

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.

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.

