

SERICULTURE—A GLANCE AT THE HISTORY OF SILK.

BY LOUIS A. BERTRAND.
VIII.

According to the Chinese annals, the Empress Si Ling Chi was the first who, about five thousand years ago, having gathered the silkworms from the trees, fed them with leaves of the mulberry in her palace, and obtained a silk superior in quality to that produced in the forests. She also invented silk tissues. This invention contributed so immensely to the prosperity of her country, that she was placed among the Chinese divinities, and even now the Chinese Empresses offer annually solemn sacrifices to her memory.

As it is the habit of the Emperor of China, once a year, to plough the earth, in order to add dignity and honor to agricultural pursuits, so in like manner the Empress, by annually visiting the silkworm-nurseries and laboring with her own hands, encourages the production of this valuable commodity.

In all ages the silkworm-nursery has afforded a favorite occupation among the fair sex; it is still emphatically a female concern. What lady will take the lead in feeding these precious insects, and in propagating this rich business in Utah?

Two centuries before the Christian era the Chinese carried on a commerce in silk with Persia, Greece and Italy. The generic name given to this valuable material has remained unchanged, except with a slight modification of the word. In fact, the French word *soie* or silk bears among them the name of *sec*. The Mongols name it *sirke*. The Manchous, *sirche*. The Russians designate it by the word *chek*, and the Greeks *sez*, etc. Notwithstanding the antiquity of the use of silk, its nature was for a long time unknown, and its importation into the West is of recent date, compared with its high antiquity in Asia.

I will remark here that several very curious fragments of Chinese works on sericulture were translated, in 1837, into the French language by Mr. Stanislas Julien. Since that time, various Chinese particular modes and useful implements have been adopted by the French breeders.

Before the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, Rome was compelled to import, at an enormous expense, silk tissues from the further end of Asia, and such was their high price that one pound of silk was worth one pound of gold. The history of the introduction, in 555, of the first silkworm eggs into Constantinople by two monks, is a popular one. But, to a reflecting mind it is difficult to comprehend how these two men, coming on foot from China, could present healthy eggs to the Emperor Justinian. That they came, perhaps, from a less remote country, is the opinion of Mr. de Gasparin a high European authority. A Byzantine writer attributes that celebrated importation to a Persian. Be that as it may, the breeding of silkworms spread very slowly in Europe.

Silk manufactures were founded at Athens and at Corinth, in Greece; and from thence sericulture was introduced into Sicily and Naples, and lastly into France during the fifteenth century. The city of Lyons began to manufacture silk in 1450; Tours, Avignon and Nîmes in 1470; and then Paris and Amiens. But the results were, at first, so trifling that silk goods still commanded extremely high prices; they seemed kept in store exclusively for princes and monarchs. Henri II, when he was crowned at Reims on the 25th of July, 1547, wore the first silk stockings ever seen in France. And in England, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth, at the same period of time, used silk stockings only in state ceremonies.

Under Henri IV, Sully established a silkworm nursery in the garden of the Tuilleries. *Olivier de Serres*, the illustrious author of *Theatre d'Agriculture*, one of the most charming among the old and best agricultural writers, stamped by his pen a mighty impulse to sericulture in France. King Henri honored him with high esteem; he loved him and graciously called him "*his lord and master concerning agricultural pursuits*." Louis XIV continued to encourage this enterprise in France, though with but little success, so far as relates to the production of cocoons and the spinning of silk.

The weaving of silk goods with foreign thread had, on the contrary, already made marked progress in France, and had a great development, which it preserved even up to the revocation of the edict of Nantes, after which period the weaving as well as the spinning of

silk lost ground considerably. The emigrants carried this beautiful industry into England, Germany and Switzerland, and raised the most active competition against France, where manufactures of silk remained in a languishing condition up to the close of the great revolution at the end of the last century, and until shortly before the return of peace to Europe.

Abbot Boissier de Sauvages was the greatest writer on sericulture of the eighteenth century. He was truly the father of the modern silkworm-nursery. The number of good and intelligent breeders has been, comparatively, very small in every silk-raising country of Europe, until lately. "The art of spinning silk is in the hands of people as ignorant as the men who produce it," said Count Dandolo in 1816. Vincenzo Dandolo was born at Venice in 1758, and died in 1819. His name is immortal. Dandolo did not regenerate sericulture, but he enjoyed the glory of having conceived the project of that regeneration. He was the first man who, in the beginning of the present century, seriously attempted to improve the practices of sericulturists. A competent chemist, but a little frivolous as a calculator, an intelligent and wise mind, he submitted the silkworm-nursery, as he found it, to the most attentive and judicious examination, and opened a new way before it. The name of *Dandoliere* has been given to a kind of cocoonery, as it was conceived and constructed by him. Comprehending that the worms are in need of a pure and incessantly renovated air, he disposed apertures to take in that air, outwardly, by means of trapdoors, which could be opened and shut at will. Dandolo placed a stove in the room, and several fire-places. But, though excellent for that time, his system solved the question only in part—the ventilation is established by too numerous hearths. The outward air may be too warm, too cold, too dry, too damp, the professor is compelled to recommend the continual use of a bottle containing a purifying liquor, which, in reality, purifies nothing at all.

