

sand-banks, partially uncovered by the larger stream-tides, which lie directly opposite the town of Cromarty, near the spot pointed out by tradition as the site of an earlier town, which was swept away some two or three hundred years ago by the encroachments of the sea. And these banks, with their thick covering of green *Zostera*, used to be pointed out by the fishermen of the place, in my younger days, as the *meadows* of the old town, still bearing their original coverings of vegetation,—a vegetation altered, no doubt, by the “sea change” that had come over it, but still essentially the same, it was said, as that which had smiled around the old burgh, and not at all akin to the brown kelp or tangle that every storm from the boisterous north-east heaps along the shore. It was virtually affirmed that the luxuriant terrestrial grasses of ancient Cromarty had made a virtue of necessity in their altered circumstances ; and that, settling down into grasses of the sea, they remained to testify that an ancient Cromarty there had *once been*. *Zostera marina*, like most plants of the land, ripens its seeds towards the close of autumn ; and I have seen a smart night’s frost at this season, when coincident with a stream-tide that laid bare the beds, nip its seed-bearing stems by thousands ; and have found them strewn along the beach a few days after, with all their grass-like spikes fully developed, and their grain-like seeds charged with a farinaceous substance, which one would scarce expect to find developed in the sea. In the higher reaches of the Cromarty Frith, the *Zostera* beds, which are of great extent, are much frequented, during the more protracted frosts of a severe winter, by wild geese and swans, that dig up and feed upon the saccharine roots of the plant. The *Zostera* of the warmer latitudes attain to a larger size than those of our Scottish seas. “A southern species,” says Loudon, “*Zostera oceanica*, has leaves a foot long and an inch broad. It is used as a thatch, which is said to last a century ; bleaches white