

from repletion. And when it is thus dead, they find the bulk of what it has spun in its inside.¹

"Now, SERIA is known to be an island in a recess of the Erythræan Sea. But I have been told that it is not the Erythræan Sea which makes it an island, but a river which they call SĒR, just as the Delta of Egypt is isolated by the Nile and not by a sea compassing it all round. And these Seres are of the Ethiopic race; and they hold also the adjoining islands, ABASA and SAKAIA. Yet others say that they are not Ethiopians at all, but a cross between the Scythians and the Indians. This is what they tell of these matters" (vi, 26).

NOTE VI.

FROM THE HISTORY OF AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS.

(Circa A.D. 380.)

"Beyond these regions of the two Scythias, towards the east, a circling and continuous barrier of lofty mountains fences round the Seres, who dwell thus secure in their rich and spacious plains. On the west they come in contact with the Scythians; on the north and east they are bounded by solitary regions of snow: on the south, they reach as far as India and the Ganges. The mountains of which we have spoken are called Anniva and Nazavicium and Asmira and Emodon and Opurocarra.² And these plains, thus compassed on all sides by precipitous steeps, are traversed by two famous rivers, Œchardes and Bautis, winding with gentle current through the spacious level; whilst the Seres themselves pass through life still more tranquilly, ever keeping clear of arms and war. And being of that sedate and peaceful temper whose greatest delight is a quiet life, they give trouble to none of their neighbours. They have a charming climate, and air of healthy temper; the face of their sky is unclouded; their breezes blow with serviceable moderation; their forests are spacious, and shut out the glare of day.

"The trees of these forests furnish a product of a fleecy kind, so to speak, which they ply with frequent waterings, and then card out in fine and slender threads, half woolly fibre, half viscid filament. Spin-

¹ Erroneous as this account is, it looks as if it had come originally from real information, though afterwards misunderstood and perverted. The "shelter adapted to winter and summer" seems to point to the care taken by the Chinese in regulating the heat of the silk-houses; the "five years" may have been a misunderstanding of the five *ages* of the silk-worm's life marked by its four moultings; the reed given it to eat when the spinning season has come may refer to the strip of rush with which the Chinese form receptacles for the worms to spin in (see *Lardner's Cyc. Silk Manufacture*, p. 126).

² Read "Anniba, Auxacius, Asmiræus, Emodon, and Ottorocorrhas." See extract from Ptolemy, *supra*, p. cli.