

Ellen Hutchins & Dawson Turner
Letters of July & August 1811
used in the performance of
Ellen and Dawson: Seaweed and Sealing Wax, 20th August 2021
and on Zoom, 14th December 2021

The original letters are held by the Library and Archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London (fifty letters from Dawson Turner to Ellen Hutchins) and the Wren Library of Trinity College Cambridge (seventy letters from Ellen Hutchins to Dawson Turner).

The preparation of transcriptions of all the twenty four letters from 1811 is a project of the Ellen Hutchins Festival, Bantry, Ireland. It was undertaken in 2021 by Madeline Hutchins, Co-Director of the Festival, researcher on Ellen, and her great-great-grandniece.

The Festival thanks the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London and the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge for permission to use the transcriptions/letters. See the bottom of the Letters September to December document for a note on the process and the funding of the transcriptions. Permission to use this material elsewhere needs to be sought from the Ellen Hutchins Festival / Kew / Trinity College Cambridge.

These letters are presented in the order in which Ellen wrote hers and received his.

Letter 1. Ellen to Dawson Turner: 12 July 1811

I cannot tell you, my dear Sir, how much & how often I have wished to write to you for some time past & how long I feel it is since I last wrote to you, but when you hear the causes of my silence you will not, I hope, think me negligent. For three weeks my Mother was very ill, & employed me day & night. As soon as she got better I began to make little excursions to the mountains, though after fatigue & confinement I was not strong. But my excursions were interrupted by the arrival of a visitor whose taste & mine did not agree. To her I was obliged to attend & endeavour to find amusement (no very easy matter in the mountains) for a mind devoted to dress & gaiety. She is just gone off & I seize almost the moment of her departure to thank you again & again for the pleasure your books give me. I read them while the rest of the family slept. M^r Hooker's tour interested me greatly. It has delighted me & so far exceeded my expectations. What would he not do if he had materials? I cannot think how he has contrived to make his book so interesting after all his losses. The natural

wonders of the country are no doubt so great as to make any thing interesting but I think his unaffected strong descriptions impress them deeply on the mind. I admire his manner very much. The country one cannot admire, it overpowers with astonishment & bears an impression of terror. One is thankful for being an inhabitant of a milder climate & living at a distance from so dangerous a neighbour as a volcano, but to go see such a country must be the most agreeable thing possible. Every line I read I felt how much reason there was to regret the loss of Mr Hooker's collections. I am sure he has a strong mind & is well fitted to bear the dangers of travelling & to give information to others in a most agreeable manner with much strength and simplicity as to make one feel and believe every word. I could fill my sheet with admiration of his Tour & thanks to you & him for the pleasure it has given. You will say how natural for an Irish woman to wish the poor Icelanders plenty of potatoes. I have often thought how happy they would be if they had but plenty of the wholesome vegetable with their fish. I wish they could have plenty of food. I have read Vaucher with much interest he tells a great deal and leads one to minute examination but I believe he is often erroneous in his arrangements. I was greatly pleased just when I was reading accurate observations on the conjugatae I found *Conferva dissiliens* in the last state of its existence and with conjugated filaments. Its mode of connection differs a good deal from the other species and is very curious. Each joint is triangular and of course the filament is so. Dillwyn's figure gives no idea of the nature of this species which makes it one of the most curious. I have found *Conferva mucosa* again. I had given Mr Dillwyn all I had preserved & never found it since until a few days ago. I have specimens on glass & on paper for you. I have found a curious water plant of which I enclose a specimen. You shall have a drawing when I can find time to do one. My Mother though much better is very weak, if she continues better I shall be able to go to the mountains some days next week. I was out yesterday up the banks of a mountain river and found the beautiful little *Jungermannia* I enclose, it is quite different from anything I have. The fruit stalks are all gone. I shall not be able to get it perfect till next year. I have been seriously endeavouring to find *Jungermanniae* for Mr Hooker & shall seek every nook and cranny I can get into. The little one I sent in a letter lately cannot I think be *curvifolia* as you suppose. The leaves are pointed & undivided. It seems to me a very distinct little species. It is much smaller than *Curvifolia*. It creeps on mosses on trees & on the stems of heath. The enclosed I think a great beauty. Sir T. Gage sent me *J. ciliaris* from a mountain near Killarney & another species that I do not know. I shall have great pleasure in sending you a good store of all of *J. tomentella* though it is plenty in many places. I have planned a few excursions when they are over I will make up for you a large parcel of Lichens &ca., but I wish to delay a little in the hope of having something new to send. I have not yet been able to read the life of Tasso I only began it last night. I am sure it is very interesting & I ever feel your kindness in wishing me to enjoy what gave you pleasure. I feel anxious for night that I may enjoy my

