Silk, n. [A. Silk, a kind of wool; Steer, a kind of wool; Russel, a kind of wool; Lat. Alsanum (known as silk); Silk, a kind of wool; From the silk from Asia, Asia, Asia, the silk, a Chinese name for silk; Or, from the Silk, a Chinese name for silk.

A well-known species of goat's wool, spun by the antelope of various species of the Phasianus genus, of which Phasianus domesticus is that which is more commonly employed for this purpose, and is

which is more especially applied the name of silk-snow. The threads as spun by the silk-worm, and wound up in its cocoon, are all double, in consequence of the twin stings in each of the glands of the worm which they are spewed from. These two threads are laid parallel, and are held together by a kind of varnish which encases them, and constitutes 25 per cent. of the weight of the silk. The thickness of each thread is about one thousandth part of an inch. It is much the strongest of all textile-fibres, a thread of it of a certain diameter being nearly three times as strong as a thread of flax, and twice as strong as a thread of hemp. The order of raw silk is generally bright yellow, but in some varieties it is nearly white. - Raw silk is produced by the operation of winding it on, at the same time, several of the balls or cocoons (which are immersed in hot water, to soften the natural gum of the silken thread) on a common reel, thereby forming one smooth even thread. When the skin is dry, it is taken from the reel and made up into bobbins; but before it is fit for weaving, and in order to enable it to undergo the process of dyeing, without furring up or separating the fibers, it is converted into one of three forms - viz., singles, from, or warp-silk. - Single (a collective name) is formed of one of the rove threads, being twisted, in order to give strength and firmness. From this form is twisted the yarn, in two or more threads twisted together. In this state it is commonly used in weaving, as the sheet or web. - Flower silk is formed of two, three, or more singles, according to the substance required, being twisted together in a manner similar to that in which the singles of which it is composed are twisted. This process is termed organization; and the silk so twisted, organ-silk. - The art of making the silk-threads substance of the cocoon available for textile purposes seems to have originated with the Chinese, and to have been practised by them from a very early period. According to the written records of the Chinese, the art seems to have been known and practised by them 2,730 years before the Christian era. Until the reigns of the Emperor Justinian, the silk-worm was only cultivated in China; but the raw material was purchased and manufactured for a long time before by the inhabitants of Persia, Tyre, and other places. Until the reign of Augustus, however, silk was very little used in Europe. In the 6th century, two months brought some silk from the silk-worm from China and India to Constantinople, and the Emperor Justinian encouraged them to breed the insects and cultivate the cocoon. Within a short period afterwards, silk manufacture was established at Athens, Thebes, and Corinth, not only for the war upon mulberry-leaves, but for un- winding its cocoons, twisting their filaments into strong threads, and then weaving them into cloth. At that time, and for a long period afterwards, the Venetians became the only channel through which the silk-producers of the Greek empire transferred the wool; and they received great wealth from the trade. This industry became in the 13th century, and in 1146, Roger I., King of Sicily, in his conquest of Greece, took measures to promote the growth of the industry, and compelled them to continue their labours in Palermo and Calabria. From these places the silk industry spread throughout Italy, and ultimately reached Spain, from which country it was introduced into France during the reign of Francis I. The cultivation of the silk-worm was not commenced in France till 1504. The mulberry plantations for the purpose of the business were greatly encouraged by Henry IV., and since that period they have been the source of much benefit to the inhabitants of the country. In France, the cultivation of the mulberry is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable. The manufacture of silk is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable. The manufacture of silk is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable. The manufacture of silk is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable. The manufacture of silk is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable. The manufacture of silk is carried on in nearly every province, and the product is very considerable.