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CHARLES EDWARD FAXON.

C. S. SARGENT.

(With portrait.¹)

CHARLES EDWARD FAXON died at his home in Jamaica Plain on the 6th of February, 1918. He was born in Jamaica Plain, then a part of the town of Roxbury, January 21, 1846, and was the son of Elisha and Hannah Mann (Whiting) Faxon. Elisha Faxon was a direct descendant in the eighth generation from Thomas Faxon who came from England to America about 1647 and settled in Braintree, Massachusetts. The father died when Charles was nine years old and the oldest son of the family, Edwin,² took his place and exercised a wise influence on the younger children. Under his guidance Charles and his youngest brother Walter learned to love Nature. With him they roamed the fields and woods in what is now Greater Boston which sixty years ago were full of interest for the lovers of Nature. He taught them to look at trees, to gather and observe flowers, to watch birds and collect their eggs, and it is probable that the two boys would never have become distinguished in science without this brother's inspiration and guidance. The Faxon family was a remarkable one even for New England in the middle of the last century. The children were taught music, and constantly attended the best concerts and the opera. They studied French at home and as children read it fluently, and no effort was spared for their intelligent education. As a child

¹ For permission to use the plate from which the portrait of Mr. Faxon is printed RHODORA is indebted to the courtesy of the Massachusetts Biographical Society.

² See RHODORA, ii. p. 107.

Charles Faxon taught himself to draw, using as his model the studies of landscape and of trees published by J. D. Harding, an English artist, in his *Lessons on Trees* and other books which in their time were influential in increasing the love of drawing. By the time he was fifteen years old Charles Faxon was able to make excellent copies in color of some of Audubon's birds, and during the summers made successful pencil and water color sketches of the scenery of northern New England.

What Faxon learned from schools was in the Jamaica Plain public schools and the Lawrence Scientific School at Cambridge, from which he was graduated as a civil engineer in 1867. At Cambridge he was noted for skill in mechanical drawing. Later he became deeply interested in English literature and taught himself to read nearly all the modern European languages. After graduating from the Lawrence Scientific School he was a clerk for a short time in the firm of leather merchants established by his father and conducted by two of his older brothers. During this time he made a journey among the mountains of western North Carolina, and in 1876 he passed six months in Europe, visiting Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland.

Faxon lived always in Jamaica Plain and did not care to travel except in western and northern New England where he spent a few weeks every spring and autumn, his last journey to northern New Hampshire having been in the autumn before he died. Berkshire County, Massachusetts, was a favorite field of the Faxons and they knew its flora well, as they did that of the Green Mountains of Vermont and of all northern New Hampshire. Outside of New England Faxon traveled little and never crossed the continent. In the spring of 1883 he passed a few weeks at Mobile, making sketches of some of the southern trees for *The Silva*, and in the winter and spring of 1885 he visited with me several of the West Indian islands in the hope of obtaining material of some of the West Indian trees which grow also in southern Florida. On this journey we returned by the way of New Orleans and went as far west as San Antonio, Texas. In April of the next year he visited with me the Florida Keys on one of the steamers of the United States Lighthouse Service and at this time made a large number of drawings. This was the last of Faxon's journeys beyond New England.

From 1879 to 1884 Faxon was an instructor of botany in the Bussey Institution of Harvard College. He was a Fellow of the American

Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 1897 Harvard conferred on him an Honorary Master of Arts degree.

During the 70's Professor D. C. Eaton was preparing an illustrated work on the Ferns of North America and the Faxons, who were interested in Ferns, had opportunities for collecting northern material for him. This led to an invitation to Charles Faxon to make some of the colored drawings for Eaton's book. The first of these, that of *Aspidium Goldianum* Hook., was published in June 1879, and is plate xl. of volume i. The remaining plates of this volume and all those of volume ii. were drawn by Faxon.

