

the bamboo is applied. *Bambusa arundinacea* is perhaps the most common species. It sometimes covers immense spaces forming a dense jungle, and rising occasionally to the height of forty or fifty feet. It is at



Fig. 280. — BAMBOO, (*B. spinosa*.)
a. Section of the stem.

once majestic and elegant, and impresses upon the traveller the peculiar aspect of a tropical region. In the joints of the stems an opaque white substance, becoming opaline when wetted, and composed of silica, is found, called *Tabasheer*. The seeds are sometimes used instead of rice, and a tolerably good bread is made of them. It grows very rapidly, but does not bear fruit or grain till it is twenty-five years old.

Bambu'sa, n. [Skr. *ban buhr*.] (*Bot.*) The Bamboo, a genus of plants, ord. *Graminaceae*. A number of species are known, all gigantic, tree-like, branching grasses, natives of India, the isles of Sunda, and tropical America. The stems are hollow, jointed, hard externally, and coated with flint. The bamboo is one of the most valuable and useful plants which the Author of nature has bestowed on the natives of the countries where it grows. Wherever strength and elasticity are required in combination with lightness, there the bamboo is available. Houses are made and roofed with them, and all sorts of carpentry work are prepared from their stems. Cut into lengths, and the partitions at the joints knocked out, they form durable water-pipes, or if the partition is left, excellent buckets are made for holding water. Masts of vessels, lance-shafts, bows and arrows, with the quiver for receiving them, walking-sticks and smoking-pipes are readily prepared, and by notching their sides the Malays make wonderfully light scaling-ladders, easily conveyed where heavier machines could not be transported. A grove of these gigantic grasses, when covered with spines, as several of the species are, such as *B. spinosa*, form stockades impenetrable without the aid of artillery. The young shoots, as they spring from the earth, make a tender and good esculent vegetable, and they are also used as a pickle. Most of the paper manufactured in China is made from the leaves bruised and crushed in water, and of the fibres, baskets are made and a durable material prepared for weaving into mats, window-blinds, and even the sails of boats. It would be difficult to enumerate the various purposes to which