

Dawson Turner to Ellen Hutchins: 19th April 1808

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Text at top of letter:

The enclosed moss is *Splachnum ampullaceum* a most beautiful plant of which I will send fine specimens by Mr Mackay. Can I ever be useful in procuring any books for you on any subject, or in giving an opinion, which I will always do to the best of my abilities.

Madam

You will, I am apprehensive, think that I have been sadly negligent having this long delayed to thank you for your last letter and to give my opinion upon its contents, as well as upon the *Confervae* which you were so kind as to forward to me sometime ago. I could most easily fill this sheet of paper with my excuses, & that without having recourse like Tasso or Voltaire to fiction to aid the truth, but as such would be but sorry amends, I shall on the other hand trust to your goodness to excuse a neglect that has been most involuntary on my part, & shall at once state my sentiments, such as they are, though they are very unsatisfactory to me, & I fear likely to prove still more so to you. The little moss contained in your letter is *Dicranum cerviculatum* in the description of which in *Misc. Hib.* there is an error, that the leaves are described nerveless.

Of the *Jungermanniae* Mr Hooker says

No 2 is quite new to him

4. is *Jung multiflora* as you suppose (*J bicuspidata* is the same)

5. *Jung pauciflora* & No 6 same in a state likely to bear fruit, which he much wants.

7. Is a new & most beautiful species of the tribe of *J playtyphylla*; there is young fruit upon it so that it may probably be now in perfection. (I beg your permission to name this *Jung Hutchinsiae*.)

8. A common species, but not yet described. Dickson has confirmed it as *J ?fissa*.

9. Mr Hooker thinks is a variety of *J spinulosa*.

1. *Jung spherocephala* – as you say. (It is also *J trichonnaus* of Dickson.)

No 3. *Jung trichophylla*, in fruit, very rare indeed –

Of these *Jungermanniae* Mr H begs for a supply (if you can procure it without trouble) of No 2, 3, 6, 9 & particularly as much of No 7 as you can spare or procure - & he also wishes for No 8, if in fruit – He will be very happy to send you any British species that you want.

The *Sertularia* that you sent me on blank / black paper is altogether new to me – the other which was loose in your letter is *Sertularia dichotoma* but in my opinion is not distinct from *Tubularia ramosa*; I suspect that Ellis' *Tubularia muscoides* is also only *Sert volubilis* in an imperfect state. The specimens of *F subfuscus* contained in your letter is, as you justly observe, a very curious one, & your account of its progress is very interesting to me, as it is precisely similar to what I have observed of *Conf elongata*, one of its nearest affinities, upon our own coast. The *Fucus*, that you enclosed a bit of, originating from knots in the stem is *F mucronatus*, & I shall be very thankful for perfect specimens of it, as all mine are fragments unfit to draw. It requires to be watched in different stages, for *Proteus* himself was not more variable. The loose *Ulva* in your letter is only *U compressa*, & certainly different from that which was in your parcel without name or number. The other *Fucus* in your letter cannot be *F edulis*, as Mr Mackay supposes, nor do I think that it is *F laciniatus*, though there are two specimens so named in Dr Scott's Herbarium which I suppose to be

the same but which are without fruit. I should rather apprehend that, when found perfect, it will prove new. I shall look anxiously for the parcel that you are so good as to promise me next month; Mr Mackay will have the kindness to forward it via Mr. Foster & as I shall soon have occasion to send him some cuttings of Willows, by the same conveyance I will slip in a few mosses etc for you. You can scarcely conceive how pleased I am at you having directed your attentions to & being delighted with, this tribe. Can any thing be more wonderful or are the traces of the hand of the Deity anywhere more visible? I shall never forget the emotions I felt on the first day that I examined & determined to study mosses. Pray do not scruple to make me as useful as it is in my power to be to you, & write to me as often as you have any doubts to solve or anything to communicate. You do not know how much pleasure your letters give me, & when I tell you that I live here the only resident partner of a large banking establishment, that I have no small botanical correspondence, & have also on my hands a great part of the education of my little girls, you will scarcely think me unreasonable if I entreat of you not to be too scrupulous in exacting an answer to every letter before you oblige me with a second. Now then for the Confervae, about which genus I must xxx that we are all at present in the dark, knowing no more than just what Roth & Dillwyn have published.

No 1 may xxx & this is a variety of *C diffusa*

*2. New species - near sister to *C stricta*

3. *C tetrica* as you say.

No 4. *C stricta*

*5. *6. *7. Beautiful new species. I never saw one of them before.

*8. This too, I think new, but it is, like No 2 very near *C stricta*

9. We have found this at Yarmouth, but I know no name for it.

10. Var. of *C Stricta*, I think

*@11. This will not come off the paper so as to be well examined.

*@12. Conf *Turneri* Eng. Bot. I never saw it half so fine.

*13. Most beautiful new species

*@14. & *@15. These also seem new, but are near *C littoralis*

16. Conf *tomentosa* *@17. Conf *parasitica*

*@18. I think may be a var. of *C ?glominata* & *@19. Of *C ?sinicea*

20. *C multifida* Eng. Bot.

*21. One of the most beautiful plants I ever saw, either this or No 5 or No 7 must be called *C Hutchinsiae* - choose which you please. I ask this favour at your hands & hope you will not deny me.

*@22. I think a var of *C arbuscula* *@23. Certainly new. There is another very fine Conferva that you call *@C fruticulosa, a name I am unacquainted with nor do I know where the plant is described. After all, what I have written about these plants is so unsatisfactory that I would destroy my letter if I thought that any farther examination would enable me to say anything better. Even this, however, is the most unequivocal evidence to prove how interesting the contents of your parcel are. I have taken the liberty of prefixing asterisks to those I particularly wish for more of, but I beg you will neither take any trouble nor rob your own collection for the purpose. Indeed anything from your shores will always be acceptable to me as I have many hungry mouths constantly gaping around me. It is for these and not for myself that I am a beggar. Fucus tomentosus has caused the same doubts in me as in you & I shall be very glad of any light upon the subject. *Sert loricata* I have not, the others that you are so good as to offer, I do not want. Of F coronopifolius I will beg a further supply at a future time. I have barely left room to repeat once more the assurance of the respect & esteem with which I really am Madam your very faithful & much obliged servant D T

Yarmouth 19th April 1808