

Quite the reverse. Mark how thickly these carbonaceous impressions cover the muddy-colored and fissile sandstones of the formation, giving evidence of an abundant vegetation. We may learn from these obscure markings, that the place in which they grew could have been no unfit habitat for the crustaceous tribes.

There is a little, land-locked bay on the southern shore of the Frith of Cromarty, effectually screened from the easterly winds by the promontory on which the town is built, and but little affected by those of any other quarter, from the proximity of the neighboring shores. The bottom, at low ebb, presents a level plain of sand, so thickly covered by the green grass-weed of our more sheltered sandy bays and estuaries, that it presents almost the appearance of a meadow. The roots penetrate the sand to the depth of nearly a foot, binding it firmly together; and as they have grown and decayed in it for centuries, it has acquired, from the disseminated particles of vegetable matter, a deep leaden tint, more nearly approaching to black than even the dark gray mudstones of Balruddery. Nor is this the only effect: the intertwined fibres impart to it such coherence, that, where scooped out into pools, the edges stand up perpendicular from the water, like banks of clay; and where these are hollowed into cave-like recesses, — and there are few of them that are not so hollowed, — the recesses remain unbroken and unfilled for years. The weeds have imparted to the sand a character different from its own, and have rendered it a suitable habitat for numerous tribes, which, in other circumstances, would have found no shelter in it. Now, among these we find in abundance the larger crustaceans of our coasts. The brown edible crab harbors in the hollows beside the pools; occasionally we may find in them an overgrown lobster, studded with