

Dawson Turner to Ellen Hutchins, date uncertain ? May 1810

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[date illegible; however, the letter was, from internal evidence, written in late April or early May 1810].

Long a time, my dear Madam, as has elapsed since last I wrote to you, I still feel it would be wrong to offer any apology on the subject; for an apology seems to infer some injury done or slight shewn to the party to whom it is made, whereas in the present case it would be quite the reverse, as I am myself the only sufferer. I am sure of one thing, which is that you believe me incapable of shewing you intentional neglect, I trust I may be equally persuaded of another, that you have believed me sincere in my declarations that your correspondence is one of my greatest amusements & pleasures; & under this confidence I rest satisfied that you would not believe I would willingly hazard the loss of it, nor will I enter into a detail of the vexatious circumstances that have harrassed me & kept me silent for the last three months, the principal one of which has been a forgery upon our Bank. This, you will I know be glad to hear, has been attended with no unpleasant consequences beyond trouble & anxiety; which have been greatly eased by the two letters I have received from you in the interim, one of them containing drawings & specimens. About a fortnight ago I had an opportunity, by means of a tradesman from this neighbourhood of the name of Chapman, going to settle in Dublin, to send you a small parcel; & I availed myself of it to convey to you Mr Dillwyn's Synopsis of the Confervae, which I recommend to you to have interleaved to write remarks upon, Mr Hooker's paper on foreign mosses published in the last volume of the Linnæan Transactions, & a small pamphlet lately printed by Mr Mathias in memory of a friend of ours who died a few months ago. It is an elegant tribute of friendship, & as such I am sure you will like to see it, tho you do not know the parties. "Forse un di fia", as Tasso says, I may have the pleasure of shewing you the Villa of Blundeston, which is there so much praised. I had not a moment to look out any plants for you, nor even to write a line; but Mr Chapman promises me he will soon point out some means of conveying our parcels backward & forward without trouble, & if he will do so he will do me a great favor. You are likely, I understand, soon to see a botanical friend of mine, Sir Thos Gage, who married Lord Kenmare's daughter, & is just gone to Ireland, to pass some months there. He declares he will at all events make your acquaintance, even if he cannot procure an introduction to you; nor & if Mr Hooker should be disappointed in returning to Iceland, which seems at present problematical, you must not be surprized if one day in the summer you find that he & I are at Bantry waiting your permission to call at Ballylickey. These, however, are mere Chateaux en Espagne, where, by the bye, it does not seem probable that the English will long have Chateaux at all of a more substantial nature. And now, my dear Madam, ¿what have I to thank you for? – I hardly know, it is so much, how & where to begin. In the first place, however, for your mosses, which, tho *Grimmia*, have puzzled & teased me as much as any *Tortula* or *Orthotricha* could have done, & I now speak of them most doubtingly. No 3 I have already told you I could not ascertain, & I am, unluckily, still in the same predicament. – No 4 appears to me to be *Gymnostomum luteolum* [*Anoetangium aestivum*], but I apprehend I must be wrong, as you would know it, if it were so. N^o 5 is *Grimmia controversa* [*Weissia controversa*]. - seems to me the same as No 3. – No 7 is *Grimmia recurvirostra* [*Hymenostylium recurvirostrum*], & No 8 is *Grimmia Dicksoni* [*Dicranoweisia cirrata*].

Your Hypnum, No 9[?] is *H. subtile*, for more of which I should be obliged to you at some future time, & still more so for more of your little moss supposed a *Tortula*, the fruit of which I much long to see, as I suspect it to be a species described by foreign authors, but not known in Britain, own brother to *T. tortuosa* [*Tortella tortuosa*]. This, I think, is all I have to say of Mosses, except that your *Phascum alternifolium* is not so, but is barren shoots of some moss, I think *Dicranum purpureum* [*Ceratodon purpureus*]. The drawing of *Fucus aculeatus* is excellent & I am greatly obliged to you for it. I only delay its publication wishing to get a fresh specimen of *F. pedunculatus* to accompany it, as I think they will illustrate each other. Now for what I know of your *Confervae*; & sorely little it is. Mr Borrer & Mr Hooker both agree that No 56 must be an animal production, & they are inclined to refer No 59 to *C. vaginata*: the others remain new as far as we know, & as soon as I have any leisure I will try what I can do towards describing them. No 69 is *Rivularia elegans* [*Chaetophora elegans* (Roth) C. Agardh], a plant very common here & certainly of the same Genus as *Riv. angulosa*, even if these must be separated from the marine *Rivularia*, which I believe it will be difficult to do. I can find no uniting of the filaments as in *C. distorta*. Your No 65 is a new species of the same Genus. No 64 is *Conferva alternata* of English Botany, much finer than it has ever been found before, & No 67 I apprehend may possibly belong to *C. limosa* [*Oscillatoria limosa* C. Agardh]: of No 66 I know nothing, & should be thankful for more specimens, as well as of any other, except 69. I was very vexed at not sending by Mr Chapman the *Confervae* you wish for, most of which I have for you. *C. paradoxa* & *C. fotida* are two plants for any light on which I shall be very thankful. The drawing of *F. loreus* may wait to any future time. I should not be able to do anything with it for some months; for you & my other botanical correspondents are by no means the only portion of my engagements that I neglect, but I have also been obliged to leave my *Hist. Fuc.* sadly, & to let two months go by without any No being published in either of them. Lichen *papillaria* of With. is common here, & is, as you say, really a curious plant; *L. tenuissimus* too we have in plenty, tho' seldom with fruit. I spent 2 days lately with Mr Leach at Halesworth, & was greatly pleased with his extraordinary enthusiasm. He went 400 miles lately to catch a beetle, which I think is the ne plus ultra of Entomological ardor. I almost regret I am not an Entomologist & that I feel the aversion to [sic] do to killing Insects, tho' I think it both right of itself & particularly necessary for the father of a family, particularly if [sic] what Warner says is true that man is of Nature cruel, & that the most natural amusement of children is impaling butterflies & cockchafers. I have hardly left myself room to thank you in the name of my daughter for your kind offer of shells: she has so few, & so few means of collecting, that for any British or foreign she would be much obliged to you. You express yourself indebted to me – How can you so pervert terms! when I not only know but feel all the obligation is on the side of Your ever obliged

D. T. Yarmouth [date illegible; however, the letter was, from internal evidence, written in late April or early May 1810].

Pray write immediately. Capt Mangin has no objection to forwarding any small letter-like parcels. – Is *F. loreus* annual or perennial? in what month does it bear fruit? & do you find the buttons ever swollen into a spherical shape – if you do pray draw me so[?].–