

fruits of the Palm tribe, and of numerous other plants, is the Island of Sheppey; and I purpose describing in this place, not only the remains of the Palms, but also of some of the most interesting vegetable fossils with which they are associated in that celebrated locality.

This island, which is situated in the mouth of the Thames, is entirely composed of the London clay, with layers of the septaria, or clay nodules, so common in that deposit. On the north, there is a range of cliffs, about two hundred feet high, which is continually undermined by the waves, and large masses of the clay are thrown down upon the shore, and innumerable fruits, seeds, branches and stems of trees, and other fossils, exposed. The vegetable remains are strongly impregnated with iron pyrites, and as this mineral speedily undergoes decomposition, when exposed to the atmosphere, the choicest examples often fall to pieces, even when preserved in a dry cabinet. Mr. Bowerbank, who possesses an unrivalled collection of these fruits, keeps them in stopper-bottles filled with water, placing the different species separately, and labelling the phials. I have successfully employed mastic varnish, first wiping the specimens dry, and removing any saline efflorescence, by means of raw cotton, and then brushing in the varnish with a stiff hair-pencil.

The fruits, or seed-vessels, occur in such profusion, that a large collection can easily be made.