

DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, March 20, 1909.

SERICULTURE—SILKWORKING EGGS.

BY LOUIS A. BERTRAND.
XIV.

The question of eggs being of vast importance in sericulture, in order to collect in a particular chapter the textual opinion of the French writers and most competent breeders who have most successfully discussed on that subject. In the meantime, I will insert here a few rules to be observed in order to obtain the most vigorous and perfect insects for reproduction:

1st. For a brood of an ounce, you must hatch at least three ounces of eggs, in order that you may sacrifice all the worms which are to be rejected during the hatching or in raising them.

2nd. Keep a single division—it will be easier to take care of your worms and to manage them.

3rd. Place your insects in a room, where they will find most space and most air possible.

4th. Observe strictly the following items:—equality of the whole brood, equality of food, cleanliness of the shelves and nursery.

5th. At every moulting you must reject unmercifully all late worms, all poorly or weak ones, preserving only the very best.

6th. Do not mind, too much, variations of temperature, but keep the ventilation of your nursery as uniform as possible.

REELING OF THE COCOONS.

The implements, properly so called, for reeling the cocoons are most simple in all countries of the world. They consist principally of a basin and a reel. The basin is used to receive the cocoons and some warm water to soften the gum of the silken envelope, so as to set free the threads forming the exterior silky layers. The union of a certain number of these threads form the thread of commerce, known by the name of *grege*, or raw silk.

The reel, by its rotary motion, winds off the cocoons. In large factories certain numbers of these winding machines are placed side by side, the impulsion being given to them by a single motive power. Of course the arrangement is such that the operator can at will stop any one of these little contrivances while the others continue to work. The entire of the operation is automatic, except that in regard to each reel we find a basin and a woman to superintend the work. The labor of the superintendent consists:

First.—In the immersion of the cocoons in the warm water until the silky layers are sufficiently softened.

Second.—In the cleansing, with a species of brush or broom, of the first layers, until they become a pure and clean thread.

Third.—In the uniting, by pressure and twisting a certain number of threads of the cocoons in proportion to the standard of raw silk intended to be produced.

The raw silk thus formed by the union of a greater or less number of cocoons is passed through an orifice or drawing frame, which acts on the winder, whose rotation determines the development of the threads of the cocoons which remain immersed on the surface of the water in the basin, so that in proportion as the cocoons are wound off the attendant is careful to add a new one, as much to keep up the supply of thread as to maintain the regularity of the standard.

The cocoons being conical from the commencement to the end of the winding, the raw silk would have the greatest irregularities if the workman did not conduct his work so as to connect the strongest—that is to say, the commencement of the thread of the new cocoon, with those which are just being exhausted.

The threads, issuing wet and gummy from the basin, would adhere and stick together in the skein if care were not taken to prevent it. The preventive consists first, in preserving a sufficient distance between the basin and the reel, to permit a partial drying; and second, in a "guide thread" so arranged that the transport takes place by a slow zig-zag movement, which prevents the threads from crossing each other at the same point at each turn, which latter causes the adhesion. Some suggestions will assist us to understand and to obviate the difficulties in this branch of the work. The degree of previous preparation should vary with the durability of the silky couches, having regard to the age, breed and origin of the cocoons. If prepared too much, the result would be that more silky matter would be yielded by the first layers than there should be. This superfluous matter would be only waste, and would possess a value much inferior to that of fine silk.

If the cocoons are, on the contrary, insufficiently prepared, they present a resistance to the winding off, which causes the breaking of the thread, and leads to a new source of waste. The workman ought to possess great skill in joining a new thread to a thread in work. He should be competent to select the most opportune moment to assure the regularity of the product, so that the trace of the successive connections may be imperceptible to the eye, and thus avoid knots, coarseness, curls or dots. Nor will rare skill in these particulars produce the effect desired unless the wheel revolves with a fixed and steady velocity of at least five hundred meters per minute. Without this the thread, instead of being smooth and brilliant, would be rough and dull.

A too slow movement would not dress the thread sufficiently, clasped, as it is, very tightly by its peculiar position and fixed under the form of the figure 8 in the layers of the cocoons. A movement too slow causes those undulations which give the dull appearance, while the development of the thread in the straight line by the more rapid movement permits the reflection of the light in those perfect and determined conditions which give brilliancy to the finest silk.

The manufacture of silk, as it exists in countries the most advanced in the art, embraces seven special branches of industry, viz: First, the rearing of the silkworms; second, the flature or reeling of the silk from the cocoons; third, the throwing or spinning of the silk thread; fourth, the dyeing of the silk; fifth, the preparation of the silk threads for the looms; sixth, the weaving of silk goods; seventh the spinning of waste silk.

These specialties, although consequent and dependent upon each other,

like links in a chain, can nevertheless be practiced separately, as is the case now in France.

The above description will give to the readers of the News an idea of the importance of the reeling business. The numerous able and interesting lectures delivered by Mr. George D. Watt and Mr. Edwin Rushton in this city and in our settlements, as well as the elementary notions written by myself and published in our daily press, are sufficient to guide beginners in the different branches of sericulture. Having been appointed by President Young to take charge of his fine cocoonery, I will keep a journal of my doings there. And I will perhaps retake my pen next winter to impart to the public the result of the next crop, and everything which shall be deemed interesting or worthy of publication.

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