

Ellen Hutchins to Dawson Turner: 9th November 1810

Transcription of the letter given by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge. Released on www.ellenhutchins.com on 9th November 2025.

Your letter, my dear Sir, should not have lain so long unanswered had I been well enough to write. The day after it came I went to see a small Whale that was killed in the bay at some distance from me & got a wetting & severe cold, this with other things has prevented my writing. I was greatly delighted to hear from you as I always am. Pray do not apologize for a short letter when it is inconvenient to spare time for a longer. A line from you is a great gratification to me, it brings the best news that you are well. The Bay has been all summer full of Whales, they came in after Herrings & sprats. One was driven by a storm into a shallow place & killed by the country people. I find that it is *Balæna Boops*. I got fine specimens of *Lepas Balænaris* on its fins & was greatly pleased to see this ugly creature, it gave some idea of the nature of these immense creatures, tho' it was only 32 feet long, the mouth 8 [? / 4] feet long & the tail 10 ft. across. I was very near many of them alive in summer but had no idea of their shape from what I could see in the water. It was amusing to see them swim about in all directions spouting water. The people here do not remember to have seen them up the Bay until this last year but at the mouth of the Bay they are frequently seen.

You ask me if I have ever thought on the arrangement of the submersed *Algæ*. I used to amuse myself with conjecturing what your future arrangement may be, but found it a subject greatly beyond my power of seeing into & that one day's experience generally contradicted that of the former. My views must be very confused & my opinion of little value, yet as you ask me I venture to tell you what I have thought, supposing that even the conjectures of a person who is out of the way of being prejudiced by other people's opinions may interest you & that if I have chanced to see any part of your system it would give you pleasure. I imagine that you will unite in one genus all the *Fuci* that bear imbedded tubercles, with pores on the surface, whether placed in receptacles or in the frond, as *Fucus natans*, *vesiculosus*, *lozeus*, [___?] in another genus those that bear capsules [sepili ?] on their frond or in ~~the~~ cilia attached to it as *purpurascens*, *confervoides*, *gigantinas*, *Coronopifolius*, [*Iboluæ* ?], *membranifolius*, *Brodiaei*, *palmella*, *crispus*, *mamellosus*, *scillatus*. Is not the fruit of *Fucus rotundus* *Griffithsia* & perhaps *plicatus* of the same nature? *Fucus lumbricalis* seems to stand alone as well as *F[ucus] rubens*. Will you form a genus of those with seeds on the surface of the frond, as *F[ucus] bulbosus*, *sacharinus* & *palmaris*? What can be done with *F[ucus] edulis*? Its fruit seems to be tubercles placed between the two skins of which the frond is composed. The seeds seem [to be] disp[er]sed within the frond. Perhaps [the] same is the case with *Ulva ligulata multifida* & some other *ulvæ*. I don't know the fruit of *F[ucus] filum*. *F[ucus] flagelliformis* is certainly of the same nature as *Riv[ularia] virmiculata*. I have s[ee]n the fruit & believe that what you have figured as seeds are really capsules. Those plants of which I have sent you drawings as *Rivulariæ* seem to form with *Conf[erva] gelatinosa* & *Riv[ularia] endifolia* [?] a very natural assemblage but how can *F[ucus] tomentosus* & *Bursa* be separated from them unless the jointed structure be taken into consideration. The form & situation of the capsules is precisely [similar?] tho' [___] *bossus* [?] & *Bursa* are much longer plants & of longer st[em]at[ion]s [?]. The *Fuca* with two kinds of fruit you will I suppose place in the genera [1] one with capsules & single seeds scattered in the frond as [?] *Kaliformis articulatus*, *clavellousus*, *dasyphyllus ovalis*, [*longissimus* ?] *obtusius pusillus* [?], *pinnatifidius*, *Laceratus*, [*las*] *acimatus* [?] *reniformis bifidus* perhaps (I have not [sent?] sample seeds) *sanguineus sinuosus* [___] *tea* [?]. *Hypoglossum* & *ruscifolius* perhaps *F[ucus] [punctatus?]* &

