

SALUTATORY.



THE culture and manufacture of silk is one of the earliest industries of which the world preserves any record.

Its history dates back to a period of great antiquity, said by some authorities to be as long as 2600 years before Christ, when Si Ling, the wife of the third Emperor of China, collected the silk worms, fed them herself and learned how to reel the silk and make it into garments. From that day to this the production of silk has continued with but few interruptions. For many centuries its development was slow and intermittent, but during the last hundred years its manufacture has been immensely simplified and augmented, and to-day silk is one of the most important articles in the world's commerce ; it is now to be found in every portion of the habitable globe. Until within a comparatively recent date, in consequence of its high price, silk was exclusively used to adorn the persons of the rich and the great, but to-day so inexpensive has it become that its sale is not restricted to the favored classes, and it is worn or used by the comparatively poor people as well as by the more wealthy portions of the community.

The importance of the cultivation of silk and its ready adaptability to various domestic and manufacturing purposes has led to the publication of numerous works, treatises and periodicals more or less directly connected with its production and use. Among others, the Nonotuck Silk Company, of Florence, Mass., has frequently issued learned brochures on this subject which have had large sales in various portions of the United States and Canada ; and following its big sister's example, the Corticelli Silk Company, of St. Johns, have