an account of the silk-worm, which he describes as a hom­ed caterpillar, he does not indicate its native country. As­syria is named by Pliny as the original region of the bom­byx, and he adds the extraordinary statement, that the stuff which the women of Rome unravelled and wove anew, was made from a *woollen* substance combed by the Seres from the leaves of trees, and that draperies formed from it were imported from the country of the Seres. These ancient people, we need scarcely remark, are generally believed to be the same with those we now name Chinese. Silk, in their language, is called *sβ* or *ser,* the latter term corre­sponding with that used by the Greeks, who, we cannot doubt, derived both the material itself, and the name by which it was designated, from the Chinese nation. According to La- treille, the city of Turfan, in Little Bucharia, was for a long time the rendezvous of the western caravans, and the chief entrepôt of the Chinese silks. It was the metropolis of the Seres of Upper Asia, or of the Serica of Ptolemy, situate, according to that author, between the Ganges and the East­ern Ocean. Hence the *Serica vestis* of the Romans, and the word *Sericum,* their name for silk.

This substance was but slightly known in Europe before the time of Augustus, and in the days of Aurelian was va­lued at its weight in gold. This was probably owing to the mode in which it was procured by the merchants of Alex­andria, who had no direct intercourse with China, the chief, if not the only country in which the silk-worm was then reared. Though so highly lauded both by Greek and Ro­man writers, it was in frequent use for many centuries be­fore any certain knowledge was obtained either of the coun­try from which the material was derived, or of the means by which it was produced. By some it was supposed to be a fine down adhering to the leaves of trees and flowers ; by others it was regarded as a delicate kind of wool or cotton,@@1 and even those who had some idea of its insect origin, were incorrectly informed of the mode of its formation.@@2 The court of the Greek emperors, which surpassed even that of the Asiatic sovereigns in splendour and magnificence, be­came profuse in its display of this lustrous ornament; but as the Persians, from the advantages which their local situ­ation gave them over the merchants from the Arabian Gulph, were enabled to supplant them in all those marts of lndia to which silk was brought by sea from the East, and had it in their power to cut off the caravans which travelled over land to China through their northern provinces, Constantinople thus became dependent on a rival power for an article now deemed essential to the enjoyment of civilized life. The Persians, with the rapacity inseparable from the power of monopolists, exorbitantly raised its price, and many attempts were made by Justinian to free his subjects from their ex­actions. An accidental circumstance is said to have accom­plished what the wisdom of the great legislator was unable to achieve. Two Persian monks, who had been employed as missionaries in one of the Christian churches established in India, had penetrated to the country of the Seres, that is, to China, where they observed the operations of the silk­worm, and acquired a knowledge of the art of man in work­ing up its produce into so many rich and costly fabrics. The love of lucre, mingled, it is said, (though perhaps a single motive may suffice,) with a feeling of indignation that so valuable a branch of commerce should be enjoyed by unbe­lieving nations, induced them to repair to Constantinople, where they explained to the emperor the true origin of silk, and the various modes by which it was prepared and manu­factured. Encouraged by the most liberal promises, they undertook to transport a sufficient supply of these extraor­dinary worms to Constantinople, which they effected by con­veying the eggs of the parent moth in the interior of a hol­low cane. They were hatched, it is alleged, by the heat of a dunghill, and the larvæ were fed with the leaves of wild mulberry. They worked, underwent their accustomed me­tamorphoses, and multiplied their kind according to use and wont, and in the course of time have become almost universally cultivated throughout the southern countries of Europe, thus effecting an important change in the commer­cial relations which had so long existed between our conti- tinent and the east.@@3

The cultivation of the silk-worm spread, at the period of the first crusades, from the Morea into Sicily, the kingdom of Naples, and several centuries afterwards, more especially under the administration of Sully, into France, to which kingdom it is well known to he now a source of great wealth. It is indeed curious to consider how the breeding of a few millions of small caterpillars should occasion such a dispa­rity in the circumstances, or at least in the outward shew, of different tribes of the human race. When the wife and em­press of Aurelian was refused a garment of silk on account of its extreme costliness, the most ordinary classes of the Chinese were, we doubt not, clad in that material from top to toe; and although, among ourselves, weekday and holi­day are now alike profaned by uncouth forms, whose vast circumference is clothed in silk attire, yet our James the Sixth was forced to borrow a pair of silken hose from the Earl of Mar, that his state and bearing might be more effec­tive in the presence of the ambassador of England, “ for ye would not,” said the uncouth pedant, “ that your king should appear as a scrub before strangers.” Queen Elizabeth, in the third year of her reign (1560), was highly gratified by receiving from her silk-woman, Mrs. Montague, a pair of knit black-silk stockings, with which she is said to have been so delighted, as never afterwards to have worn those of cloth. Even Henry the Eighth, notwithstanding his expensive magnificence, could not indulge himself as did his daugh­ter, but wore cloth hose, except on gala days, when he sometimes contrived to obtain a pair or two of silken ones from Spain.

The silk-worm cultivated in Europe is the same as that which produces the greater proportion of the Chinese ma­nufacture. It is the larva of the *Bombyx mori,* a pale co­loured moth, with two or three obscure and transverse streaks, and a lunate spot on the superior wings. The ca­terpillar feeds on the leaves of the mulberry, and before as­suming the chrysalis form, it spins a protecting covering in the shape of an oval cocoon, of a close tissue of the finest silk, usually of a yellow colour, but sometimes white. The fila­ment does not form regular concentric circles round the in­terior surface of the cocoon, but is spun as it were in spots, going backwards and forwards with a wavy motion. This apparently irregular manner of proceeding is plainly per­ceptible when the silk is wound off the ball, which does not make more than one or two entire revolutions, while ten or twelve yards of silk are being transferred to the reel.@@1 The caterpillar casts and renews its skin several times before it commences to spin, and when full grown, it measures from two and a half to three inches. The principal points to be attended to in its cultivation, are regular feeding three or four times a-day, good ventilation, and a rather high tem­perature, especially at the period of spinning, say 70°Fahrenheit. It lives and spins though fed only on lettuce leaves, but their true and natural food is the mulberry, es­pecially the white kind, called by botanists *Morus alba.*

The important tree just named, is a native of China, from whence it is believed to have been transferred to lndia, Per­sia, and Asia Minor. It was introduced at Constantinople during the sixth century, in the reign of Justinian, in con­nection, no doubt, with the importation of the worms them­selves. It was afterwards introduced into Greece, and the name *Mοrea,* by which the Peloponnesus is now distinguished,

@@@ Sec Robertson’s Historical Description concerning Ancient India.

@@@, Edinburgh Cabinet Library, viii. 152.

@@@5 See Procopius De Bello Gothico ; Gibbon's Decline and Fall (Reign of Justinian); Edin. Cab. Library, already cited ; and thia

Encyc. Art. *Entimology,* ix. 247.

@@@4 Cabinet Cyclopaedia, xxii. 112. .