William Jarvis, clergyman, the thirteenth and youngest child of Hezekiah Jarvis by his second wife, Sarah Whitney, was born at Norwalk, Conn., on Feb. 29, 1796. Having been born in leap year and the day being unnecessary to complete the century, Mr. Jarvis was eight years old before he had a birthday. He died Oct. 3, 1871, thus having had but seventeen anniversaries of birthdays in all. Notwithstanding, then, this apparently youthful record, Mr. Jarvis was seventy-five years of age when he died, having come of an equally long-lived stock. His grandfather lived to be 100 years, three months, and three days old, and his grandfather's wife was over ninety years of age at the time of her death. Mr. Jarvis was a nephew of Bishop Jarvis, and was fitted for college by the bishop's only son, Rev. Dr. Samuel Jarvis, after which he went to Union college, New York where he was graduated and afterward pursued his theological studies at New Haven, Conn. In August, 1823, he was ordained by Bishop Brownell, at Norwalk, a deacon, and in the following November, at East Haddam, a priest. He continued to minister at East Haddam and Hebron for some time, in the latter place gaining the friendship of Dr. Peters, who was also governor of the state. In December, 1825, Mr. Jarvis was married by Bishop Brownell to Elizabeth Miller Hart, eldest daughter of Maj. Richard Hart and Mrs. Elizabeth Hart. About two years afterward he removed with his family to Portland, at that time Gatham, Conn. Here he was elected to Trinity Church, but a few years later an attack of severe bronchitis obliged him to retire permanently from any public speaking. In 1852 the family residence was sold and Mr. Jarvis removed to Middletown. Later, when his eldest daughter married Samuel Colt of Hartford, he made that city his home, and for some years did business in New York. As a preacher, Mr. Jarvis had a fine reputation for fervor and impressiveness, his delivery being remarkably clear, earnest, and powerful. He was distinguished for fidelity and devotion to his duty. His enforced silence, for his voice was unheard in the pulpit for thirty-five years, was a great grief to him. During this long period he was a terrible sufferer and bore his physical agony with constancy and submission to the will of the Almighty.


Rev. WILLIAM JARVIS, 1818, was a resident of Norwalk, Conn., and a member of the Philomathean Society.

(Died: 1871)

Philomathean Catalogue 1830
WILLIAM JARVIS

Was born at Norwalk, Conn., on the 29th of February, 1796, and was the youngest and thirteenth child of Hezekiah Jarvis. His birthday being on the 29th of February, and it being leap year, Mr. Jarvis was eight years old before he had one of these matal days, and had but seventeen in all. He died on the 3rd of October, 1871, aged 75 years, and seven months.

His mother's maiden name was Sarah Whitney, a daughter of Mr. Whitney of Darien, who lived to be 100 years, three months, three days old. His wife was over ninety at the time of her death. The mother of Mr. Jarvis was, at the time of her marriage, a widow Nash, and he was a widower with several children.

There are some interesting facts in regard to Mrs. Whitney, the mother of Mr. Jarvis, which are related by her only surviving grandchild. After she had passed her eightieth year her eyesight returned to her as clear and bright as in the days of her youth. She became an Episcopalian from her own reading and research, and was devoted to the doctrines of the Church. The Rev. Mr. Mather, a Congregational clergyman, treated her with the greatest kindness and respect, often loaning her his horse to ride to Stamford, a distance of five miles, to enjoy the Church services.

Her first husband, not being in sympathy with the doctrines of the Episcopal Church, sometimes refused to let her have his horse, when the energetic old lady would declare her intention to walk, saying where duty dictated, the Lord would provide a way. And so it often proved, for she would hardly get started before some neighbor would assist her to the place in which her soul delighted.

Bishop Jarvis and Hezekiah Jarvis were brothers and the Bishop's son, the Rev. Samuel Fairman Jarvis offered to fit his young cousin, William, for college, who was, for some time, an inmate of the Doctor's family, and who had decided to devote himself, as soon as his studies were completed, to the ministry of the church.

The friendship between these two cousins was deep, true, and lasting, and when sorrow and embarrassment overtook the Doctor in the latter part of his life, the love of his cousin William proved a precious boon to his wounded spirit.

Mr. Jarvis was graduated at Union College, and afterwards pursued his theological studies at New Haven, Conn. In August, 1822, he was ordained deacon at Norwalk, by the late Bishop Brownell, and, on the 5th of November, of the following year, was ordained priest, also by him, at East Haddam, at which place, and Hebron, he ministered for some time.

While at Hebron he won the affection and friendship of Dr. Peters, who was also Governor of the State, and this friendship continued unabated until the death separated them.

During Mr. Jarvis' ministry at Hebron, a church was erected, which was considered one of the handsomest rural churches in the diocese. This church was altered and repaired only a few months before his death, and it was a great pleasure to him to prove to his old parishioners that he still remembered them with affection, by presenting to the parish a font of Ohio
stone, commemorative of his rectorsship from 1821 to 1826.

Mr. Jarvis was married by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Brownell, in December, 1825, to Elizabeth Miller Hart, eldest daughter of Major Richard William and Mrs. Elizabeth Hart of Saybrook, Conn., a marriage which resulted in great and lifelong happiness.

From Hebron, Mr. Jarvis removed to Chatham, now Portland, Conn., where he continued rector of Trinity Church until disabled by a severe bronchitis, induced by undue exercise of his voice while suffering from whooping cough. For months he could only speak in a whisper, and for years suffered great pain and discomfort. He was at last reluctantly compelled to give up all hope of doing official work again, and resigned his parish.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Emery, who was, for some time, a member of his family.

Mr. Jarvis retired from the ministry, sore as was the trial, and devoted himself to his home and family. He was surrounded by and there, with an interesting domestic circle, made his life cheerful and happy. There were five daughters and four sons, and as in every picture there must be shadows, so in this beautiful and sunny group the dark shadow of death entered, and cast a gloom around the happy fireside. Four of these children were swept away almost simultaneously by that terrible scourge, scarlet fever.

Mr. Jarvis continued to reside in Portland until 1852, when he removed to Middletown, where he remained until after the marriage of his eldest daughter to Col. Samuel Holt of Hartford, Conn., when he made that city his home.

"As a preacher, Mr. Jarvis was fervent and impressive, both his voice and delivery being good; as a pastor, he was distinguished for fidelity and devotion; as a friend, he was faithful and generous, and as a husband, kind, wise, and affectionate."

In July, 1866, the family of Mr. Jarvis was again afflicted by the death of his youngest son, John Samuel, named after his tried friend, Gov. Peters. He had just completed his 29th year, leaving a widow and two young daughters.

But Mr. Jarvis' life was drawing to a close. Afflicted with a painful disease, he often suffered intensely, but, with a trusting faith, he resigned himself to the will of his Heavenly Father, awaiting the hour when he should be with his loved ones who had gone before. Conscious that his end was approaching, he bade farewell to his beloved wife, his children and grandchildren, and to his cherished friends, whom he had loved so long and well, and then his spirit passed away to a bright and glorious immortality.

"So He giveth His Beloved sleep." 

E. H. G.

FROM The Jarvis Family Hartford 1879. 

pp. 55-57

Portrait accompanies sketch.