book. Night & early morning is my time for indulging with a book. I should indeed have been delighted to see pictures with you in London. I should not enjoy any thing more, but such pleasures are not to be had every where, & I feel that I ought not to wish for any pleasure that would take me away from those who want me so much as my friends do. If they had but health I should feel happy with them any where. I have seen what you say is just that the solitude of London is much more shocking than that of the most remote retirement with any companion who interests one's heart one can be happy. I have never felt so much alone as in a room with strangers in whom I had no deep interest. You were very good & kind to write so agreeable letter. Your account of the painting that pleased you so much was very amusing as well as that of the savage from New Holland. I also like to observe strong impressions & often amuse myself with imagining how a person would feel at their first sight of many objects familiar to us but I dare say I should be disappointed. Pray let me hear how Mrs Turner is. I shall be very glad to hear of her as often as you can tell me. I think I found Hypnum ?cupressus yesterday. It is not described In Musc. Hib. which you sent me. How can I thank you for all you have sent me I really know not. I am sorry Ping. grandiflora did not reach you in a good state. Lady Aylesford got her specimen very well she says. How provoking to me that yours should not be good. I sent you P. lusitanica and what I take for vulgaris after one of my mountain walks. Perhaps My Sagina is maritima. If you saw it recent you would think it very different from procumbens. I found Carduus heterophyllus the other day by a mountain stream.

Believe me, your ever faithful friend

E Hutchins

Ballylickey July 12th 1811

Letter 2: Dawson Turner to Ellen 4 July 1811

How very long, my dear Madam, indeed how very unusually so, is the time that you have suffered to pass since last I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you. Your kindness to me on this subject has produced upon me precisely the same effect that similar kindness in a different way would have with the youngest of my children.— I am grown as fractious & as impatient as can be, whenever the very post that I had calculated does not produce me a letter; & though my own self love and vanity, of which, God knows, I have a sufficient share, will not allow me to suppose I am altogether forgotten; yet I feel a thousand anxieties respecting the health of yourself & your family, & thus endeavour to

screen under the mark of regard towards a friend what is in reality a mere selfish impatience. Yet still, selfish as I am, I am really anxious to know that you & the rest of the family at Ballylickey are in the enjoyment of good health; & I promise you, if you will but write to say this much, I will be satisfied that you should in silent for as many weeks longer as you think proper to appoint. The season with us is delightful, & vegetation thriving, & the earth beautiful beyond what the oldest man ever remembers, & I am enjoying it prodigiously, from the inclination my two eldest girls have recently expressed to become botanists, in consequence of which I have been teaching them their botanical A.B.C. & been examining with them the most common flowers, which has been going over again the employment of 19 years ago, & verifying in a manner the prospect of future happiness held out by the newly married husband in his wife at the end of the old song that

‘you shall be courted in your girls,
And I’ll go a wooing in my boys.’

