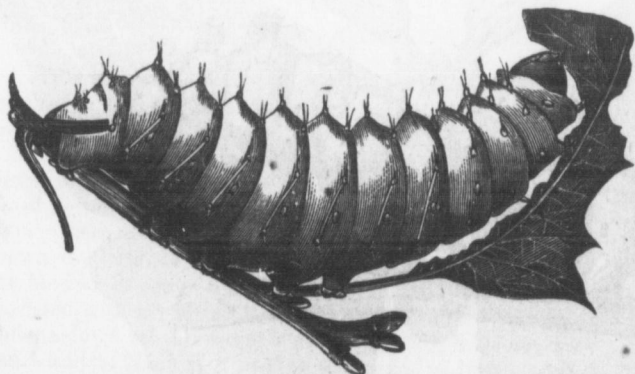


This magnificent insect belongs to the same Family as the well known Chinese Silk Worm, *Bombyx mori*. It has received the especial name of THE American Silk Worm, because for all practical purposes it is the only American silk-spinner now known that can be rendered of any commercial value. For many years *Sericiculture* or the art of raising silk producing insects, has been very seriously threatened with great loss if not entire destruction by the various epidemic diseases that affect the Mulberry silk-worm. Much attention has therefore been paid lately towards acclimatizing in Europe and elsewhere, other silk producing Bombyces in order to supersede if necessary the mulberry species. *Telea Polyphemus* being found easy of propagation, its whole history is well known and we, therefore, purpose to give our readers a detailed account of its various transformations, the more especially as it is a tolerably common insect and from its size and splendid appearance both as larva and moth, it is sure to attract attention and excite the curiosity of those who see it. Hitherto it has been supposed to feed only on oak, and those who have bred it in large numbers for the silk market have raised it exclusively on oak leaves, but it, nevertheless, frequently attacks the maples and from the enormous size of the caterpillar and its voracious appetite, a great deal of damage is often done. Figures 28, 29 are admirable illustrations of the perfect moth, male and female. Dr. Harris thus describes its appearance: "Its wings are cut off almost square at the corners. It is of a dull ochre-yellow colour more or less clouded with black in the middle of the wings, on each of which there is a transparent eye-like spot, divided transversely by a slender line, and encircled by yellow and black rings; before and adjoining to the eye spot of the hind wings is a large blue spot shading into black; near the hinder margin of the wings is a dusky band edged with reddish white behind; on the front margin of the fore wings is a gray stripe which also crosses the fore part of the thorax, and near the base of the same wings are two short red lines edged with white." On the under side the colours are paler, but the bands are more distinct. The antennæ are broad especially in the male and deeply pectinated. The wings expand from five to six inches. When at rest the wings are held elevated above the body like those of a butterfly, but if disturbed they are spread out flat, both pairs being displayed. The moth usually flies towards dusk or in the early part of the evening. The moths make their first appearance about the month of June. The female lays a large number of eggs; she deposits them on the underside of the leaves leaving but a single egg in each place.

Mr. L. Trouvelot, in an admirable article in the *American Naturalist*, has given a very interesting account of his success in raising large broods of these caterpillars, having had in 1865, five acres of woodland swarming with insect life, numbering not less than a million. According to him "the incubation of the egg lasts from ten to twelve days." The caterpillar eats its way out of the egg, the shell of which it devours. The Larva (Fig 30) attains its maturity in about 70 days, having changed its skin five times during that period.

FIG. 30.



Colour—Pale, bluish green—orange spots.

It is about three inches in length, though it has a peculiar fashion of contracting its body, and hunching up its segments, when not in motion. Its colour is pale bluish green. The segments are covered with orange or reddish warts, or tubercles which have a pearly lustre, and are furnished at their extremities with a few hairs. The head and feet are brown, and the tail or anal segment is bordered with a brown V-shaped line. The sides of the body are striped obliquely with white.

The cocoon, (Fig 31) which is of a regular oval shape and about two inches long, is formed