

DAMASK, a kind of woven cloth, composed both of flax and of silk, which is believed to have been originally brought from Damascus. Linen damask is used for table-cloths and napkins. Until within the last half century, the cloths of this kind used in England were imported from Germany; but the manufacture has since that time been successfully carried on both in Scotland and in Ireland. Damask cloths are of thick texture but fine in quality, and the weaving of them puts into requisition all the skill of the weaver for the production of the elaborate patterns which they bear. Some of these patterns require upwards of twelve hundred changes of the draw-loom for their completion, the method of performing which could not be explained without going into the detail of the art of weaving; it will however be briefly treated in a later article. [WEAVING.] The weaving of silk damask was introduced into England by the Flemish weavers, who fled hither from the persecutions of the Duke of Alva in 1567. For a long time silk damask dresses were used on all occasions of ceremony by ladies of rank and by wealthy commoners; but they were never commonly worn. They were wrought with a great variety of colours, and if the patterns did not exhibit much taste they were sufficiently showy; from the quantity of silk which they contained, they were also very costly. The damask employed at the present day for curtains and the like articles of household furniture is made of a mixture of silk with flax, cotton, or wool; the warp, or long threads, being of the more costly material.