

**Sericulture in Brazil.** — The Italian newspapers, says *La Nature*, give some interesting information with regard to the measures now being taken in Brazil to forward the production of a silk yielded by a peculiar species of butterfly, which is as yet but little known in that country, and quite unknown in Europe. This butterfly (*Bombyx saturnia*), commonly called the *portaspejos*, has a spread of wings four times as great as that of the common silk-worm moth. The caterpillar feeds on the leaves of the *Ricinus communis* and also of the *Anacardium Occidentale*. The cocoon differs very widely in appearance from the common cocoon. It is enveloped in a bag-

like pellicle, resembling cobweb, which being removed, the cocoon is found to be oval. In color it is grayish, and its tissue differs from that of European cocoons in being wove like a bird's-nest. The caterpillar does not shut itself quite up in the cocoon, but leaves an opening, through which it escapes in the imago-shape.

The *Bombyx saturnia* works rapidly, completing the cocoon in three weeks; in three weeks more it quits it; and thus the silk-harvest takes up only six or seven weeks. The process of filature, or of unwinding the threads of the cocoon, is very simple, the threads, owing to the peculiar structure of the cocoon, being very readily separated from one another by the action of warm water. The fibre possesses considerable strength. One thread, twelve inches long, will bear a weight of sixty-two grains, and a cord of fifty-four threads a weight of over two pounds. The thread, however, is somewhat coarse, but efforts are being made to get it of greater fineness so as to fit it for weaving into fabrics and spinning into sewing-thread. If this Brazilian fibre passes successfully through its period of trial and experiment, it will give the world a very cheap silk, the cost of production being much less than that of European silk. The cocoon is found in great quantities in the north of Brazil. The caterpillar feeds on the tree, and withstands the inclemency of the weather. The tree is so abundant that whole ship-loads of cocoons might be collected.