

Dawson Turner to Ellen Hutchins: letter of 6th May 1811

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Yarmouth 6 May 1811

It is, my dear Madam, it really is the most senseless thing in the world ever to delay for a single post to reply to any letter of yours; for such is your kindness, that the effect of delay is sure to be as it has proved in the present instance, the heaping upon me such a load of debt as I feel myself incompetent to repay, or even to thank you adequately for, & this sensation of inefficiency only lends procrastination ten times more force, so that by degrees I grow callous, & sink into a kind of apathy. The letter you were so kind as to write to me on 23rd March had scarcely been two days in my hands, when it was succeeded by a box of lichens, & some very beautiful drawings, for which I am infinitely obliged to you; these too I had scarcely time well to look at, before there came some of the most interesting Jungermanniae I that Mr Hooker ever saw, especially J. Hutchinsiae & J. serpyllifolia (*Lejeunea cavifolia*) in fruit, neither of which had you sent before. Thus situated – que faire? Is it not strictly true that I had more to thank you for than I could well express. The Lichens I without any delay sent off to Sussex, having more confidence in Mr Borrer's judgement than my own, & he, having then just lost a sister in law, did not return them till 4 days ago, when I had an opportunity of franking to you his sentiments through the medium of the Countess of Aylesford. The same frank also contained an engraving of Jung. Hutchinsiae with which I am mistaken if you will not be delighted. Her Ladyship, who is a most zealous botanist, & as good a one as a person generally living in London can well be, writes me word she shall avail herself of the opportunity to introduce herself to you & ask for *Pinguicula grandiflora*. You will find her a pleasant & sensible woman, & I have no doubt, of your having in her a frequent correspondent; for all of us on this side of the channel, my dear Madam, at the same time that we give the due praise to the liberality and hospitality of your countrymen, are ready enough to suck the one & to fasten on the other; a living instance of which you always have before you in myself, without it being necessary to use any arguments to prove what I say. Your *Fucus loreus* (what a fine figure!) is already engraved, & will be published on the first of the next month. Upon the subject of your Lichens, where I differ from Mr Borrer, you will see on the other side my opinions, with astericks, as usual, to those species of which I wish for more. Of your Jungermanniae I will at some future time beg for specimens for myself. At present I have not a single specimen of an individual of the genus, having given my whole collection, which was the best in the kingdom, to Mr Hooker. By the way, pray let me know without delay the names of all the species that you have, & Hooker shall send you what you have not. His stock of duplicates is not large, so that I must beg of you to do this soon, lest it should be previously exhausted. He took away with him all the Jungermanniae contained in your letter sent through the Bishop of Norwich (through whom I hoped to receive many other letters from you) which I mention, lest there should be among them any on which you wished for an opinion. The two Tremellae in that letter are, No 1, *Ulva lubrica* of Roth, No 2 *Tremella Nostoc* of Linnaeus, which Roth makes a distinct genus, called Linkia after the Portuguese traveller, from the curious disposition of the seeds. Of the Lichens, No 196 is in the shape of brown & white granules, unguessable; No 197 I have long known, a native of high heaths in Sussex & of Scotch mountains, & I described it many years ago under the name of *Endocarpon laetevirens*, but afterwards doubted if it was not the leafy part of some Baeomyces. Your specimen seems to fix it as an Endocarpon, which I am glad to see. The books for you, my dear Madam, are not yet gone – why? – 'it's a question I often ask myself, & am ashamed to answer – "because of a foolish spirit of procrastination, which I strive to justify by calling it over-employment. – The fact is, I have not looked out the Confervae for you, but in a few days they set off, & I shall be glad to hear of their arrival. To the Journal & Vaucher I have taken the liberty of adding 2 other books that pleased me; one, a life of Tasso, that has given me much gratification that

I could not resist the desire of having you share my pleasure: the third, a little volume that will probably amuse you, containing outlines of the pictures that have lately gained the prizes in the Parisian Exhibition. The intention of the sender will, I am sure, make you look favourably upon them, and I flatter myself you will not be displeased with me for having taken such a liberty. Accept, my dear Madam, the assurance of the esteem & regard of your much obliged friend

Dawson Turner —

Of your Lichens

(A long list of comments and names on numbered species sent by Ellen for help with identification. When Ellen found something she could not identify she allocated it a number, in sequence within each genus. 40 lichens are covered here, over 20 have asterisks indicating that Dawson Turner wanted more sent to him.)

I had nearly forgotten to mention 3 mosses in your parcel. Bryum No. 3 B. bicolor — No. 4, a plant I have from Mr Mackay but believe a non-descript — & a moss without fruit, of which I cannot guess the genus. It is something like and something like Grimmia acuta No. 174 looks like a species I do not know — please send more — Lady Aylesford may be useful in franking our letters.

I saw the other day at the opposite end of the county our Pinguicula without any appearance of flower, & got a promise of 20 good specimens for you.