

**Damask.** 1. (*Fabric.*) *a.* A rich silk stuff originally made at Damascus and thence deriving its name. It had raised figures in various patterns, and flowers in their natural colors embossed upon a white or colored ground. The work was probably of the nature of embroidery in the first place, but the figures were afterwards exhibited on the surface by a peculiar arrangement of the loom, which brought up certain of the colors and depressed others, according to the requirements of the pattern.

We read of similar goods in the year 1305 B. C., when Deborah celebrated the victory over Sisera: —  
“Divers colors of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.”

The events of the bloody battle of Mt. Tabor took place but four days' march from Damascus, and it is probable that this ancient city was, as early as the times of Abraham (1996 – 1822 B. C.), the workshop of articles in metal, silk, wool, and flax, as well as the depot of an extensive trade between the Orientals on the east and the Phœnicians, the carriers of antiquity, on the west.

Abraham's steward was a man of Damascus, and, in default of issue, would have been heir to his property. Through all the uproar of antiquity Damascus has maintained a prominent position, being geographically well situated and rich in the great necessity of a warm climate, water.

“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” said the haughty Syrian.

Mohammed refused to enter the city, as it was decreed that a man could enter Paradise but once, and he did not wish to exhaust his chances by an entrance on a paradise upon earth.

The steel, the roses, and the fabrics of Damascus survive in most modern languages.

The rich work of the looms of Damascus opened the eyes of the rugged men of the West, who alternately won and lost the rocky mountain-road which led to Jerusalem, and the fabric has retained its name and substantially its character ever since.

Silk and worsted damasks were favorite materials with our grandmothers for bed-hangings, curtains, and the upholstering of furniture.

“A bed of ancient damask.”

*b.* A woven fabric of linen, extensively made in Scotland and Ireland, and used for table-cloths, fine toweling, napkins, etc. By a particular management of the warp-threads in the loom, figures, fruits, and flowers are exhibited on the surface, as in the ancient damask. It is known as *washing* damask, or, when unbleached, as *brown* damask.

A small patterned toweling, known as *diaper*, has a figure produced in the same manner.

*c.* Stuff with a wavy or watered appearance. *Moire*.