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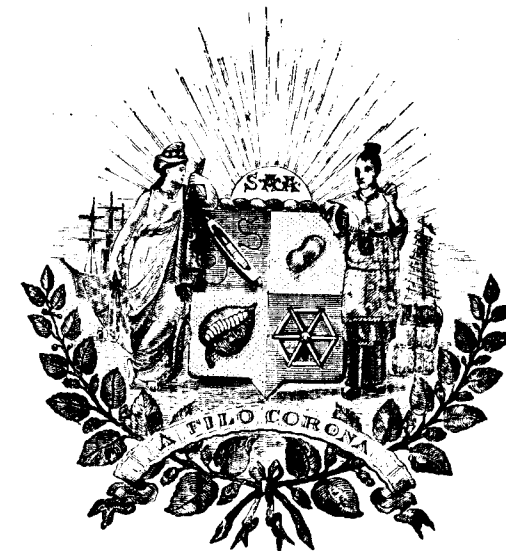
A  
The Silk Industry in America.

A HISTORY:

PREPARED FOR THE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION.

BY

L. P. BROCKETT, M. D.



1876.



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## PREFACE.

THE little treatise herewith offered to the public can make but slight pretension to original thought, or literary merit; though its preparation has required extensive and somewhat protracted research in fields seldom explored by literary men, and not often by those specially interested in the silk industry.

The writer desires to acknowledge his deep obligations to Franklin Allen, Esq., the Secretary of the Silk Association of America, not only for placing at his disposal the Association's large collection of works on silk and silk culture, which comprises most of the literature of the subject, but in a still higher measure for his free permission to use and transcribe the greater part of his "Chronological Record of the Silk Industry in America," prepared with great labor for the forthcoming volume of the U. S. Industrial Directory; and for tables of statistics, which add greatly to the permanent value of this volume. Without such coöperation, the production of this work would have been impossible. Grateful acknowledgments are also due to A. T. Lilly, Esq., the author of a history of the silk industry in Connecticut; John Ryle, Esq., of Paterson, N. J., and other manufacturers, who have also communicated important facts for the work.

For whatever of good or use there is in this little volume, the credit is largely due to these kind friends; for its errors and shortcomings, if such there be, the writer must alone bear the responsibility; but the burden will be lighter, if his readers will do him the justice to believe, that he has sought, to the best of his ability, to honor American Industry, and to set forth the achievements of American enterprise and perseverance.

This work is published under the auspices of the Silk Association of America. The privilege of its sale at the International Exhibition at Philadelphia, has been accorded by A. T. Goshorn, Esq., Director-General of the U. S. Centennial Commission.

L. P. B.

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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

WHEN our mother Eve draped herself in the broad leaves of the banian fig, just before leaving Paradise, and when just after the expulsion from that pleasant abode, the fallen pair were clothed in "coats of skin," their rude garments were, all unconsciously to themselves, the types of the textile fabrics which were to form the raiment of their descendants for all coming time. The leaf of the banian fig, with its soft and silky fibres, was the food of several species of silk-worm, and the source from whence was obtained the material for those delicate filaments which constitute our silken tissues; it was also the type of those other vegetable fibres, which have furnished so large a portion of the clothing of the world; while the skins of animals slain for propitiatory sacrifice were the prototypes of the karosses, haiks, and other garments of sheepskin, fur, or wool, goat's hair and camel's hair.

The progress of civilization at every stage has been marked by some improvement in the fabrics which constituted the clothing and drapery of the human body. The skins, fur, wool and hair of animals were early laid under contribution for this purpose, and in the warmer climates, the fibres of flax, grass, cotton, the inner bark of trees, and somewhat later the exquisite and glossy filaments spun by the silk-worm were appropriated for the same purpose. It was not until a comparatively high state of civilization had been attained, that the art of spinning and weaving these into fabrics of wonderful beauty and grace was discovered, and every step of subsequent progress in the fabrication and ornamentation of silken tissues has marked a stage of æsthetic culture and advancement.

It is our object to trace briefly the history of this progress in the manufacture of what has been throughout all the past an article of luxury, and which so lately as the third century of our own era commanded a price so great as to be beyond an emperor's wealth to purchase for his empress; but in our own time has come to be within the means and ability of the great masses of our people, and a necessity instead of a luxury. We do not propose to make this history exhaustive—many volumes would be required for that purpose—but only to review briefly the course of the silk manufacture in other lands and countries, and somewhat more fully the struggles of our own people to attain to the position which they now hold