

the qualities of different vegetable productions differ from each other! How well the rigid fibre and compact texture of the oak enable the bulky vessel to resist the buffeting of the waves! The ash, the beech, the fir, the yew, each has those appropriate qualities which make it individually preferable to the rest. The flexibility of the hemp and flax renders them capable of being woven and formed into sails and cordage; and, exposed as the sails and rigging are to the vicissitudes of the weather, how well are they protected by being covered over with tar, itself of vegetable origin!

Some woods very readily split with that regularity of surface which we observe in common laths; and of the utility of that kind of material in almost every kind of building no one can well be ignorant. Other woods, as the willow, very readily bend, with a considerable degree of elasticity, in every direction; and hence are of value in the fabrication of what is known under the general name of wicker-work^g.

^g The art of making wicker-work is often successfully cultivated at a very early period of civilization. Thus, in the neighbourhood of California, some of Captain Beechey's officers were supplied with "water brought to them in baskets, which the " Indians weave so close, that, when wet, they become excellent " substitutes for bowls." (Beechey's Voyage, p. 385.) And we know that, not long after the conquest of Britain by Cæsar, the ornamental wicker-work of the natives was highly prized at Rome.