

THE HERBARIUM OF JAMES I'ANSON OF DARLINGTON

By B. WELCH

This comprises about 650 sheets, and was included in the herbarium of C. E. Salmon which came, as a bequest, to the British Museum (Natural History) in 1930. With it was a MS. note written in 1920 by Mr. Salmon giving the following information. Herb. I'Anson came into his possession in 1919, through the kindness of the collector's grand-daughter, Miss S. J. I'Anson of Darlington. The dated specimens were collected between 1801 and 1815 and many examples bear the names of the collector's relations and other members of the Society of Friends, such as William, James and Nathan Backhouse, E. Robson, William Brunton, Philip Harrison and J. L. Knapp. The specimens, mounted on small sheets ($12\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ in.), are in an excellent state of preservation, having been kept in paper packets in a wooden cabinet made with compartments just the size for the sheets. It is exceptional for there to be two sheets of any species and very common plants are not represented. Whilst the majority were collected in the vicinity of Darlington, the plants contributed by J. Woods, James Backhouse and others are from many other parts of Britain. The specimens collected by William Backhouse are of special interest as Baker and Tate (*Fl. Northumberland and Durham*, 1868, p. 109) reported that his herbarium was lost in the fire at Thirsk in 1864 that totally destroyed J. G. Baker's own collections and library.

James I'Anson was born on the 7th April 1784, the son of William and Mary I'Anson of Darlington. He married Sarah Dixon on 27th April 1808 at Darlington, and died at the age of 37 on the 10th June 1821. He was a linen weaver. By correspondence with Miss I'Anson in 1920, Mr. Salmon ascertained that James I'Anson's son Charles was born at Darlington, 15th January 1809, married in 1834, and died at Darlington, 5th September 1884. He was one of the owners of the Whessoe works just outside Darlington and the Rolling Mills of Fry, I'Anson and Co. near Rice Carr (where *Daphne laureola* and *Epilobium palustre* were collected). Charles's son, Joseph Coventry I'Anson, was born at Gateshead, 8th July 1842, and died in London in August 1917. As a child, about 1855, he added a few specimens to his grandfather's herbarium.

Also in 1920 Mr. A. J. Crosfield sent Mr. Salmon notes that Edward Robson of Darlington (born 17th October 1763, died 21st May 1813) married Elizabeth Dearman, sister of Mary Back-

house. Their son, also Edward, born 29th December 1791, died 26th November 1819, married Jane, sister of William Backhouse. William Backhouse, son of Jonathan and Ann, was born 17th November 1779, married Mary Dixon of Cockfield, W. Durham, 27th March 1806, and died suddenly on 9th June 1844. James I'Anson married Mary's sister, Sarah Dixon. Nathan Backhouse of Darlington was born 28th March 1788 and died 9th November 1805. Philip Harrison of Darlington, born 6th November 1762, died 27th April 1808, was a dealer in drugs and groceries. William Brunton of Ripon (1775-1806) contributed specimens from that neighbourhood.

Other sources indicate that William Backhouse was a banker. He was a cousin of James Backhouse (1794-1869) who was born at Darlington and apprenticed to a chemist and druggist there, but delicate health led him to an outdoor life and between 1820 and 1830 he began business in York as a nurseryman. In the obituary notice in *J. Bot.*, 7, 5 (1869), J. G. Baker said of James Backhouse that 'Under the encouragement of his relative, Edward Robson, . . . he and his brothers learned, when very young, to take an interest in the plants of their neighbourhood, and formed a herbarium'. This was the Edward Robson who contributed to Smith's "*English Botany*" and is mentioned in that work as 'a very assiduous and accurate botanist'. He probably also encouraged James I'Anson. The 1801 specimens include *Stellaria nemorum* and *Allium oleraceum* from Baydales, close to Darlington, and *Tofieldia pusilla* from Cronkley Fell, the last collected by E. Robson. James I'Anson would have been 17 and William Backhouse 21 in that year, when James Backhouse was 7, Nathan Backhouse 13, Philip Harrison 39 and Edward Robson 38. Nathan died in 1805, P. Harrison in 1808 and E. Robson in 1813. The specimens dated 1815 were collected by James Backhouse and include *Cherleria sedoides* from Ben Lawers, *Daboecia cantabrica* from Ireland, and others from Cromer, Deal, the Isle of Wight and St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall.