

Ellen Hutchins to Dawson Turner, 7th December 1812

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Dec. 7

How a sweet a preparation of the medium of life is a kind friend's letter! Such my dear Sir, was your last to me. It came at a time when its effect was most wanting, just when I was shivering over the fire after having taken a Blister from my side, where I had for a long time past a fixed pain. I am now better a good deal, but not good for much or able to make any active exertion. Your letter gave me variety of pleasure. It was much to hear that you are all enjoying good health, & able to feel happy in each other's society, & that your little Ellen is increasing in strength tho' she has not yet the power of expressing her thoughts. I hope she will soon speak. An infant at her age is interesting when it has acquired the power of expressing or even of attempting to express itself. I hope my dear Sir, you will never feel it necessary to think of a subject to make a letter valuable to me. I can most truly assure that any thing from you is so to me & that I should feel more pleasure in any thing that it pleased you at the moment of writing to tell me than in any subject that I thought you had taken the trouble of seeking for. I am very glad you liked *Conferva dissiliens*. You could not but like so wonderful a plant. I spent 5 days admiring it & often wished your eye had been in place of mine. I wished too that Vaucher had it before him. What gratification it would have afforded to such an observer. I think *Conjugata* is his best family. A most interesting one to all lovers of *Conferva*. I need not tell you how much I have been attached to them & how reluctantly I have given up drawing them for the last year. Yet I always hope to return to such interesting employment. I have drawings of almost all the species, for I never felt satisfied with Dillwyn's plates. Please God you shall yet get from me every one that I can find. I always intended that you should have them merely for your own gratification, for I had no idea that you thought of publishing any but the new ones, tho' indeed the old ones never have, I believe, had justice done to them. I think I could make large drawings of all the common species & give a pretty accurate idea of their structure. When I begin for you I shall do finer drawings than those I now have. I can correct myself & shall be very glad of any directions you can give me. Speak without reserve as to the faults of those you have. Tell me of any you would wish me to do larger or better drawings of. Tell me what you have already that you are satisfied with, for I forget what you have except my new ones. I have sent you all these except *mucosa*. Say every thing, the size you would like & all that you can think of. I will do my very best to please you, tho' I may not be able to begin for some time. I think you may probably like them done in the style of *Fucus fruticulosus*. How fine all the larger & more common species would be if I could do them well. I will tell you what I have often wished, that when Hist. Fuc. [Turner's book on Fuci] was at the end, when you give your arrangement you would give a plate to illustrate each genus not published in the work, for I imagine you will arrange all the submersed Algae & how can it be well done without plates? But perhaps my fancy does not suit your plan or that if you mean to proceed in the publication of such plants it may be quite unnecessary. I hope you will not

think me very impertinent. I suspect I am so, but I want to lay my faults upon you & to hint that you have encouraged me to plague you. Of late my whole heart, or rather the little botanical spot in it, has been given up to *Jungermannia*. I am glad you were so pleased with my last & I hope before long to have a very favourable account of them. Was I not a desperate blunderer about *J. Lyelli*. I enclose *J. Mackaii* in a very fine state for Mr. Hooker. I promised to send it in November. He wanted the seeds, which those specimens contain. I am not a little pleased that your friend is a Member. I hope to trouble him very often & shall do so without mercy.

I think *bicolor* a very appropriate name for the new *Orthotrichum* [a moss], but let it be whatever you please. I have got Mr. Hooker's numbers. Quite thank him. Pray do again & again for then they have delighted me beyond measure. Is it not a very fine work? Pray ask him for a specimen of *J. [Jungermannia] resupinata* for me. I intend to find it when I can go out for him. I am by the fire planning in my little way as active a campaign next Spring as [Napoleon] Bonaparte could arrange. I don't know how it may be when the time of execution comes, but at all events killing *Jungermannia* for the purpose of giving them honorable life in the pages of your friend is less guilty amusement than destroying thousands to decorate the pages of his history or that of any other destroyer.

I have done nothing of late but read a little. You will wonder when I tell you that old as *Thalaba* is I never read it 'till the other day. I like it extremely. I greatly admire the Author's power. What a store he has collected of wild Arabian tales & eastern customs & with what talent does he make use of them. I am going to get more of his poems. Do you admire him? What do you think his best? Do you like the *Curse of Kehama*? I had not until I saw *Thalaba* read any thing of Southey's but *Letters from Spain & Portugal*, which I disliked extremely. I have just read *Childe Harold*. How do you like it? Parts of it delight me extremely. I am surer that Lord Byron can write fine poetry than that he is an amiable man. I don't like his severity towards women & some other parts of his poem do not please my mind but are there not beautiful passages in it. I would say more but I am obliged to hurry my letter, indeed I have written the whole in a hurry & feel that I should in this apologize for having said so much than for not saying more & yet I should like to tell you all the parts that pleased me. I wish very much that I could see *Ld. Byron's* poem entitled *English Bards & Scotch reviewers* but I am told it can't be got, perhaps you could lend it or if it be not long get it copied for me. I will take great care of it, but how or when will you find any way of sending it. I should like to get your friend's *Psyche* to compare with *Mrs Tighe* from which you say it differs so much. Pray excuse all the trouble I give you. I hope to hear from you soon. My side pains me but in or out of pain I am
ever & ever your true friend

E H.

Decr 7th

[Direction:] Dawson Turner Esqre | Yarmouth