

ning these fibres they manufacture *silk*, the use of which once confined to our nobility has now spread to all classes without distinction, even to the lowest. Those Seres are frugal in their habits beyond other men, and study to pass their lives in peace, shunning association with the rest of mankind. So when foreigners pass the river on their frontier to buy their silk or other wares, the bargain is settled by the eyes alone with no exchange of words. And so free are they from wants that, though ready to dispose of their own products, they purchase none from abroad" (xxiii, 6).

NOTE VII.THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SILK-WORM INTO THE
ROMAN EMPIRE, FROM PROCOPIUS, DE BELLO GOTHICO.

(A.D. 500-565.)

"About the same time certain monks arrived from the (country of the) Indians, and learning that the Emperor Justinian had it much at heart that the Romans should no longer buy silk from the Persians, they came to the king and promised that they would so manage about silk that the Romans should not have to purchase the article either from the Persians or from any other nation; for they had lived, they said, a long time in a country where there were many nations of the Indians, and which goes by the name of SERINDA. And when there they had made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the way in which silk might be produced in the Roman territory. And when the Emperor questioned them very closely, and asked how they could guarantee success in the business, the monks told him that the agents in the production of silk were certain caterpillars, working under the teaching of nature, which continually urged them to their task. To bring live caterpillars indeed from that country would be impracticable, but arrangements might be made for hatching them easily and expeditiously. For the eggs produced at a birth by one of those worms were innumerable; and it was possible to hatch these eggs long after they had been laid, by covering them with dung, which produced sufficient heat for the purpose. When they had given these explanations, the emperor made them large promises of reward if they would only verify their assertions by carrying the thing into execution. And so they went back again to India and brought a supply of the eggs to Byzantium. And having treated them just as they had said, they succeeded in developing the caterpillars, which they fed upon mulberry leaves. And from this beginning originated the establishment of silk-culture in the Roman territory" (iv, 17).

Zonaras (*Annals* xiv, vol. ii, p. 69 of Paris ed. 1687), in relating this story after Procopius, says that till this occurred the Romans did not know how silk was produced, nor even that it was spun by worms.