant lines of green may happily be separated from the border and used as a single motif on any small article where a bit of dainty embroidery is desired. The single lines forming the stamens are here made in Holbein stitch—single lines running with the weave of the fabric in this case.

The wreath of blue flowers with its bow-knot of ribbon is a very dainty little pattern for the corner of a baby's carriage-robe and pillow. It may also be used on the crib blanket, using Penelope canvas as a guide in making the crosses, then removing the canvas thread by thread after the work is done. Care must be taken when using the canvas this way to see that the needle does not penetrate the threads of the canvas and thus sew it to the fabric underneath. This would cause trouble in removing the canvas and would be apt to pull the crosses awry.

As this blue wreath is perfectly symmetrical, the bow of ribbon can very easily be repeated on the opposite side and thus form a larger design which would perhaps be more suitable for some purposes than it now appears.

In the lower left corner is a very striking pattern in rich colors. Only one-fourth of the design is given, but the matter of repeating this around the centre is very simple and easy of accomplishment. When complete, the entire pattern covers a space of sixty-one meshes, an excellent size for a sofa-pillow or square centrepiece, if a wide mesh canvas is used, or if four crosses are made in place of every one shown on the pattern.



PLATE II

PLATE III

A VERY graceful slipper pattern is given on the opposite page, to be worked on any fine-mesh material, such as Java canvas, taking the stitches across two or three threads of the fabric. First, trace the outlines of the slipper pattern, which may be cut from an old slipper, on the canvas, then count the meshes and begin the work from the middle. It is possible that the design will have to be changed slightly at the back to fit the pattern, but this is not difficult.

If a very close rich effect is desired, the entire background should be covered with cross-stitch. Do this with some dark color or black after the design has been put in with bright colors. This is also a good pattern for beaded slippers, either beading only the design or covering the whole slipper with beads.

If the design is to be worked solid over the entire surface, Penelope canvas makes a good foundation, and instead of using crosses, the tent-stitch may be effectively employed if a rather coarse thread is used. The tent-stitch is the simple slant-stitch, half of the cross, in fact, and all the stitches extend in the same direction, or the alternate rows run differently as one may fancy. The effect is that of a rich woven fabric.

Above this the dainty rose wreath with its bow of blue ribbon appears. This hardly needs any suggestions, for every worker in cross-stitch will immediately think of several ways in which such a charming little pattern can be used to advantage; however, one idea must be expressed. If the bow of ribbon is repeated on the opposite side of the wreath and the whole used on a glove-case or oblong pincushion, no prettier effect could be desired. On a fine canvas this design would come very tiny and consequently would make the daintiest imaginable cover for a safety-pin book or needle-case.

At the top right corner is a single conventional flower enclosed in a square, and while this makes an excellent centre for the sofa-pillow described on another page, it also is an admirable motif for an all-over design for a pillow. Again it makes a pleasing, solid-looking border to be used on a single straight edge or around four sides of any square-cornered cloth.

The two units of design to the left of this yellow flower can be used similarly, for all-over patterns or repeating borders. These all-over effects are most pleasing when nicely done, and a great many articles may be so embroidered if one stops to consider the possibilities of cross-stitch. Besides pillows, there are floor-cushions, hassocks, stool-covers, chair-cushions, tea-cozies, slippers, bags, and bands for trimming.

Two simple corner patterns are given at the bottom of the page, which may effectively be used on lunch-cloths, napkins, pillows, scarfs, carriage-covers or curtains, either keeping the design merely in the corner or connecting the motifs with straight or broken lines of cross-stitch.

Perhaps the straight narrow bands will be found as useful as any of the cross-stitch patterns shown, as there are so many ways in which they can be adapted and they are very simple to make. A whole set of toilet accessories can be fashioned of scrim or canvas and ornamented with a single border pattern in two harmonizing colors. This set should consist of a collar-bag with a circular bottom, a handkerchief-case, glove-case, veil-case, and pockets for manicure articles.

