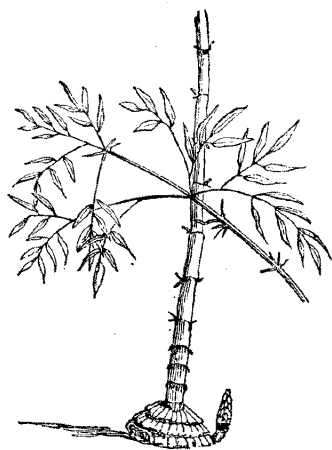


**BAMBOO** (*Bambusa*), a genus of grasses, of which most of the species attain a great size, many of them 20 or 30 feet, some 70 or 100 feet in height. The species are numerous, and are found in tropical and subtropical regions, both of the eastern and western hemispheres. They are of great importance to the inhabitants of the countries in which they grow. All of them have a jointed subterranean root-stock (rhizome), which throws up 10—100 stems. These are generally straight and erect; although one large species (*B. agrestis*), common in dry mountainous situations in the south-east of Asia, has crooked, and sometimes creeping stems. The stems grow to their full height unbranched, but afterwards throw out straight horizontal branches, especially in their upper parts, forming a dense thicket; and many of them being strongly armed with spines, they are planted for defence, presenting a formidable barrier, even against regular troops. Some of the smaller kinds are often planted as hedges. The stems are jointed



Bamboo.

like those of other grasses, very hard, but light and elastic, hollow, containing only a light spongy pith, except at the joints or nodes, where they are divided by strong partitions. They are, therefore, readily converted into water-vessels of various sorts; and when the partitions are removed, they are used as pipes for conveying water. They are also much employed for house-building, for bridges, &c. The smaller stems are converted into walking-sticks, and are imported into Europe under the name of B. cane, both for that purpose and to be employed in light wicker-work. In China, the interior portions of the stem are used for making paper. Some of the species grow to the height of only a few feet; and almost all of them are slender in proportion to their height, although *B. Guadua*, a native of New Granada and Quito, has a trunk 16 inches in diameter. The stems of different species vary also very

much in the thickness of the woody part, and so in their adaptation to different purposes. The external covering of the stem is, in all the species, remarkably silicious; the stem of *B. tabacaria* is so hard that it strikes fire when the hatchet is applied. This species is a native of Amboyna and Java; its slender stems are polished, and used for the stalks of tobacco-pipes. The leaves of some kinds are used for thatch, and the Chinese plait hats of them; of the external membrane of the stems of some, they make paper. From the knots of the B. there exudes a saccharine juice, which dries upon exposure to the atmosphere, and which the Greeks called *Indian Honey*. It is also sometimes named *Tabaris* or *Tabasheer*; but this name more properly belongs to a phosphorescent substance, containing silica and lime, and possessing remarkable properties, which forms in the joints of some species of B., and of other large grasses growing in dry situations. See **TABASHEER**.—The young shoots of some kinds of B. are eaten like asparagus, or are pickled in vinegar. Those of *B. Tulda*, a common Bengalese species, are used for these purposes when about 2 feet long. The seeds of some species are used as rice, and for making a kind of beer. Bamboos are generally of very rapid growth, and they are often found in arid situations, which would otherwise be destitute of vegetation. It is not improbable that they may yet be employed, where they do not naturally abound, to render districts productive which are now little else than deserts, in climates like those of Arabia, the north of Africa, and Australia; and the quality of the grain of different species seems to deserve more attention than it has ever received. The species common in the West Indies (*B. vulgaris*) is supposed to have been introduced from the East Indies. A few species are found in the Himalaya, to an altitude of 12,000 feet, and a dwarf species from that region has been successfully tried in the open air in England.