

**Damask** (from *Damascus*, whence first brought), a variegated textile fabric of silk, richly ornamented with raised patterns representing flowers, fruits, etc., woven in the loom. It is also fabricated in woolen stuffs. Woolen damasks and moreens are sold in England at 9d. to 1s. 6d. per yard.

*Damask* likewise denotes a kind of wrought linen, used chiefly for table-cloths and napkins, and so called because its patterns resemble those of real damask. It was first made in Flanders, but it is now wrought extensively in Britain, particularly at Dunfermline in Scotland, and also at Lisburn and Ardoyne in Ireland. An inferior description has latterly been made of cotton. See *Linen*.

*Irish Damasks*.—As early as the beginning of the last century, the manufacture of linen damasks was introduced into Ireland from Germany; and there still exist specimens woven in Ireland 130 years ago. The manufacture has gone on increasing in excellence, and it is now considered that the high-class Irish damasks equal any from any other country. Almost all are used in Great Britain, and the better kinds are so costly that none but the wealthy can purchase them. Hand-loom weaving is invariably adopted for the best damasks; but the power-loom is now beginning to be employed for the cheaper damasks and diapers; and it is hoped that this will create a foreign market for them. The Jacquard loom is extensively used for the richer damasks, for which its wonderful action especially adapts it. What a Jacquard loom is, a long and wearisome description would scarcely make intelligible; what it appears like, the thousands who watched the working of the several Jacquard looms at the great exhibition may perhaps remember; what it does is exemplified by specimens of pattern, or damask, or figure weaving, for which it is especially adapted. In designing table-cloths, table napkins, and d'oyleys, for royal personages, city companies, club houses, and regimental messes, the damask manufacturers of Ireland sometimes display considerable taste; and this taste afterward reflects some of its light upon the cheaper and ordinary commercial products. It is yet a disputed point among persons artistically inclined, what kind of ornamentation is best fitted for colorless damasks; human forms and features are seldom damasked satisfactorily, and buildings are very tame affairs when so depicted; at present, heraldic emblems seem to take the lead.

*Damask* is also applied to a very fine steel, prepared in some parts of the Levant, but particularly in former times at Damascus, whence its name. It is used for sword and cutlass blades, and is very finely tempered.