The removal of Hooker to London has taken away from me the only literary companion that was serviceable to me in this part of the country & what is worst, now he is there he is courted by society, on account of his extreme good nature & the unaffected manner in which he bears his rare acquirements, that it is impossible even to get a letter from him, & I begin to fear he will not publish his *Jungermanniae*, though he has already put himself to the expense of the engravings. I long very much to know what you think of his *Journal*, the safe arrival of which in Ireland Mr Mackay communicated to me about a month ago. Its reception among his friends in London has been even more flattering than I could have wished; for being done with materials so scanty, it has raised such an idea of what may be expected from his voyage to Ceylon, as no human power can be sufficient to gratify. I wish most heartily he would be wise enough to be contented & stay at home. Did I tell you that the last vol. of the *Linnean Transactions* contains a figure & description of a new genus of] mosses, called after me, *Dawsonia* I mention it, not from any vanity, but because the plant is so thoroughly new & extraordinary. The habit of *Polytrichum commune* & a *Peristomium* consisting of numberless long capillary white threads; issuing with no apparent order from the mouth of the capsules. It is a plant from New Holland; – at present I cannot get a specimen for myself; but if I can procure a duplicate of the paper or even of the plate alone, I will forward it to you. About a fortnight ago, I had a letter from Sir Thomas Gage, telling me he was on his road to Suffolk. As soon as he arrives I shall make a point of going see his collections. He offers me drawings of the scenery of Killarney, which I shall be very glad of. At present I cannot ask him here, Mrs Turner being ordered wholly to keep her bed till her confinement for which we look in a month or 5 weeks. Yet, thank God, in other respects her health is good, & I trust there is in her situation nothing to give cause for

anxiety. She joins in every good & kind wish to you & yours with, my dear Madam, your much obliged friend. Dawson Turner.

Yarmouth 4th July 1811

Letter 3: Ellen to Dawson Turner: 19th July 1811

July 19

My dear Sir,

The messenger who put my last letter into the post office brought me yours. As my letter explains the causes of the silence you so kindly enquire about, I shall say no more on that subject except that whether I write or not I never can forget you. The heart must be more than commonly cold that could be insensible to the many kindnesses you have shown me. Mine, I feel, is not so. I am greatly pleased with the favourable account you give of Mrs. Turner, & shall wish very much to hear of her confinement & that you are all well & happy enjoying each other's society. You only want to have her well for you seem in other respects happy & now delightfully employed teaching your girls. I wish you had every flower I see as I walk about & often imagine you all cheerful & interested examining plants. I then compare the difference of your enjoyments with my own. With me Botany has been a solitary amusement, for I know not a person nearer than Dublin who knows the name of a plant & when I began did not know one. xxx I am sorry to find that Mr Hooker hesitates about the publication of his *Jungermanniae*. I am willing to flatter myself that as he has done so much towards it he will proceed further. His engravings are beautiful. Can't you spur him on? I am sure you will. I was near breaking my bones yesterday in a mountain cliff seeking *Jungermanniae*, & found the two I enclose neither of which I had seen before. No. 38 grew on banks shaded very much near a mountain rivulet & No. 39 in a cliff mixed with many other species. I have another that I wish to examine more & compare with some that I have before I send it & also found a good deal more of the species sent in my last letter, which is to my eyes one of the most beautiful of all. The day was fine & I think a very fortunate one, but very fatiguing. I walked many miles among rocks. If tomorrow be a fine day I am to set out at day light to another mountain, & here there is a Lake & if the weather will allow I have planned little excursions to different places near me. I cannot spend more than a day out, but of a day I make the most by setting out very early & returning late. As soon as I have ended my excursions you shall have a large parcel of *Jungermanniae* & Lichens. I gathered a great many specimens of *Exacum filiforme* yesterday. I found a little

bank covered with it in full flower. I also got the fruit of *Irsnea plicata*. I told you in my last how much Mr. Hooker's Iceland tour interested me. I do not wonder you should wish heartily that such a man & such a friend should stay at home, but I believe it will not be easy to confine his active spirit. He seems formed to be a traveller. Thank you for telling me so much about Dawsonia. I should be extremely glad to see it. It must be a very curious moss, & its bearing your name makes it peculiarly interesting to me. Sir Thomas Gage is now on his way or perhaps by this time in England. He was delayed at Killarney much longer than he expected by Lord Kenmare who had a fit of gout. He has done much collecting Lichens. I hope he will share his collection with you. Indeed I am sure that he will. He has given me a great many specimens. I am collecting more shells as the coral sand is now coming in. The people are taking it up for manure. Miss Turner shall soon have some of the best shells I can collect & whatever I can find in future. I do not yet know much of shells but I intend if I can find time to learn more. I have some that I can't find descriptions for. Do pray let me hear soon how Mrs. T. is & believe me with kind wishes for her,

