

**SILK**, a very soft, bright and delicate thread, produced by the *bombyx* or silkworm. The first silk known in Europe appears to have been brought from a part of China. Though this commerce began in a very early age, it was not before A. D. 555, that the arts of rearing the worms and working the silk were known to the western world. At this period, two monks brought the secret from the Indies, and manufactories were set up at Athens, Thebes, and Corinth.