

VELVET (It. *velluto*, Fr. *velours*, Ger. *Sammt*). Velvet, like damask, is primarily a silk weave developed on the shuttle loom in China. (See SILK.) The pile surface is formed by an extra set of warp threads looped over wires, so that the loops rise in relief. When the pile is to be a cut pile the wires have a knife at the end which cuts the loops as it is withdrawn. Plain velvets have a uniform surface of cut pile of solid color. The more elaborate figured velvets can be profitably made only on hand looms. Many of them have pile figures that contrast boldly with flat satin, twill, or taffeta ground. Some of the early Venetian velvets had figures still further elaborated by cutting the pile two different heights. The Genoese velvets were distinguished for contrasts of cut with uncut pile. Plain velvets are often woven double on the machine loom, without wires, the pile being formed by special warps that pass back and forth between the upper and the lower parts of a double cloth. The cutting of this common pile produces two velvets with a minimum of effort, and some of these double-woven velvets, by a process originated and developed in America, have figures produced by bringing only part of the pile warps to the surface in the ground. The result is a two-tone velvet, suggesting damask as closely as a cut-pile surface can suggest a flat surface. Velvets are also figured by printing and embossing after the fabric leaves the loom. See PLUSH.