

XXVIII. *Remarks on the Bryum marginatum and Bryum lineare of Dickson. By Sir James Edward Smith, M.D. F.R.S. P.L.S.*

Read April 19, 1814.

HAVING, within a few days past, had occasion to advert to the study of Mosses, I met with a remark of Bridel upon the subject of Mr. Dickson's labours in this department of Botany, which, though of no great importance, requires correction; especially as the learned reviewer of Bridel's work in the *Annals of Botany*, vol. ii. 333, has given it his tacit assent. After commending, in general terms, the labours of our great cryptogamic botanist, Bridel accuses him of having sometimes published, as new mosses, what had really been described by other writers. The only instances given are two. *Bryum marginatum* of Dickson he rightly indeed says is *B. serratum* of Schrader; and *B. lineare* is nothing else than *Dicranum pellucidum*. The reviewer properly indicates that the last of these observations is not correct. Indeed so incorrect is this remark, that the plant of our countryman is a *Trichostomum*, the *lineare* of *Fl. Brit.*; Mr. Dickson, though so despised by some critics, and by Bridel amongst them, for not attending to the *peristomium*, having, by his consummate skill of observation, distinguished by their other characters these two mosses, which his critics, it seems, confound. Nor is it a sufficient apology for the great author of the *Muscologia* to say (with the reviewer) that Mr. Dickson's figure of his *Bryum lineare* is such as to justify the mistake. The figure is, indeed, though correct

rect as far as it goes, not sufficient in such a difficult case to found any judgment upon. Bridel surely must have seen a specimen, or he would have prudently limited his assertion to the figure only.

But it is on the subject of Mr. Dickson's *Bryum marginatum* that I now wish to defend him. This is indeed the *serratum* of the learned Schrader, communicated by that author to Gmelin, who first published it in his edition of the Linnæan *Systema Naturæ*, vol. ii. part 2, 1330, under the name of *Mnium serratum*. Professor Schrader himself afterwards removes it to *Bryum*, in his *Spicilegium*, p. 71. Now the first part of Gmelin's second volume was not published till 1791, and the second part perhaps rather later; nor did Schrader's *Spicilegium* come out till 1794. But Mr. Dickson's second fasciculus, where his *B. marginatum* is described and figured, was published in 1790, so that the charge against him falls to the ground; and if we were disposed to throw any blame on so great and so candid a man as the present Gottingen Professor, we might say that he ought not to have omitted, in his *Spicilegium*, a reference to a standard cryptogamic work, published four years before.

Far be it from me, however, to insist on any such charges. My aim is only to justify my venerable friend, my master in this line of study; a task I the more readily undertake, as he is doubtless better employed than in thinking on the subject.

Norwich,
April 18, 1814.

J. E. SMITH.



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