

Ellen Hutchins to Dawson Turner: 20th February 1810

Transcription of the letter given by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge. Featured on www.ellenhutchins.com on 20th February 2025. The whole correspondence is available on the Ellen's Letters page of the website.

My dear Sir

You have I hope by this time received the drawings of *Fucus aculeatus* [now named *Desmarestia aculeata*] & some Confervae that I sent through Captain Mangin above a week ago. I have deferred answering your letters since I sent the parcel expecting to find something new this springtime. Nor have I been disappointed, for in dredging for shells & plants yesterday I met with a single specimen of a most curious little plant, composed of distinct short filaments enclosed within a colourless wrinkled skin. You shall have a drawing with the next things. Its nearest relative seems to be *C foetida* [*Amphipleura rutilans*], which I can hardly think is a Conferva. I never could see anything like what Dillwyn's plate represents. You shall have a sketch of it as it appears to me. I can hardly believe that *C paradoxa* [*Enteromorpha flexuosa* - synonym *Ulva flexuosa*] is not rather an *Ulva*. I have got a simple freshwater Conferva to send unlike anything I have yet seen, & I feel sure that I shall be able to make out in the spring & summer 5 or 6 more that are not in Dillwyn & which I have never yet drawn.

Your being pleased with the 9 Confervae I sent adds much to my interest in them. I cannot tell you how much I feel obliged by your offer to assist in completing such descriptions as you wish me to give, but as you would even if I should attempt to write any part of the descriptions, have all the trouble, & as I am sure I could not execute them well, I beg of you to do the whole, at anytime you like. I am indeed very sensible of your kindness & of Dr Smith's politeness, but I should feel afraid to attempt describing anything. You know I am good for nothing but gathering up all that I can find for those who know how to observe them with scientific eyes. Mine alas are in every way very short sighted. During the course of next summer I shall attend with all possible diligence to the Rivulariae & expect to find more specimens than you have yet had from me. I have seen single specimens of two very large fine ones, if possible I must get more to draw & feature. The only freshwater plant I have ever seen that resembles the marine species in structure is *C gelanitosa*, & even of this I am not sure that the fruit does not somewhat differ. *Rivularia angulosa* is of a very different nature I believe. If my plant be the true *angulosa*, I think the filaments connected somewhat like *C distorta*, & they seem to me somewhat of the same nature, but that they terminate in a different manner. *Riv endivifolia* does not grow here. I should like to get it & if you have plenty to spare of any of the following Confervae I should also thank you for specimens at any convenient time, *comoides*, *reticulata*, *glomerata*, *aegagropila*, *villosa*, *Borreri*, *urceolata*, *crispa*, *fracta*, & *dichotoma*. I am very glad you find my *Utricularia* is *media* [*Utricularia intermedia* - flat leaved or intermediate bladderwort]. If possible you shall have specimens in flower, barren ones you shall certainly get. –

About *Fucus loreus* [*Himanthalia elongata*] I cannot please myself. The rocks are covered with young and the few remaining fragments of the old have all discharged their seeds. The end of the summer is I think the season when the plant is in perfection. The first I can get fit to draw shall be done for you. I have not yet heard about the office in Dublin for

conveying parcels to & from England, though I wrote to my brother to make inquiries. When I write next you shall hear all about it.

To the lichens I shall pay particular attention & collect in large quantities for you. I have got *L papillaris* of Withering. It seems a very curious one, it is I dare say common with you. *Parmelia tenuissima* [*Leptogium tenuissimum*] grows here. I hope Mr Borrer will be soon able to give us an English book to consult. I hope you found the morsels of mosses I sent with the last drawings interesting. Is the morsel under the seal of this letter *Phascum alternifolium*? I can get plenty. In shells I advance, but slowly. I have got some of which I am either doubtful or cannot find descriptions in Montague. When we can hear how to send things by this office in Dublin I shall make up some for Miss Turner. I sometimes get presents of West India shells, would she like to have share? Tell me my dear Sir how I can do any thing for you or any of your family & believe me ever your obliged friend

Ballylickey 20th February 1810 E Hutchins