E. H.

Ballylickey July 19th 1811

As Ellen finished her letter, Dawson Turner's letter to her written on 11th July arrived (letter 4 here) and after reading it, Ellen added a postscript to her letter (see below, after letter 4)

Letter 4: Dawson Turner to Ellen, 11th July 1811

EH Turner to Ellen 11 July 1811

I am certain, my dear Madam, I do right I feeling persuaded you will rejoice in whatever adds to my happiness, & consequently will do so as learning that my anxiety on account of Mrs Turner is at length happily terminated by her being brought to bed of another daughter (the sixth now living for I have lost 2 & my only three sons) & of her being likely to do well after having been in the most imminent danger. The nurse assures me that this child is to be the flower of my family, & I therefore proposed to call her Ellen after yourself, and were you resident as near to Yarmouth as you are to Bantry, I should venture also to propose to you to be her godmother. You will not, I trust, be displeased with this liberty that I take with your name: on the contrary I would fain hope that this little incident, if it please the Almighty, to spare the life of the babe, may be more likely to bring you one day to Yarmouth, & that you will regard what I have done as the most decisive proof of the

esteem & respect that Mrs Turner & I feel towards you. This I can most truly say, that, as far as I have at present the happiness of knowing you, I know no female in the world whom I should so earnestly wish a child of mine to emulate.

I had last night the satisfaction of seeing your handwriting, though but a few lines, through the Bishop. You said, however, that your hand was tired with writing, and I therefore trust there is a longer letter on the road. The *Pinguiculae* will not bear the pressure and warmth of a bag of letters, without being dried, but I am not there for the less indebted to you for your attempt to gratify me with the sight of them recent. The larger one in your letter was certainly *P vulgaris*, and I the more rejoice at your having found it, as you can now decidedly speak to its differing from *P grandiflora*. The nectary, I observe, was bifid, so that this mark fails as a specific character. I long to hear from you what other we may depend upon. I have just added *Antirrhinum repens* to our catalogue of Yarmouth plants. It is rare in England – do you want specimens? – You must not forget you were to give me a list of all the British plants that are desiderata to your herbarium; & I am vexed to see you let year roll on after year without doing it, as if time stood still and were not already making me an old man.

Dr Smith has just printed a translation of Linnaeus' Lapland Tour in two small volumes which I wish I could find any means of conveying to you. They are not worth sending alone, but they will interest you, & I hope you will get them. Pardon, my dear Madam, the haste of a rapid pen & agitated mind & believe me with the truest esteem

ever your obliged friend

Dawson Turner

Yarmouth 11th July 1811

Ellen's postscript to her letter of 19th July (letter 3)

Your welcome letter is just come in. I heartily rejoice that you are so happy as to have Mrs. T. safe after such danger. Of your friendship to me I know not what to say. I have no power of expressing my feelings of tenderness & gratitude. I ask myself how have I deserved such friendship or what is there in me to merit xxx interest such a man as Mr. T. but I can find no satisfactory answer, even self-love cannot give one, nor can I flatter myself that I deserve the opinion you have of me. I cannot tell you how I feel the honour you & Mrs T. have done me by giving your child my name. I wish I could believe myself worthy of such a mark of friendship. How I wish that I could see you all. How glad I should feel to be God-Mother to

the little babe & thus to be in some sort connected with your family. Of her being brought up to piety & virtue there is no fear while it pleases God to spare her & her parents to each other. May you all live to enjoy the best blessings this world affords. Pray let me hear soon how Mrs. T. & the little infant are & believe me the sincere & affectionate friend of you all. The Post Boy is just going I cannot say more.

