

GAUZE, a light, transparent fabric, originally of silk, and now sometimes made of linen or cotton, woven in an open manner with very fine yarn. It is said to have been originally made at Gaza in Palestine, whence the name. Some of the gauzes from eastern Asia were brocaded with flowers of gold or silver. In the weaving of gauze the warp threads, in addition to being crossed as in plain weaving, are twisted in pairs from left to right and from right to left alternately, after each shot of weft, thereby keeping the weft threads at equal distances apart, and retaining them in their parallel position. The textures are woven either plain, striped or figured; and the material receives many designations, according to its appearance and the purposes to which it is devoted. A thin cotton fabric, woven in the same way, is known as leno, to distinguish it from muslin made by plain weaving. Silk gauze was a prominent and extensive industry in the west of Scotland during the second half of the 18th century, but on the introduction of cotton-weaving it greatly declined. In addition to its use for dress purposes silk gauze is much employed for bolting or sifting flour and other finely ground substances. The term gauze is applied generally to transparent fabrics of whatever fibre made, and to the fine-woven wire-cloth used in safety-lamps, sieves, window-blinds, &c.