as *σήp,* the nation whence it came was to them *∑ήρes*, and the fibre itself *σηρικόv,* whence the Latin *sericum,* the French *soie,* the German *Seide* and the English *silk.*

*History.—*The silk industry originated in China; and according to native records it has existed there from a very remote period. The empress, known as the lady of Si-ling, wife of a famous emperor, Huang-ti (2640 b.c.), encouraged the cultivation of the mulberry tree, the rearing of the worms and the reeling of silk. This empress is said to have devoted herself personally to the care of silkworms, and she is by the Chinese credited with the invention of the loom. A voluminous ancient literature testifies not only to the antiquity but also to the importance of Chinese sericulture, and to the care and attention bestowed on it by royal and noble families. The Chinese guarded the secrets of their valuable art with vigilant jealousy; and there is no doubt that many centuries passed before the culture spread beyond the country of its origin. Through Korea a knowledge of the silkworm and its produce reached Japan, but not before the early part of the 3rd century. One of the most ancient books of Japanese history, the *Nihongi,* states that towards A.D. 300 some Koreans were sent from Japan to China to engage competent people to teach the arts of weaving and preparing silk goods. They brought with them four Chinese girls, who instructed the court and the people in the art of plain and figured weaving; and to the honour of these pioneer silk weavers a temple was erected in the province of Settsu. Great efforts were made to encourage the industry, which from that period grew into one of national importance. At a period probably little later a knowledge of the working of silk travelled westward, and the cultivation of the silkworm was established in India. According to a tradition the eggs of the insect and the seed of the mulberry tree were carried to India by a Chinese princess concealed in the lining of her head dress. The fact that seri­culture was in India first established in the valley of the Brahma­putra and in the tract lying between that river and the Ganges renders it probable that it was introduced overland from the Chinese empire. From the Ganges valley the silkworm was slowly carried westward and spread in Khotan, Persia and the states of Central Asia.

Most critics recognize in the obscure word *d'meseq* or *d'mesheq,*Amos iii. 12, a name of silk corresponding to the Arabic *dimaks,*late Greek *μέταξα*, English *damask*, and also follow the ancients in understanding *meshi,* Ezek. xvi. 10, 13, of “silken gauze.” But the first notice of the silkworm in Western literature occurs in Aristotle, *Hist. anim.* v. 19 (17), 11 (6), where he speaks of “ a great worm which has horns and so differs from others. At its first metamorphosis it produces a caterpillar, then a bombylius and lastly a chrysalis—all these changes taking place within six months. From this animal women separate and reel off the cocoons and afterwards spin them. It is said that this was first spun in the island of Cos by Pamphile, daughter of Plates.” Aristotle’s vague knowledge of the worm may have been derived from information acquired by the Greeks with Alexander the Great; but long before this time raw silk must have begun to be imported at Cos, where it was woven into a gauzy tissue, the famous *Coa vestis,* which revealed rather than clothed the form.

Towards the beginning of the Christian era raw silk began to form an important and costly item among the prized products of the East which came to Rome. Allusions to silk and its source became common in classical literature; but, although these references show familiarity with the material, they are singularly vague and inaccurate as to its source; even Pliny knew nothing more about the silkworm than could be learned from Aristotle’s description. The silken textures which at first found their way to Rome were necessarily of enormous cost, and their use by men was deemed a piece of effeminate luxury. From an anecdote of Aurelian, who neither used silk himself nor would allow his wife to possess a single silken garment, we learn that silk was worth its weight in gold.

Notwithstanding its price and the restraints otherwise put on the use of silk the trade grew. Under Justinian a monopoly of the trade and manufacture was reserved to the emperor, and looms, worked by women, were set up within the imperial palace at Constantinople. Justinian also endeavoured, through the Christian prince of Abyssinia, to divert the trade from the Persian route along which silk was then brought into the east of Europe. In this he failed, but two Persian monks who had long resided in China, and there learned the whole art and mystery of silkworm rearing, arrived at Constantinople and imparted their knowledge to the emperor. By him they were induced to return to China and attempt to bring to Europe the material necessary for the cultivation of silk, which they effected by concealing the eggs of the silkworm in a hollow cane. From the precious contents of that bamboo tube, brought to Constantinople about the year 550, were produced all the races and varieties of silkworm which stocked and supplied the Western world for more than twelve hundred years.

Under the care of the Greeks the silkworm took kindly to its Western home and flourished, and the silken textures of Byzan­tium became famous. At a later period the conquering Saracens obtained a mastery over the trade, and by them it was spread both east and west—the textures becoming meantime impressed with the patterns and colours peculiar to that people. They established the trade in the thriving towns of Asia Minor, and they planted it as far west as Sicily, as Sicilian silks of the 12th century with Saracenic patterns still testify. Ordericus Vitalis, who died in the first half of the 12th century, mentions that the bishop of St Evroul, in Normandy, brought with him from Apulia in southern Italy several large pieces of silk, out of the finest of which four copes were made for his cathedral chanters. The cultivation and manufacture spread northwards to Florence, Milan, Genoa and Venice—all towns which became famous for silken textures in medieval times. In 1480 silk weaving was begun under Louis XI. at Tours, and in 1520 Francis I. brought from Milan silkworm eggs, which were reared in the Rhone valley. About the beginning of the 17th century Olivier de Serres and Laffémas, somewhat against the will of Sully, obtained royal edicts favouring the growth of mulberry plantations and the cultivation of silk; but it cannot be said that these industries were firmly established till Colbert encouraged the planting of the mulberry by premiums, and otherwise stimulated local efforts.

Into England silk manufacture was introduced during the reign of Henry VI.; but the first serious impulse to manufactures of that class was due to the immigration in 1585 of a large body of skilled Flemish weavers who fled from the Low Countries in consequence of the struggle with Spain then devastating their land. Precisely one hundred years later religious troubles gave the most effective impetus to the silk-trade of England, when the revocation of the edict of Nantes sent simultaneously to Switzerland, Germany and England a vast body of the most skilled artisans of France, who planted in these countries silk­weaving colonies which are to this day the principal rivals of the French manufacturers. The bulk of the French Protestant weavers settled at Spitalfields, London—an incorporation of silk workers having been there formed in 1629. James I. used many efforts to encourage the planting of the mulberry and the rearing of silkworms both at home and in the colonies. Up to the year 1718 England depended on the thrown silks of Europe for manufacturing purposes. But in that year Lombe of Derby, disguised as a common workman, and obtaining entrance as such into one of the Italian throwing mills, made drawings of the machinery used for this process. On his return, subsidized by the government, he built and worked, on the banks of the Derwent, the first English throwing mill. In 1825 a public company was formed and incorporated under the name of the British, Irish and Colonial Silk Company, with a capital of ₤1,000,000, principally with the view of introducing sericulture into Ireland, but it was a complete failure, and the rearing of the silkworm cannot be said ever to have become a branch of British industry.

In 1522 Cortes appointed officials to introduce sericulture into New Spain (Mexico), and mulberry trees were then planted and eggs were brought from Spain. The Mexican adventure is