

short but abundantly divided and interlaced, spreads all round from the base of the stems and the nodes of stolons close to the surface of the mud (fig. 44). It grows in tufts (Plate XVII. See frontispiece), which often assume great dimensions and a remarkably circular shape. Such patches may measure anything between 3 and 15 feet in diameter, and even more. The grass owes this peculiar growth to the production of numerous underground branches or stolons, which grow out from the buried stem bases radially, and measure from a few inches to several feet. Inequality in the density of the mud, admixture of sand, pebbles, or larger stones, and other conditions may favour development in one or the other direction, when the circular shape of the clumps gives way to irregular shapes, or it may be that two or more clumps meet in the course of expansion and fuse, and finally many clumps may unite and form regular meadows with a dense matted growth.

"The leaf-blades are rigid, long, and long-pointed, standing off at angles of 60 to 70 degrees, and bright green or slightly glaucous. Like all the *Spartinas*, it has the spikelets closely arranged in stiff, one-sided spikes, which spring from a common axis, and are erect, so that they are almost or quite applied to each other. There are usually four to seven of them, but starved specimens may have only two, and luxuriant specimens as many as eleven. . . . The grass begins to flower in the latter part of July, and the flowering is most profuse in August and September. Some individuals, however, lag much behind, and may be found in bloom as late as the end of December. As each spikelet contains only one flower, it also has only one grain, which remains tightly enclosed in its husks. . . . The spikelets become easily detached when ripe, drop into the water, and leave the bare spindles standing up stiff like spears until they break down along with the stems, which gradually decay during the winter and spring. The ripening of the grain takes place mostly in October."¹

As with many other seaside plants, the output of seed is rather uncertain, and appears to be influenced to a marked degree by the weather during the flowering season. Doubtless

¹ O. Stapf, *Proc. Bournemouth Nat. Sci. Soc.*, Vol. V, pp. 77-8.