

DAMASK.

DAMASK, the name given to all textile fabrics in which figures of flowers, fruits, or others not of geometrical regularity, are woven. The word is supposed to be derived from the city of Damascus having been an early seat of these manufactures. From the intricacy of the early process, the art of D. weaving was long a mystery confined to a few localities; but since the introduction of the Jacquard-machine, it is extensively employed wherever ornament is wanted in the stuffs used for dress or house-furnishings. The rich satins and brocades of Lyon and Spitalfields, the flowered ribbons of Coventry, and the bed and window curtains of Halifax and Bradford, are all examples of D. manufacture; but it is in the department of table-linen that the art has had its widest scope and greatest triumphs. The principal seats of the manufacture, on the continent of Europe, are at Courtrai and Liege in Belgium, and in some parts of Saxony, Silesia, and Austria; in England, to a considerable extent at Barnsley, in Yorkshire; in Ireland, at Belfast, Lisburne, and Ardoyne; and in Scotland, at Dunfermline, which may be called the metropolis of the manufacture.

There are three descriptions of D. known in the trade—viz., 1. Full Harness, which is generally employed in patterns of limited size and minute detail, the peculiarity being that the Jacquard-machine only lifts one thread by each needle, and in such cases, the pattern is repeated to fill up the breadth wanted. 2. 'Single' or 'Common' D., in which any number of threads, from two to seven, can be lifted by one needle, to form the pattern; while the ground is produced by a set of five shafts and heddles, giving from twice to seven times the extent of pattern obtained from the same machine by the full-harness process. In full harness and single D. goods, a square fabric is considered the proper medium, that is, the warp and weft equal; but sometimes a thread or two less or more on warp or weft is used, according to the effect wanted to be produced. 3. In Double D., the pattern is produced in the same way as in single, and the ground formed by eight shafts

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and heddles, forming what the weavers call an eight-leaved twill, absorbing one-half more weft than warp, and giving that fine satin-like ground which distinguishes double damask. Besides these descriptions of D., a mixed cotton and woollen coloured fabric in table-covers has been introduced, and is now manufactured extensively, the ground of which is woven with twelve shafts.

To give an idea of the capital required to work the finer branches of the trade, it may be mentioned, that it is quite usual for the mere designing and painting of a pattern to cost £50; and £70 has been paid for some extensive designs; while the famous 'Crimean Hero' pattern, containing portraits of the Queen, Prince Consort, Emperor Napoleon, &c., cost £600 of outlay, ere a yard of cloth could be brought to market, employing seven Jacquard-machines, consuming 50,000 cards, and containing 4800 threads in the square yard. In 1836, there were in Dunfermline 3000 D. and 517 diaper looms, and the capital embarked in the trade was estimated at £826,261, and the total number of persons employed, 5044. Steam-power was successfully inaugurated in 1849, when one factory employed about 100 power-looms. In 1877, there were 11 power-loom factories, with 4000 looms, two-thirds of which were employed in the weaving of damask. When it is considered that the production of one power-loom is equal to that of four hand-looms, some idea may be formed of the development of the trade since 1836.—A good description of D. and the D. loom is to be found in Chalmers's *History of Dunfermline*. vols. i. and ii.