

Ellen Hutchins to Dawson Turner, 16th December 1812

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Dec. 16

My dear Sir,

Tho' I am very ill indeed I cannot delay to thank you for your kind letter. Your kindness at all times gives me so much pleasure that to express my grateful feelings is one of the very few things that interests me so strongly as to tempt me to write a letter in the state I am in. I am glad you can neither see or hear me. My cough is so severe that I make every body in the house uneasy. Yet I have so often been very ill in the same way that I look forward to getting better when mild weather comes. I am unable to make any active exertion, to walk up & down stairs is painful & my Mother's weak health obliges me to exert myself beyond my strength. The good account you give of yourself & all your family has been a great pleasure to me. May you all long have health & the power to enjoy all the pleasures of each other's society & to employ yourselves in the elegant & interesting occupations for which you all seem to have taste & talents. I am very much pleased with Mrs. Turner's etchings. She will get on famously I am sure. How very kind you both were to think of sending them to gratify me. I should be very glad to have any others done by her or your little girls. How much I should like to have the Art. My dear Sir you cannot feel how happy you are to live in a situation where you can enjoy the advantage of improving your mind & taste, unless you spent part of your life where with the desire for mental cultivation you had not the possibility of gratifying it. Thank you for all you say about little Ellen. I shall be ever glad to hear of her & should feel angry if you did not mention her. My poor Mother too would feel disappointed if you did not say how she was, for she always says when a letter comes from you "How is Mrs. T. & how is the little child?" I shall not be able to send your parcel until I get better. It shall be the first thing I do, for tho' it will not be as good as any of the former ones, I wish you to have it. All last season I could not draw or do any thing that I wished. The only drawing I did for the whole year was a Basket of Roses on velvet to give to a friend whom I am not likely to see again, as a gage d'amitié. I hope for more leisure soon & think I shall be able to draw a great deal next spring & summer, having got rid of some troublesome affairs that plagued me all last season. Doing the *Confervæ* for you will gratify me much. I shall feel the most animating interest in the employment when I think they will gratify you, & show you that however unequal the little I can perform may be to prove the regard I have for you it will mark my desire to please you. Indeed you cannot gratify me more than by asking me to do any thing for you. The *Utricularia intermedia* [flat leaf bladderwort] you shall have when I can go for it or even sooner, for I can send for it. My little maid knows it very well. When I do the *Confervæ* shall I do the varieties on the same sheet? For I intend to do all the appearances. We have many of them, all as interesting as distinct species, perhaps more so. I should like to know very fully from you how you would like them to be done. If I am able to execute ever so few I should wish them to be good. Perhaps you would prefer the remarkable varieties on separate sheets, such, for instance, as the very (to a common observer) distinct states of *C. albida*. The green marine species appear generally confused. I think that many varieties are made species. I think *?infustris*, *laete-virens*, *diffusa* & perhaps *albida* are but varieties of one species. I think I have specimens to support the opinion, however the appearances are so remarkable & so handsome that I think they all deserve to be drawn. Would you like to have a drawing of the large variety of *Fucus hypoglossum*. I can send you a pretty

good one. I could send you some *Confervæ* too that I did for myself, but I think I shall do better drawings for you in summer. If you saw me just now you would not expect me to do much in summer, but please God I shall get relief when warm weather comes. I do not expect to be well until then. I shall in a few days write to you again. I have had for a long time past a good deal [to] say on the *Rivulariæ* which are great favourites with us both. Did I send you a drawing of *Fucus flagelliformis* which is a true good *Rivularia* both in structure & fructification. I have a little sketch more highly magnified than the former ones of *F. capillaris* to send in my next letter. I really am not able to overturn the things in my portfolio to look for it, I am so faint from coughing incessantly & from want of sleep. All I can do is to turn over the leaves of a book for I cannot call it reading, or do a little needle work when my head does not ache violently.

I have been for a long time past thinking of getting English Botany, but I wanted to ask your advice. You mentioned some time ago that Mr Sowerby would sell any class or genus separately. I do not think the *Cryptogami* parts worth much, but if I could get the flowering plants & ferns. I should be glad, but how to get this part seems the difficulty, unless I can meet with some friend going to London, which perhaps may be the case in some time. Will you tell me if I can get this much separately or if you think it a good plan to take what I mention without the rest. Your *Fuci* & Mr Hooker's *Jungæ* leave one nothing to wish for, so far as they go & I hope to see the Mosses no less elegantly figured. Dillwyn's *confervæ* are better than those of Eng. Bot. & as to the Lichens, I think the descriptions of *Lichenographia Britannia* without figures much better assistance than the figures of Eng. Bot. which generally seem to me badly executed. However, I have not seen many & perhaps it is not fair to judge from the few. Whenever you are at leisure pray let me have your advice, but do not hurry for I am not impatient, at this time. You need not trouble Mr. Hooker for *Jung. resupinata* for me. I had plenty of it dried long since but I mistook it for *J. undulata*, which I also have from all our mountain rivulets. *Resupinata* is very common. It grows in our lawn & on my rock it is now in perfection. Would you like to have some? I shall put a bit into this letter that I may be sure that I am right, & with it a very pretty *Braeomyces* that I had to send in the last & forgot it. No. 235 is not, I think, *B. macilentus*. If one could say what is species or variety in this genus so full of difficulties, I should say it is a good species, & is not rare here.

I am glad to have so full & so pleasing an account of my doubtful *Jungermannia*, & thank Mr. Hooker. When I can write again I shall have some remarks to make in return. Pray is *J. Calyptrifolia* engraved yet? I long to see it. I may send you a large supply. I have plenty to share with my friends for I was so delighted with it that I gathered more than I know what to do with, unless you will relieve me by taking part of the load. I hope it will soon make its appearance as well as *J. Turneri* which is another of my darlings. I have spent parts of Thursday writing this letter. If I felt less confidence in your kindness I should ask your pardon for indulging myself by troubling you. Pray ask Mrs. Turner & all your girls to accept my affectionate regards & tell her how much I admire her etching. It appears to me that she already executes admirably. May you all enjoy many happy new years, & look back with pleasure on the well spent past.

Ever affectly yours

E. H.

Decr 16th 1812.