M. de Gasparin epitomizes in this wise Dandolo's system: "He had searched to regulate the warming process, to introduce more order in the distribution of food, more space in the nurseries, and a certain amount of ventilation. He had touched upon all cases which required a larger reform, but he did not know or did not dare to undertake that reform." However, the name of that noble Venician ought to be inscribed among the most illustrious sericulturists.

In 1826, an obscure southern Frenchman, starting from a collection of letters written by Catholic missionaries in China, having bestowed his labors on *Olivier de Serres* and *Sauvages*' works in order that he might study Dandolo's theories and surpass them, undertook three difficult even prodigious tasks:—namely to revive and experiment again upon all practices known or tried in sericulture, in order to appreciate them; to transform sericulture, which was before him an empiric industry, into a totally rational one; to realize Henri IV. and *Olivier de Serres*' thought that is to say, to extend silk husbandry to the northern provinces, that a sufficient quantity of material might be raised in France, to give employment to its important silk manufacturers.

The name of Charles Beauvais, already known to the numerous readers of the News, has been immortalized by his silk reform. This reform includes various beneficial innovations which can be resumed by these two words *Salubrious Cocoonery*. (magnanerie salubre). It soon founded the *silk Institute des Bergeries de Senart*, in the vicinity of Paris, where numerous students came from every country of Europe, even from India, to listen to his valuable instructions. The Professor found an able auxiliary in Mr. d'Arcet, a scientific gentleman of the first order. The problem to be solved was how to realize a very valuable innovation, imperfectly discovered during the eighteenth century—I mean *forced ventilation*. It is the principle, itself, of a salubrious nursery; it is realizing the prophetic words of an old sericulturist:—"Silk-raising will perhaps become some day the most sure crop, a business where the least shall be left to chance."

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DISSOLUTION NOTICE.

NOTICE is hereby given that the Co-partnership heretofore existing between DON C. ROBERTS and JESSE W. LEWIS, under the name and style of ROBERTS & LEWIS, has been this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts of the said firm will be paid by D. C. Roberts, who will continue the business at the old stand in Provo City, U.T.

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NOTICE!

ACCORDING to previous notice published in this paper, May 22, 1888, I have this day turned over all my old accounts for collection to S. H. LEAVER, having made him my Attorney to collect all debts due me.

All persons knowing themselves indebted, either by Note or Book Account, will govern themselves accordingly.
WM. JENNINGS.
Salt Lake City, January 9th, 1889.

NOTICE!

ALL PERSONS knowing themselves indebted to WM. JENNINGS are hereby notified to call immediately at my office, EAGLE EMPORIUM, up stairs, and settle.

S. H. LEAVER.
Salt Lake City, January 9th, 1889.
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NOTICE!

GODBE & MITCHELL have this day sold to F. A. MITCHELL their entire stock of General Merchandise, as well as their Commission, Forwarding and Agency Business. Mr. Mitchell will continue business, as heretofore, in EXCHANGE BUILDINGS, and I respectfully solicit from our friends throughout the Territory the same liberal patronage for him as has been enjoyed by the firm.

W. S. GODBE.
Salt Lake City, Jan. 11, 1889.
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NOTICE!

THE CO-PARTNERSHIP heretofore existing between WM. S. GODBE and F. A. MITCHELL, under the style of GODBE & MITCHELL, is this day, by mutual consent, DISSOLVED. All parties knowing themselves indebted to the firm, by note or otherwise, are respectfully requested to call and settle the same without delay; and all those having claims against us will please present them for settlement.

WM. S. GODBE,
F. A. MITCHELL.
Office, Exchange Buildings. d44w50 1m

NOTICE.

THE Proprietors of the Deseret and City Pottery have consolidated their business, and will on and after the FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1889, be known under the style of the

CO-OPERATIVE CITY POTTERY,

and all business will be carried on at The old City Pottery, foot of East Temple Street, four blocks south of W. S. Godbe's Drug Store.

NOTICE!
All Persons knowing themselves indebted to the above firms, are respectfully requested to call and settle the same without delay; and all those having claims against the above firms, will please present them for settlement.

JAMES & BENSON EARDLEY,
JONAH CROXALL,
JOHN CARTWRIGHT.
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