Letter 5: Ellen to Dawson Turner July 24

July 24

When I wrote to you a few days ago I had only just read your letter & had not time either to reflect upon or answer half of it, but it has since occupied much of my thoughts. Reflection has not diminished my gratitude for the friendship you have shewn me. On the contrary the more I think the more deeply I feel your constant kindness & attention, & the more interested I feel for the happiness of you & yours. I shall look anxiously for your next letter in the hope of hearing a favourable account of Mrs. Turner's health & of the little babe, who will, I hope, be as healthy as good & as pretty as you can wish her to be. You must tell me a great deal about her.

I am quite disappointed that the *Pinguicula* did not reach you in a good state. I wish much that you could see *Lusitanica* fresh. The best distinction I can observe between *P. Vulgaris* & *Grandiflora* is the shape of the segments of the corolla, that of *Grandiflora* being shaped thus [a drawing] *Vulgaris* thus [a drawing]. The nectary being bifid in each species. You shall some time or other have a copy of a bad drawing of *Grandiflora* which will enable you to form some opinion on its specific distinction. The outline is, I believe, pretty correct, but the colouring will not bear comparing with nature. It appeared to me shocking when I had the rich Purple flowers to look at. I have a large supply of dried specimens for you.

Yesterday was delightful on the mountain. I went to a small Lake around which the mountains rose very suddenly & cast a deep gloom on the lake. I rather crept than walked up the side of a mountain for the ascent was so steep I could hardly stand upright. Here I met with many *Jungermannia*, two or three that I had not before & finer specimens than I had ever seen of others. I brought home more than I know what to do with, but I could not help pulling off every rock. You shall be abundantly supplied. I intend going to a very steep place that I saw at a distance where a rivulet runs down the side of a mountain. I crossed the rivulet at the bottom of the mountain in a little green valley where a solitary cabin stands from whence nothing but mountains can be seen & at a considerable distance from

any other human habitation. I longed to spend a week in this cabin & walk about among the rocks. On stones in the rivulet I saw for the first time *Parmelia gelida*. *Antirrhinum repens* I do not want, it grows wild in this country, but not near me. I have it in the garden in plenty. It is a great favourite & when I please my own taste in a flower pot of wild flowers it has a conspicuous place. I shall send immediately for Linnæus's Lapland tour, & thank you for telling me that it is published. I have been expecting to hear of it for some time past. I enclose specimens, some of the *Jungermanniæ* found yesterday. No 40 plenty. No 41 rare intermixed with mosses & No 42 still more rare. I met with a few shoots only, but it seems different from any I know. I have planned a few more excursions to the mountains, but my being able to execute what I plan depends on so many circumstances that I can never be sure of any thing. The principal obstacle is the very uncertain state of my Mother's health. She is very weak & some days so ill that she cannot sit up. She has nearly lost her hearing, & wants me almost constantly. I could not leave her even for a day but that a friend is come to spend some time with us. She is no Botanist but has much good nature & good humour, & much regard for me. My health suffers by confinement, so that I am obliged to exercise a great deal. Pray give my best wishes to Mrs Turner & believe me

Ever Yours

E. Hutchins

July 24th 1811

I will soon ask you for the plants you are so good as to offer. I have from time to time deferred doing so.

Letter 6: Dawson Turner to Ellen, 21 July

I have just had the pleasure, my dear Madam, of receiving your long & interesting letter, for which I am infinitely indebted to you, & I trust I value as I ought your good kindness in writing to me so immediately upon being released from a visitor, from whom, however pleasant or amiable, I cannot help congratulating you upon being freed, as a mind ill at ease, as yours has been, by reason of the health of those most dear to you, could but ill brook the society of a person whose taste & feeling were not congenial to your own. I feel sincerely for your present situation, & am extremely concerned that the two last letters I wrote to you betrayed a degree of impatience at not having heard from you, & a fretfulness of temper which, unhappily for myself & my friends, was born with me, & will, I fear, go with me to the grave. I am heartily sorry for having suffered myself to betray it towards you, & you may believe me I would upon no account have done it had I not feared that it was the

