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ON FUCUS VESICULOSUS AND SOME ALLIED SPECIES.*

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Though Theophrastus already, in his history of plants, mentions several species of marine algæ, the sea wrack does not appear to have been employed medicinally before the first half of the eighteenth century; I find, at least, no mention made of it in the new "London Dispensatory" of 1676. Russel seems to have been instrumental in introducing it into medicine through his essay, "De tabe glandulari," which was published in 1750, and in which he specially recommended *Fucus vesiculosus* in the form of charcoal and jelly, the former, known afterwards under the name of *Æthiops vegetabilis*, being prepared by heating the plant in a crucible closed with a perforated cover until smoke ceased to be given off, while the latter was made by expressing the mucilaginous liquid, and also by macerating the fucus in an equal weight of sea-water, for two weeks, or until it was converted into a kind of jelly, which was employed both externally and internally. Upon the strength of these observations *Fucus vesiculosus* was admitted into several pharmacopœias, but was afterwards dropped. The beneficial effects in scrofulous swellings and goitre of the vegetable ethiops of the sponge charcoal, which had been introduced by Arnaud de Villeneuve near the close of the thirteenth century, and the discovery of iodine in the ashes of sea-plants, induced Dr. Coindet of Geneva, in 1819, to study the effects of iodine, and led to the introduction of this element into medicine. Subsequently, Duchesne Duparc, and after him Godfrey, stated (1862) that they had found this fucus to possess valuable properties as a remedy for morbid obesity, an observation

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