

THE decline of the Indian silk industry is a subject which has lately attracted some attention. Various causes have been assigned, such as rack-renting by the Zemindars, while the existence of any specific disease among the silkworms has been strenuously denied. The question seems at last to have been settled by the investigations of a skilled entomologist, Mr. Wood Mason, Curator of the Indian Museum, who, on examining a large number of living cocoons, received from various parts of the country, found over 60 per cent. so diseased that no moths emerged, while such moths as emerged were nearly all sickly and crippled, and only 6 per cent. lived to couple and lay eggs. A further examination showed that the cells of the silk glands, and all other tissues, including even the blood, were in the last stage of disease, and literally crammed with minute corpuscles,

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identical with those which have been demonstrated to be the cause of the fibrine disease which, in an epidemic form, from 1849 to 1865 ravaged the silkworm nurseries of France, and reduced them to a state of ruin, but which, thanks to M. Pasteur, is now practically eradicated from Europe.