health of yourself & not of your friends that kept you silent. Hereafter I promise not to be guilty of it again, & I trust I shall keep my word, though it will be with difficulty, if you put me to too great a trial. Pray oblige me by mentioning whenever you write how Mrs Hutchins is. I too have an aged mother, but, thank God, she is in excellent health & spirits: were she not so, & I had even your goodness of heart, to induce me to devote my time as I ought & think nothing a fatigue for an excellent parent, still, flung as I am in the midst of a world with 6 children of my own about me, I should be debarred from the comfort you have in doing your duty. Walter Scott's beautiful apostrophe to your sex, in which he most justly calls you our ministering angels in the hour of pain & sickness, has always appeared to me to fall short of the truth, & I repeatedly say to myself, while thinking of your moral superiority over us, "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" – Though it please God to take Mrs Hutchins from you, as in the course of Nature must be looked for, I heartily wish it would be possible for you to be near my family; for you would find in my children a set of girls that would interest you by their unartificial manners, & in Mrs Turner a woman whom you would appreciate & who already appreciates you. God grant, however, that such an event may be far off. – I have to tell you of a new Poem by Walter Scott, published last week, & already out of print, nor likely to be reprinted except in the Edinburgh Annual Register, for which it was written. It is a Spanish tale, founded on the story of Roderick the last of their Gothic Kings going into a chapel beneath the Cathedral at Toledo, in which he sees, as in a vision, the impending conquest of his realm by the Moors, its restoration to Christianity, the Spanish victories in both Indies, & the events of our times. Such a story in such hands cannot but have the highest interest; yet I doubt if it will ever be so popular as his former poems, though aided by all the glow of British patriotism, because, being written in Spencer's stanza, it necessarily bears marks of labour & has passages invented for the sake of the rhyme, & being a vision it is kept in a degree of obscurity, lest the King should be thought to have seen too clearly. Should you not be able to get it, pray let me know & you shall have my copy. I only wish we were near enough for you continually to use my library as your own. The Jungermannia in your letter is very different from any I ever saw. I shall send it tomorrow to Mr Hooker in London, & I will let you know as soon as I receive his answer. I shall tell him also to revise his opinion of what he called *J. curvifolia*. The water plant appears to be Roth's *Ulva lubrica* & yet I do not think it is so; both because the seeds do not lie by fours in squares as in that species, & because I think you sent me *U. lubrica* some short time ago, & consequently would have known it again had this been the same. I think I thanked you for the two *Pinguiculae* in the few lines I wrote you on Friday sennight from Norwich. Mrs Turner has since then regained her strength surprisingly, & my little Ellen is quite well. I have dispersed my other children among their relations so that I feel quite solitary in my house. The worthy Bishop is now at Norwich, & is so good as to say you may continue to direct to him for me. I shall be there before long, & will then beg him also to

favour me with his privilege to you, if I can but find anything worth sending to you. If you have really met with *Hypnum rufescens*, I shall be very glad; for it is a scarce plant, & one that is little known. I have seen in Scotland large varieties of *Grimmia acuta* very like it. I rejoice extremely at your finding Mr Hooker's book & Vaucher's interesting; the former in particular because I had so much to do with it. Tasso I am sure you will enjoy. Dr Smith has been dangerously ill in London with a violent fever & I cannot yet learn he is recovered, which makes me very uneasy; for I have a great regard for him, an excellent man, & a sincere friend, & his loss to me as a Naturalist would be irreparable. Now Mr Hooker is gone, he is the only one I have near me. I finish, my dear Madam, not because I am come to the end of my say, but because my paper is full. Believe me always, your obliged friend D.T.

[probably black wax, but removed]

Note on it:

Postage on this as Charged again. Mr Clarke 1s 11d

Letter 7: Ellen to Dawson Turner, 4th August

Aug. 4

My dear Sir

I am so anxious that you should see *Pinguicula Lusitanica* fresh that I make one more effort to shew it you.