Professor Spencer F. Baird, one of whose earlier papers was a catalogue of the trees and shrubs of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, was anxious that the Smithsonian Institution should publish a *Silva* of North America, and as early as 1849 Isaac Sprague began to make colored drawings of the flowers and fruits of trees under the direction of Asa Gray who was to prepare a North American *Silva* for the national Government. This plan was dropped at the end of a few years, but in 1882 I accepted Professor Baird's invitation to undertake the preparation of a *Silva* of North America to be published by the Smithsonian Institution, and I asked Charles Faxon to join the Arboretum staff to take charge of the herbarium and library, and to make the drawings for the new *Silva*. He came to the Arboretum on May 12th of that year and remained in charge of the herbarium and library until his death, seeing them grow from insignificance to considerable importance; and much of the value and success of the Arboretum is due to the admirable manner in which he managed his departments.

Faxon began at once the drawings for The *Silva*, but at the end of a few months it was found that at the rate the Smithsonian Institution was willing to pay for the work it would take at least seventy-five years to complete it, and another arrangement was made for the publication of the book. Under the new arrangement Faxon made such good progress with the drawings that it was possible to begin publishing the first volume in 1891, and the last of his seven hundred and forty-four *Silva* plates appeared just twenty-one years after he began making the first drawing.

To illustrate some of the Guatemala plants described by John Donnell Smith Faxon made thirty-four drawings which were published in *The Botanical Gazette* between 1888 and 1894. They repre-

sent previously undescribed species and are accompanied by complete analyses of flowers and fruits. Four of this set are of new species of Ferns. These plates with others illustrating the flora of Guatemala were issued on large paper by Mr. Smith in 1906. In this set of thirty-four drawings are found some of the best examples of Faxon's work.

In the ten volumes of *Garden and Forest* (1888-1898) are published two hundred and eighty-five of Faxon's drawings. Among them are eight drawings of insects and their destructive work. Among the plants there is a large variety of subjects, including trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and Ferns. Many previously undescribed species and one genus (*Robinsonella*, named in honor of the editor of this Journal) are found among these drawings. Among them, too, will be found the first illustrations of several plants which have now become common in gardens, and the only illustrations which have been published of many rare and interesting North American shrubs. Among these drawings are figures of thirteen North American species of Aster, Irises, Phloxes, Barberries, and a number of Japanese trees and shrubs. Seventeen of these illustrations of Japanese trees were reproduced in Sargent's *Forest Flora of Japan*.

In the two volumes of *Trees and Shrubs* (1902-1913) two hundred of Faxon's drawings are published. They illustrate new or little known ligneous plants, including two previously undescribed genera, *Faxonanthus* in honor of Edwin Faxon, and *Grypocarpa*, and one hundred and three previously undescribed species, principally from North America, Mexico, Central America, China and Japan.

In 1905 six hundred and forty-two of Faxon's drawings were published in Sargent's *Manual of the Trees of North America*, and in the last year of his life he was at work on some additional drawings for a new edition of this work. Between 1899 and 1913 thirteen of Faxon's drawings were published in *Rhodora*, and three of his drawings of Ferns will be found in the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*. During thirty-four years, from 1879 to 1913, nineteen hundred and twenty-five of Faxon's drawings were published.

Faxon never cared to write for publication. His modesty, I think, deterred him from sharing with the public the information on many subjects of which he was master, and I can find only the following from his pen: On page 52 of the second volume of *Garden and Forest* there is a translation by him of a part of Professor Coutinho's paper

Os Quercus de Portugal, published in volume vi. of the *Boletim da Sociedade Broteriana*, on the fructification of the Cork Oak. On page 140 of the fourth volume there is an account by him of *Viaggio negli Stati Uniti dell' America Septentrionale fatto negli anni 1785, 1786, e 1787*, da Luigi Castiglioni. *Con alcune osservazioni sui Vegetabili* etc., a work which had been overlooked by American botanists; on page 292 of volume viii. will be found an article on the *Birds of the Arnold Arboretum* with lists of summer and winter residents; and on page 464 of the ninth volume there is a short note by him on *Aster infirmus* Michaux to accompany his illustration of that species which he had found growing in abundance at Lexington, Massachusetts. Of more importance is his translation from the Danish of an article on Wisconsin birds by the Danish ornithologist Grundtvig.¹ He contributed to *A Guide of the Arnold Arboretum* the chapter on birds. If Faxon wrote little his good taste, knowledge of languages and good judgment were always at the command of his associates, to whom for thirty years he rendered invaluable services in the careful and critical examination of their proof-sheets.

