

#### LINEN AND LINEN MANUFACTURES

fabrics manufactured wholly from flax or lint (Lat. *linum*). The manufacture of linen has reached its greatest perfection in France and the Netherlands, where the stimulus to produce fine yarn (see SPINNING) for the lacemakers has given rise to such care and attention in the cultivation and preparation of flax, that in point of fineness of fibre they have been unequalled. Consequently, the linens of France, Belgium, and Holland have long enjoyed a well-deserved reputation, and in the article of lawn, which is the finest kind of linen-cloth made, the French are unrivalled. In the ordinary kinds of linen, our own manufactures are rapidly improving, and will soon equal in quality the productions of continental competitors. Those of Ireland, especially, are remarkable for their excellence, and this trade has become a very important one in that country; whilst in Scotland a large trade in the coarser and inferior kinds has located itself. The export of linen manufactures and linen yarns from the United Kingdom, in 1876, was in value £7,070,149; and the amount produced for home-consumption may be reckoned at £10,000,000.

The chief kinds of linen manufactures, besides yarn and thread, which will be described under SPINNING, are: LAWN (Fr. *linon*), the finest of flax manufactures, formerly exclusively a French production, but very fine lawns are now made in Belfast, Armagh, and Warrington; CAMBRIC (q. v.); DAMASK (q. v.); DIAPER (q. v.). Of the finer plain fabrics, *Sheetings* are the most important in this country. The chief places of their manufacture are Belfast, Armagh, and Leeds. Common *Sheeting* and *Towelling* are very extensively manufactured in Scotland, particularly at Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Forfar, and Arbroath. *Ducks*, *Huckabacks*, *Osnaburgs*, *Crash*, and *Tick* (corrupted from *ticken* and *dekken*, Dutch for cover), are very coarse and heavy materials, some fully bleached, others unbleached, or nearly so. They are chiefly made in Scotland, the great seat of the manufacture being at the towns just mentioned, although much is made in the smaller towns and villages, also at Leeds and Barnsley in England. Some few varieties of velvet and velveteen are also made of flax at Manchester, and much linen-yarn is used as warp for other materials.

Linen is one of the most ancient of all textile manufactures, at least it is one of the earliest mentioned. The cerecloth, in which the most ancient mummies are wrapped, proves its early and very extensive use among the Egyptians. It formed also parts of the garments of the Hebrew as well as the Egyptian priests. Panopolis was the seat of the manufacture of linen in the East, as, according to Strabo, it was there the manufacture of linen was chiefly conducted. The wonderful durability of linen is evidenced by its existence on mummies, and by the remarkable fact mentioned by the German writer, Seetzen, and referred to by Blumenbach, that he had found several napkins within the folds of the covering on a mummy which he unwrapped, and that he had them washed several times without injury, and used with great veneration 'this venerable linen, which had been woven more than 1700 years!' From the time of these ancient Egyptians up to the present period, the use of linen for clothing and other purposes has been continuous; and although the introduction and vast development of the cotton manufacture checked its consumption for a time, it has fully regained, and has indeed exceeded, its former proportions as one of our great staples.