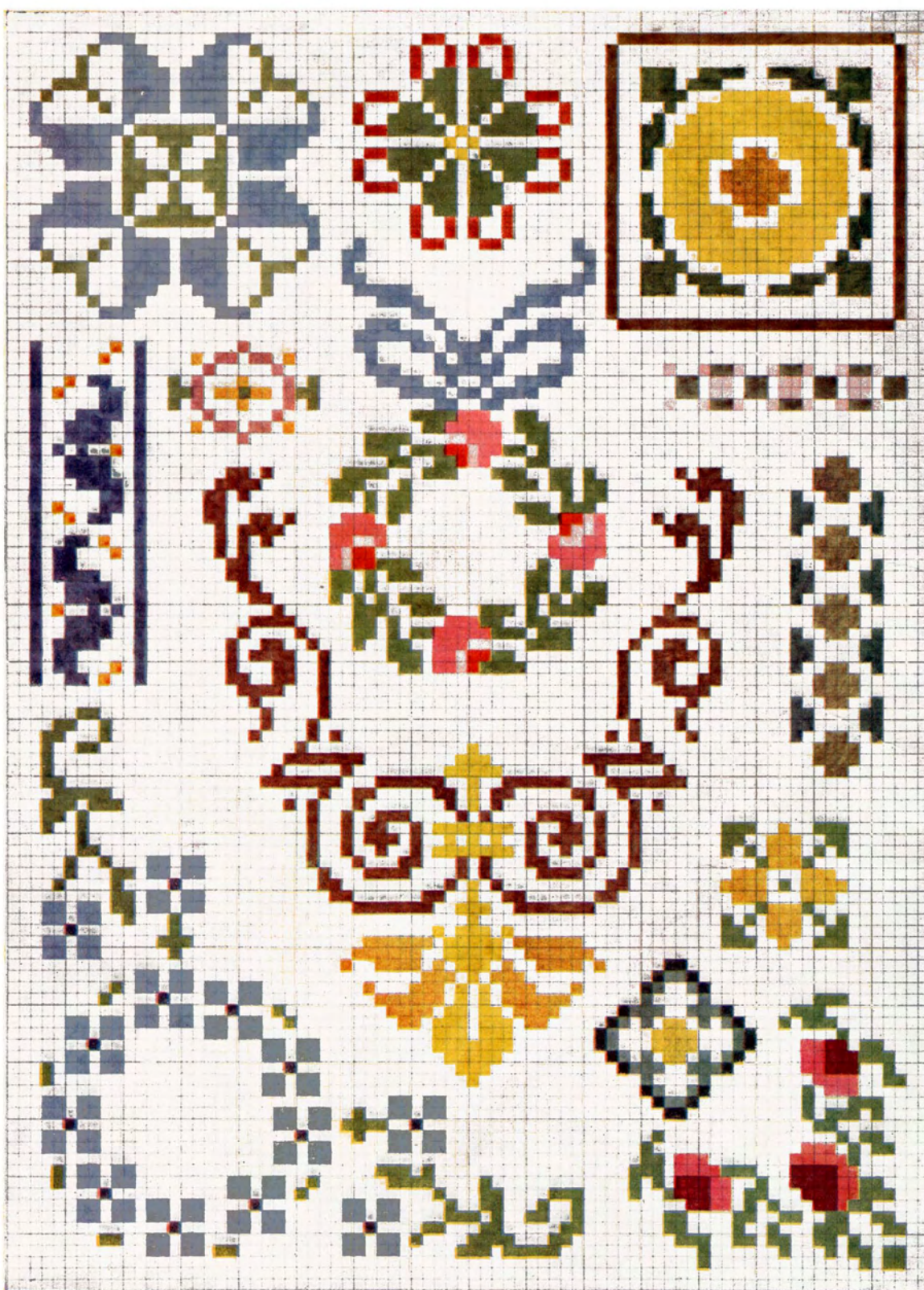


PLATE III

PLATE IV

ON the opposite page are given various animal figures to be worked in cross-stitch or some modification of cross-stitch on regular weave canvas. These figures will especially appeal to children and they are suitable for ornamenting many of the little articles of the nursery, as well as the more personal belongings of the child. Being more or less conventional in form, and being used for the purposes for which these designs are intended, one need not attempt to follow the coloring of nature, but any colors, whatever, can be used. The illustrations show the designs in two or three colors, but any of them work out nicely in a single color since the forms have a distinct character aside from any variety of tone; however, the illustrations are intended as a guide for both color and form.

Little eating-bibs of huckaback, Hardanger cloth, piqué (if Penelope canvas is used for the cross-stitch), or any similar fabric are very attractive to the child when ornamented with such figures as the knowing-looking little dog at the top of the page, the frog, moose, or a row of cunning little rabbits with uplifted feet.

On aprons and play dresses the same figures are appropriate or any other designs shown on the page may be used with pleasing results, while on the hangings and draperies of the playroom there are limitless possibilities for using cross-stitch. The two deer with trees and flowers are suitable for the end of a scarf, the tiny Indian on a horse should be repeated until there is a band of sturdy warriors across the bottom of the sash curtains.

The cooing doves or the flying bird could also be used on scrim curtains, and if a repetition of the figure seems insufficient ornament, any conventional border taken from another page and used with the birds makes a happy combination. The band could be used across the bottom of the curtains and up one side, while the birds would be repeated at infrequent intervals above the band across the bottom.

For the creeping baby a play-rug is almost essential, and to keep the little one happy and contented the rug should be as interesting as possible. A pretty rug for this purpose is made of a smooth quality of burlap in tan or some light color, with quaint figures worked over it in cross-stitch with bright yarns or heavy cotton thread. These may either be scattered over the surface promiscuously or arranged in conventional order in squares or bands. A good idea would be to divide the surface off into rectangular spaces with lines of cross-stitch, then fit the single figures into these spaces. Cross-stitch borders of some stiff simple pattern used across the ends help to hold the design together and give more of a rug effect to the whole.

Some of the animal designs are appropriate for other purposes than children's articles and will work up nicely on towel ends, novelties of different sorts, pillows, couch-covers, and curtains. When used with other more conventional spots or borders their uses are almost limitless, or they can be used alone.

Little girls who are just beginning to sew will find great delight in picking out these patterns on bits of canvas to be used for doll pillows, spreads, curtains, and rugs, and this simple work not only entertains the child and keeps her busy and happy, but also helps her become familiar with needle and thread and teaches her one of the great lessons of life.