In his drawings Faxon united accuracy with graceful composition and softness of outline. He worked with a sure hand and great rapidity, and few botanical draftsmen have produced more. Certainly none of them have drawn the flowers, fruits and leaves of as many trees. Among the very few who in all time have excelled in the art of botanical draftsmanship Faxon's position is secure, and his name will live with those of the great masters of his art as long as plants are studied.

Faxon never lost his interest in reading or in Nature, and although he lived alone he had too many resources to be lonely. In all the years I knew him he was never sick, and only once was kept at home for a few days, the result of a fall on the ice. He was absolutely free of jealousies, and, although in temperament he was not sanguine and too often had unnecessary forebodings of trouble, his life was a happy one. He enjoyed to the end the long country walks to which, with his brothers, he had become accustomed as a boy; and to him a summer day in New England, when trees, birds and flowers taught him new

¹ *On the Birds of Shiocton in Bovina, Outagamie County, Wisconsin, 1881-83*, by F. Grundtvig. Translated by Charles E. Faxon from the *Videnskabelige Meddelelser fra den Naturhistoriske Forening i Kjøbenhavn for Aaret, 1887*, pp. 305-396, and published in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, x. pp. 74-158. Issued March, 1895.

lessons, or renewed old memories, brought pleasures which only the true lovers of Nature can understand. And he died, as he had often expressed the wish to die, suddenly and painlessly.

To those who knew Charles Faxon best he has left the memory of a modest, kindly, unselfish gentleman whose life was inspiration and help to us all.

ARNOLD ARBORETUM.

SOME NEW SPECIES AND VARIETIES OF POA FROM EASTERN NORTH AMERICA.

M. L. FERNALD AND K. M. WIEGAND.

DURING the course of studies of the flora of northeastern North America the genus *Poa* has been found to be in great need of critical investigation, and the two following species are here proposed as partly clarifying the confusion which has so long existed in the series of plants passing as *P. debilis*, *P. sylvestris* and *P. alsodes*. The plants have heretofore been variously referred to these species, and sometimes one of them has been confused with *P. autumnalis*. The first is a common woodland species of the region from Newfoundland and southeastern Canada into the northeastern states and as a characteristic woodland plant may be called

POA saltuensis, n. sp., caespitosa; culmis tenuibus 2–8.5 dm. altis basi foliosis, nodis caulinis 2–4 remotis; foliis 2–5 mm. latis imis elongatis caulinis brevibus laminis quam vaginis brevioribus marginibus laevibus vel ad apicem scabriusculis, ligulis superioribus 0.3–1.5 mm. longis plerumque erosis; paniculis primariis 0.6–2 dm. longis nutantibus secundis, ramis filiformibus adscendentibus nutantibus plus minusve scabris ad apicem floriferis, mediis imisque plerumque binis rare solitariis vel ternis; spiculis 3–5-floris 3.5–5.5 mm. longis; glumis subaequalibus acutis quam lemma proximum quartam partem brevioribus glabris; lemmatibus 3.2–4 mm. longis acutis basi arachnoideis supra glabris viridibus vel rare purpurascentibus, margine anguste hyalinis, nervis marginalibus intermediisque prominentibus; antheris 1–1.2 mm. longis flavescentibus; caryopsibus ellipsoideofusiformibus fulvis 2–2.5 mm. longis.

Caespitose: culms slender, 2–8.5 dm. tall, leafy at base; the cauline nodes 2–4, remote: leaves 2–5 mm. wide; the lower elongate; the



Sargent, Charles Sprague. 1918. "CHARLES EDWARD FAXON." *Rhodora* 20, 117–122.

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