

## LESSON V.

## SILK.

cat-er-pil-lar	com-plete-ly	mul-ber-ry
se-par-ate-ly	re-mark-a-ble	fa-bric
ma-nu-fac-ture	i-mi-ta-ti-on	spin-dle
e-nor-mous-ly	ar-ti-fi-ci-al	silk-worm

That beautiful material for clothing, called silk, we owe to the labours of a caterpillar, named for that reason, the *silk-worm*. Great numbers of these insects are kept in Italy and many other countries, but they were first made use of in China, where silk was worn long before it was known to Europe. In its perfect state, this insect is a kind of moth, but it is hatched from the egg in the form of a caterpillar; in this state it eats enormously, but only one kind of food is suited for it—the leaves of the mulberry tree. In the countries where silk-worms are reared, there are always large plantations of mulberry trees, for the purpose of feeding them. When it has reached full maturity, the silk-worm ceases to eat, and begins to spin its web; this it does in the same way that spiders and some other insects do, but the silky threads which it winds round itself, have the property of hardening and becoming much stronger than the webs of other insects.

When the caterpillar has rolled itself completely up in its *cocoon*, as this wrapper is called, it becomes a chrysalis. This cocoon is an oval ball, about as large as a pigeon's egg, of either a light straw colour or yellow; it consists of a single thread,