

ever, is not the opinion of several capable judges who have particularly attended to the cultivation of this insect in France; and hardly accords with some facts presently to be given.

The common silk-moth (*Bombyx mori*) was brought to Constantinople in the sixth century, whence it was carried into Italy, and in 1494 into France.⁶⁶ Everything has been favourable for the variation of this insect. It is believed to have been domesticated in China as long ago as 2700 B.C. It has been kept under unnatural and diversified conditions of life, and has been transported into many countries. There is reason to believe that the nature of the food given to the caterpillar influences to a certain extent the character of the breed.⁶⁷ Disuse has apparently aided in checking the development of the wings. But the most important element in the production of the many now existing, much modified races, no doubt has been the close attention which has long been applied in many countries to every promising variation. The care taken in Europe in the selection of the best cocoons and moths for breeding is notorious,⁶⁸ and the production of eggs is followed as a distinct trade in parts of France. I have made inquiries through Dr. Falconer, and am assured that in India the natives are equally careful in the process of selection. In China the production of eggs is confined to certain favourable districts, and the raisers are precluded by law from producing silk, so that their whole attention may be necessarily given up to this one object.⁶⁹

The following details on the differences between the several breeds are taken, when not stated to the contrary, from M. Robinet's excellent work,⁷⁰ which bears every sign of care and large experience. The eggs in the different races vary in colour, in shape (being round, elliptic or oval), and in size. The eggs laid in June in the south of France, and in July in the central provinces, do not

⁶⁶ Godron, 'De l'Espèce,' 1859, tom. i. p. 460. The antiquity of the silk-worm in China is given on the authority of Stanislas Julien.

⁶⁷ See the remarks of Prof. Westwood, Gen. Hearsey, and others, at the meeting of the Entomolog. Soc. of London, July, 1861.

⁶⁸ See, for instance, M. A. de Quatre-fages' 'Études sur les Maladies actuelles du Ver à Soie,' 1859, p. 101.

⁶⁹ My authorities for the statements will be given in the chapter on Selection.

⁷⁰ 'Manuel de l'Éducateur de Vers à Soie,' 1848.