I have put up with it a bit of what I thought may be *Hypericum rufescens* & a little of an/the other moss that I found on a mountain cliff – great plenty of the new *Anistangin*[___]. I had the pleasure to receive a letter from you last night & am very glad to find Mrs. T. is recovering so rapidly & that little Ellen is well. I have not time to say more having just returned from a race to the bog for *P. Lusitanica* & must hurry for the post.

Yours

E.H.

Aug. 4 1811.

Letter 8: Dawson Turner to Ellen, 7th August

EH Turner to Ellen 7 August 1811. Black wax

In the hopes, my dear Madam, that your good nature me thinks I know from long experience to be excessive, will induce you to receive with complacency a letter containing virtually nothing other than thanks & nursery intelligence, I venture to set about writing you such a letter; & if you find it too trifling for even a temper like yours to suffer, I must thank you to remember that I write it in obedience to your commands, to which I now am, & to which I always shall be, disposed to pay the most implicit obedience. To begin then with something xxx regularity, for even in trifles I would if I could preserve a degree of order, any thanks are on all accounts most justly due to you; & you remind me of the famous speech of Cato on the conspirators of Cataline when you speak of lying under anything like an obligation to me; though he considered it as a proof of the decay of Rome that the meaning of words was distorted to what is quite different from their original sense, & I far from regarding a similar instance in Ireland as symptomatic of the same effect, am myself so perverted that I look upon it as an indisputable proof of the prevalence of every generous & noble feeling. Upon the subject of your *Jungermanniae* Mr Hooker desires me to say that No 37 is a new & most beautiful variety of *Jung. byracea* I think he is wrong & I have just written to him so, & begged to examine it again.

31 *J. pauciflora*

32 *J. hamatifolia* – so at least he proposes at present to call it: this is the same as he in a former letter called by mistake *J. curvifolia*.

34

35

36

24

Mr Hooker being desirous that you should be in possession of a specimen of every British species of *Jungermanniae* from himself, even those that you have yourself given to him, sent the whole of them to me for you a week ago, & I fortunately have met with a gentleman going last Monday to Dublin, who engaged to deliver them to Mackay. I would have added the *Lapland Tour* had I not that moment got your letter, telling me you had ordered it, & I doubt you will not find a second reader of such a book in the mountains about Bantry. Now for my Nursery – Mrs Turner is now certainly & rapidly recovering after having been till the last 4 days in a state of such debility as rendered her ultimate recovery doubtful. Thus it is that prevents me now having any thing whatever botanical to tell you. Your namesake (shall I add your godchild) is thriving as we wish; though at present a puny child – she promises as the Nurse tells me to be the best featured among a plain family, &

most to resemble her mother, who some years ago was a very fine woman & still much remains of it at 37 – It was not a little satisfaction to us that you so kindly acceded to our wish that she would be named after you; though indeed neither my wife nor I wanted this to bring you continually to our thoughts. When she gets old enough to lisp a few words, make observations & ask questions that it would puzzle the most renowned doctor to answer & occasionally start doubts sufficient to alarm the cleverest theologians (for all these things children will do & make us ashamed of our ignorance) you may expect my letters to be filled with her history. At present I am contented to say of her that she is well. You must recollect, my dear Madam, you are not only to ask me for the plants of this country, but to send me a list of those of your own for our Linnean Society. Does Mrs Hutchins continue well? Have the kindness to make Mrs Turner's & my wishes acceptable for her & your brother –

Yours, my dear Madam, ever most truly D Turner
Yarmouth 7 August 1811

Letter 9, Ellen to Dawson Turner, 20th August

My dear Sir

Your two last letters should not have been so long unanswered had I been either well or my mind at ease. One of them found me confined with one of those severe bilious attacks to which I am subject & from which I am now quite recovered.

The death of a friend has disturbed my mind a good deal & affected my mother so much as to make her worse than usual. She is in a very delicate state & I fear likely to remain so perhaps with some little daily variation of better and worse. I think her now rather better. Her being so has allowed me to spend parts of the last two days drawing Confervae (new ones I hope) for you. I think that I have new species of the division with veined joints.

