mountainous ; the Carpathian range is partly on the eastern side of it, and the Moravian on the west. Much of the land is very productive in corn, pasture, and wood. The people are mostly of Sclavonian origin, and speak the Polish lan­guage more than the German. In the city of Bielitz are manufacturers of woollen goods, and in all parts linen is made from flax grown near them, which is both good and abundant. There are good grammar schools in Teschen, Troppau, and Weisswassen.

SILICERNIUM, amongst the Romans, was a feast of a private nature, provided for the dead some time after the funeral. It consisted of beans, lettuces, bread, eggs, and other things. These were laid upon the tomb, as a repast for the dead.

SILIUS Italicus, Caius, a celebrated Roman poet, and author of an epic poem in seventeen books, which contains a history of the second Punic war, was born in the reign of Tiberius, and is supposed to have derived the name of *Italicus* from the place of his birth ; but whether he was bom at Italica in Spain, or at Corfinium in Italy, which, according to Strabo, had the name of *Italica* given it du­ring the Social war, is a point which is unascertained. When he came to Rome, he applied himself to the bar ; and, by a close imitation of Cicero; succeeded so well, that he became a celebrated advocate, and a most accomplished orator. His merit and character recommended him to the highest offices in the republic, even to the consulship, of which he was possessed when Nero died. He is said to have lent his assistance in accusing persons of high rank and for­tune, whom that wicked emperor had devoted to destruc­tion : but he retrieved his character afterwards by a long and uniform course of virtuous behaviour. Vespasian sent him as proconsul into Asia, where he behaved with clean hands and unblemished reputation. After having thus spent the best part of his life in the service of his country, he resolved to consecrate the remainder to retirement and the muses. He had several fine villas in the country ; one at Tusculum celebrated for having been Cicero’s, and a farm near Naples, said to have been Virgil’s, at which was his tomb, which Silius often visited.

He has imitated Virgil, and though he falls infinitely short of him, yet he has discovered a great and universal genius ; which would have enabled him to succeed in some degree in whatever he undertook. Having been for some time afflicted with an imposthume, which was deemed in­curable, he grew weary of life, to which, in the language of Pliny, he put an end with determined courage. There have been many editions of Silius Italicus. A neat and cor­rect one was published at Leipsic in 1696, in 8vo, with short and useful notes by Cellarius ; but the best are those *cum notis integris Variorum er Arnoldi Drakenborch.* Tra- ject. ad Rhenum, 1717, in 4to. ; and *cum notis Ruperti,* 2 vols. 8vo. Gott. 1795.

SILK. Under the head Silk-Worm, will be found an ac­count of the first introduction of the insect, and the com­mencement of the manufacture in the western empire. From thence it spread into Sicily and Italy; and during the time that the French occupied Milan (1521 ), artizans were con­veyed by Francis I. to Lyons, and under his protection, the manufacture of silk made great progress.'

When the Duke of Parma took and plundered the city of Antwerp in 1585, a great proportion of the merchants and artizans took refuge in England; these introduced the silk manufacture into this country, which was fostered and en­couraged by the English government. Before this period the produce of the silk-worm had been little seen in Eng­land.

The climate of England has not been found favourable for the rearing of silk-worms ; repeated attempts have been made from time to time to cultivate the breed, but they have always failed. It was supposed that the British settle­ments in America would prove more favourable for this pur­pose, and in several of them the experiment was made, but from some cause or other, these were not more successful than those of the mother country.

The manufacture of silk goods has been the object of solicitous care to the British government, and various en­actments were made by successive monarchs, with the view of encouraging it in this country. It received a great sti­mulus in 1685, when the revocation of the edict of Nantes banished from France multitudes of her most industrious and skilful artificers, which greatly benefited the countries that sheltered the injured emigrante. About 70,000 took refuge in England and Ireland, and transplanted various branches of the useful arts to different districts of this country. A large body of silk weavers settled in Spittalfields, where descend­ants of many of them may still be found.

England was, however, entirely dependent on foreigners for organzine silk thread, till Mr. Lombe of Derby, in the year 1718, having gone to Italy in the disguise of a common work­man, took drawings of the silk-throwing machinery in Pied­mont, and, on his return, erected a large mill on the river Derwent at Derby. The extensive and powerful machin­ery of this mill contained 26,586 wheels, and 97,746 move­ments, which worked 73,726 yards of organzine silk thread, by every revolution of the water-wheel, which revolved three times in the minute, and thus produced 318,504,960 yards of organzine per day.

The silk manufacture continued to increase in England, though the workmen were constantly clamouring against the importation of foreign goods. With a view to encour­age the manufacture, an act was passed (3 Geb. I. cap. 15) for granting bounties on the exportation of silk fabrics ; this was, however, no more than a drawback of part of the duties paid on the importation of the raw' silk. In 1741, permis­sion was given to the Russia Company to import the raw silk of Persia at the same rate of duty as from the Levant; and, in 1749, the same reduction was made on the duties on raw silk imported by the East India Company from China. In 1764, the fashion of the times running in favour of French silks, and the wages of the English weavers being low, and work scarce, the operatives assembled in great multitudes, and ina tumultuous manner presented petitions to Parliament praying for the total prohibition of foreign wrought silks. By the representation which the operatives made of their sufferings, Parliament was induced to reduce the duties oh raw and thrown silk, and entirely to prohibit the importa­tion of certain articles of manufactured silk goods. Thb operative weavers did not, however, derive those benefits from the prohibitions against importation, which they expect­ed, and they had frequently recourse to combinations to force their masters to raise their wages. These disputés between the masters and workmen having led to violence and riot, an act was passed in 1773, and confirmed by two subsequent acts, empowering the aldermeri of London, and the magistrates of Middlesex to fix the wages of the Spit- talfields weavers. But it is unnecessary to recapitulate the applications of the operatives and manufacturers for protec­tion against foreign competition, and the attempts of the lé­gislature to encourage the manufacture by restrictive and prohibitory enactments from 1773 to 1824 ; the silk trade in England, from the futile attempts to bolster it up, was kept in an artificial and languishing state. The manufacturer, depending upon the protection of Parliamentary restrictions on foreign competion, rather than on his own skill and ex­ertions, was not anxious to discover and introduce improve­ments into the manufacture. Since the change of system, the imports of the raw material, and the exports of the ma­nufactured article have rapidly increased; at present the va­lue of the manufacture is supposed to exceed L.10,000,000 annually, and considerable quantities of manufactured silk are exported to France itself.