

LAWN, a very thin fabric made from level linen or cotton yarns. It is used for light dresses and trimmings, also for handkerchiefs. The terms lawn and cambric (*q.v.*) are often intended to indicate the same fabric. The word "lawn" was formerly derived from the French name for the fabric *linon*, from *lin*, flax, linen, but Skeat (*Etym. Dict.*, 1898, Addenda) and A. Thomas (*Romania*, xxix. 182, 1900) have shown that the real source of the word is to be found in the name of the French town Laon. Skeat quotes from Palsgrave, *Les claircissement de la langue Françoÿse* (1530), showing that the early name of the fabric was *Laune lynen*. An early form of the word was "laund," probably due to an adaptation to "laund," lawn, glade or clearing in a forest, now used of a closely-mown expanse of grass in a garden, park, &c. (see GRASS and HORTICULTURE). This word comes from O. Fr. *launde*, mod. *lande*, wild, heathy or sandy ground, covered with scrub or brushwood, a word of Celtic origin; cf. Irish and Breton *lann*, heathy ground, also enclosure, land; Welsh *llan*, enclosure. It is cognate with "land," common to Teutonic languages. In the original sense of clearing in a forest, glade, Lat. *saltus*, "lawn," still survives in the New Forest, where it is used of the feeding-places of cattle.