I wish I could find time to do all this division for you as Dillwyn gives no clear representation of the nature of the joints in the different species. I have often regretted that you had not undertaken to give figures of the whole of this tribe instead of the Fuci alone. It would have been an immense thing but you have done it so well & given such fine figures.

I hope I need not now tell you what real pleasure your letters gave me, particularly the last where you tell me you are so happy as to have Mrs Turner out of danger & the little baby well. I delight in domestic news when it is such as one hears from your family who all seem so much to enjoy each other, & as to nursery news you need not fear tiring me with it. I

delight in little children & could be quite happy nursing & playing with little Ellen. I hope to hear of her much & often. I should be glad to indulge myself in thinking that I may one day have the gratification of seeing & enjoying the company of your family even for a little time. No person who has not seen me at home could well imagine that a person of my age can be bound to one spot as I am to this. Indeed I am fastened by so many cords that I can hardly hope to have it in my power to see you at the other side the channel. Pray do not speak or think so well of my temper & heart until you know me more. I am fretful & impatient & though I look quiet am really very restless. I used to think myself more careful of my mother than most people are until one day last summer saw a poor girl who exceeds any instance I ever saw or heard of filial affection. She was begging & had an unusually large bag on her back as it appeared to me. I am shortsighted & did not perceive until I got quite close to her that the head of an old woman old looking beyond anything I had ever seen was just above her cloak. On enquiry I found that the old woman had lost the use of her limbs that her daughter supported her by knitting & other work in a little hut. When provisions became scarce & dear she took her on her back & begged for her support. I have never thought well of myself since. I cannot tell you how much it affected me, more than all the tales I have ever heard or read. There was no fiction, hers was a true & simple story, & the fact was before ones eyes. I find with my storytelling I am filling my sheet though I have a great deal to say. I have read the life of Tasso with great interest, I can hardly say pleasure for he was so miserable that it pains one to think of his sufferings or that the extreme sensibility of genius should lead to such a state of misery. I always endeavour to find consolation in everything & to think of what good can be found even in such misery. I think the less of my own troubles when I read of the extreme suffering of others. Yet I can hardly put poor Tasso out of my head or help wishing that his friends had known better how to treat such irritable feelings. I found a great deal that was very interesting in his life. I have always loved reading lives of great men since when I was a child I read those of Plutarch's. I have been so fortunate as to get Walter Scott's poem in Dublin, it will be at Cork this day as well as the *Jungermannia* Mr Hooker has been so kind as to send me. Pray tell him how much I thank him & value his specimens. I'm particularly glad to have every one named by him so that I can be quite sure of what I may find being different or the same. I am quite sure that No. 37 is very distinct from *Byssacea* in every respect, both in the shape and disposition of the leaves it is remarkably different. If No. 35 be *J. Complanata* I have been alway mistaken in what I considered that species. When I examine Mr Hooker's specimens I will send you what I took for *Complanata*, if it be different from his. I hope you've got a few others in late letters. I long to know if *Pinguicula Lusitanica* reached you alive. I shall send you the list of our plants when I am sending you a parcel for which I am preparing. The *Ulva* I sent you is certainly different from what you told me was *Ulva lubrica*, when you get the drawing you will see. Have you *Fucus fruticulosus*

with capsules, if not I can supply you & if you want more of *Fucus cristatus* tell me as the season for gathering it approaches.

I admire how ingenuously you give me a hint on perverting the meaning of words in expressing myself under the obligations to you which I feel. If you can show me that the friendship & letters of such a mind as yours are of no value I shall agree with you but I believe you will not find it easy to persuade me of anything so contrary to my feelings & reason. With a very strong sense of obligation for all your kindness & regard for me & with every kind wish for you Mrs Turner & the children I am your faithful friend.

E. H.

I conclude and hope Dr Smith has recovered his fever.

I wish you had the *Confervae* I have just drawn. I have 5 marine ones different from any I sent you, 3 of them veined & 2 pink coloured parasitic species, little beauties.

Ballylickey 20 Aug. 1811

For the continuation of the 1811 correspondence see
Ellen Hutchins & Dawson Turner
Letters: September to December 1811