

Dawson Turner to Ellen Hutchins, 31st December 1809

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(Letter wrongly dated in pencil on the original held in Kew Gardens Library and Archives as 31 October 1809)

If I have been tardy, my dear Madam, beyond what I either ought to have been or intended to have been, in sending you the opinion you wished upon the different plants contained in your last parcel, impute my delay, I beg of you, to any other cause than intentional neglect, & of this alone believe me to be incapable. The real cause has been a multiplicity of business, besides which I have enjoyed during the last week the society of my friend, Mr Hooker, & have been glad to give up to him all the leisure I could spare from my necessary employments. He has been at Oxford, comparing his *Jungermannia* with the Dillenian Herbarium, which done there is no obstacle to his completing & publishing the work as soon as possible, except that his bookseller is not disposed to let it appear before the end of the year, under the idea that it will not sell till Winter. In the mean time he seems determined to run to Iceland, & to accept an offer made him by Count Trampe, the Danish governor of the island, whom he brought with him a prisoner to England. Our government will send the Count back in April, when he proposes to Mr Hooker to give him a passage in his ship, to accompany him all over the island, & afterwards to bring him back to England in September. This is an opportunity he ought on no account to let slip, as no better could possibly be had for seeing the island, & his having been there before will be a prodigious advantage. I have, as usual a favour to beg at your hands. (I seldom write to you, my dear Madam, without such being the case, so that I may fairly be called interested in wishing our correspondence to be brisk.) – it is that you will make me a drawing of *Fucus aculeatus* for my Hist Fuc as I have no specimen fit for the purpose & the plant does not grow here. I would further beg to have it as soon as you conveniently can, & to have it sent by Captain Mangin that it may travel expeditiously; for, in proportion as my work draws towards a conclusion, I feel the more anxious to have all the materials before me. Have you yet got the lichens that Mr Borrer & I put together for you? & do you recognise among them many as natives of your own neighbourhood? I shall be glad to be informed that they have proved serviceable, in enabling you more easily to distinguish the species found in the vicinity of Bantry. To return, however, to the object of my writing, your parcel, of which I can give you little more than, what our late Bishop, Dr Horne, said of Hume's philosophy, a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts.

Dicranum rigidulum only *D varium*

Dic rufescens the true plant, &, I believe, a good species.

Riccia fruticulosa ? Right; but Mr Hooker says he will make it a *Jungermannia*.

Grimmia No 1 & 2 – only *G apocarpa*.

No 3 – Of this I must beg of you to send more, & if you can, with the peristomum for Mr Hooker & I cannot make it out. It is very different from *G crispula*.

Tortola No 1 - This also we cannot make out.

No 4 & No 5 *T cuneifolia* & *rigida*, as you say.

Jungermannia No 21 *Jungermannia pallescens*.

22 *Jung scalaris* ? Mr Hooker feels doubts about this because it is not in fruit.

24 *Jung xxxlata* ? The doubt arises from the unusual size.

25 & million 26 both *Jung concinnata*.

Hypnum subtile ? Not so, nor anything I know – pray get more

No 5 we fear you are right in your suggestions that this may possibly be a variety of *H molluscum*.

7. I shall be glad of more; it seems a fine new species.

11. This is, it appears to me, not the same as you gave before as *H fluviatile*, but is only a variety of *H filicinum*.

12. *H abietinum*? We are still unable to make this out. It comes near *praelongum*.

13. *H praelongum* & *Swartzii*, mixed.

15. – imperfect, as you say. May it not be *H pulchellum* ? It is not what Mr Mackay sent me as *H ?reptens*

Bryum No 2 variety of *B elongatum*, I think.

A Mr Eagle, with whom I am slightly acquainted, has just sent me drawings & descriptions of about 50 mosses, intended, I have no doubt, for a *Muscologia Britannica*, in which, I suspect, he wishes me to join him, but I shall decline it. There are very few persons with whom I should choose to publish conjointly, & these drawings do not tempt me. They are but little magnified, & all green, capsule, peristomium, operculum & all. I would give Five Guineas willingly to have an opportunity of showing you the drawings of mosses I have from Mr Hooker & of comparing them with the plants themselves in your society. What a pity that the interchange of parcels is so difficult between us that I dare risk nothing which it would not be possible to replace. I finished my letter just as the clock is preparing to strike the end of 1809 & beginning of 1810, & when I consider how much advantage & pleasure I have during the course of this year derived from your correspondence I feel the value of it most forcibly & sign myself with more than usual warmth of esteem my dear Madam your obliged friend Dawson Turner Yarmouth 31st December 1809