Ulvoides which are I believe the same species with the two kinds of fruit are ought to be still kept separate from Laceratus [?] With which I believe you were disposed to unite them indeed the variations of laceratus are most puzzling. Of the other Fuci with two kinds ^{^ of} fruit capsules & lanceolate pods will [?] you so [?] form a genus containing dentatus pinastroides perhaps Lycopodioides subfuscus Conf[erva] elongata F[ucus] fruticulosus amphibius coccineus cristatus Conf[erva] coccineus [?] & [____]ula? & perhaps the Conf[erva] with veined joints may be associated with this family the only distinction I can see is that in the latter the simple seeds are in the en[d] of the brachia [?] & not in Ulva & lansetati [?] capsules. ~~I believe~~ I have not seen single seeds in Conf[erva] Byssoides. I believe that Conf[erva] rosea N°. 13 Conf[erva] Turnerii of Eng. Bot. which is I believe distinct from plumula have two sorts of fruit capsules & single seeds of large size in a globular gelatinous mass without any internal covering either placed as in Rosea & N° 13 in opposite pairs on the [____?], or at the ends of the shoots among the filaments as in Turnerii & plumula. Those must I suppose be separated from the Conf[erva] with distinct capsules only. Will you separate Conf[erva] rubra ciliata & diaphana? They appear to form a very natural family. Conf[erva] corallina does not seem to me to unite well with C[onf[erva] setacea F[ucus] filamentosus [?] & those other plants with fruit seeds surrounded by filaments without any capsule. The fruit of Conf[erva] verticulata is really like that of [Spongiosa ?] with particular capsules on surface filaments placed in a circle round the [_____] surrounded by an outer [____] of branched filaments. Will not all the confervæ & some Ulvæ which have internal granules & no capsules form a very noticeable [?] family it would include all the green [?] Marine Confervæ which are a very puzzling tribe many of Dillwyn's species are I believe only varieties C[onfervæ] flaccida & fuccida & many fresh water species distorta & its affinities [?] seem another very natural family, in which Riv[ularia] angulosa surely belongs. I enclose a little sketch of this plant with the seeds escaping at the lower end of the filament I saw many seeds that had got quite clear of their [____]ular [?] covering Riv[ularia] elegans seems a Conf[erva] with internal [g____?] very near to C[onf[erva] lubrica I lately met with it [____] or more [?] & it would puzzle you in this [state?] to distinguish it from C[onf[erva] lubrica the only difference seemed the filaments spreading from a centre [____] some [lengthened out?] so as to lose their round appearance to the naked eye in the same [____] all the C[onfervæ] it produces were of great size. C[onf[erva] pectinalis a foot lo[ng] [____] gives no idea of its strange mode of [____]

I feel half ashamed to send you this long letter, which can I am satisfied [____] be of no use to you. I have not left room to say a word in answer to your last letter which I received the night before last. I will soon write again about Lichens. I have a few to send with some drawings. F[ucus] loreus will be very soon finished, the magnified parts are done & it only wants a little shading. I hope you will like it. C[onf[erva] flaccida you shall have immediately & F[ucus] reniformis when I get it fresh. Pray tell me of any thing else I can do. Your letters are always missent to Bawtry, & no other English [letters] that I get go there. It delays yours.

Pray write Bantry Ireland very large & perhaps they will come right. believe me ever most faithfully

Yours

E Hutchins

Ballylickey

Nov 9th 1810

[cover with address]

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{12 NOV __}
{1810}[stamp in reverse]

BANTRY
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Dawson Turner Esq[ui]^{re}

Yarmouth

[added by another hand: list of names of botanists mentioned in these letters]

[Ellen] Hutchins.

[James] Dalton.

[Mrs] Griffiths.

[William] Rashleigh.

[William] Borrer.

[Lewis Weston] Dillwyn.