

## *Documents of a Great Columbia Family Are Now at Bard*

### THE BARD FAMILY

FELIX E. HIRSCH

ON ALL sides, my dear son, you have sprung from respectable ancestors. Many, if not all your more immediate ancestors were driven from their homes for their religious faith, the strongest evidence that can be given at this day that they were men of truth, virtue and honor." These are words of great family pride, but they do not seem unjustified to the impartial student of history. The man who wrote them more than a hundred years ago was William Bard, the great-grandson of Huguenot immigrants, and he addressed them to his only surviving son, John, with whom the male line of the family was to end. These five generations of the Bards gave to this country a large number of unusual personalities who combined to a rare degree Gallic charm and esprit with will power, vision and wisdom. Some of them have played a great part in the rise of Columbia University since the days of King's College. The University has never forgotten its deep obligation and perpetuates the name of the family in two appropriate places: in Bard Hall at the Medical Center and in Bard College at Annandale-on-Hudson.

Only a few books of limited merit, but many fine articles have been written about various Bards, and they are also mentioned in innumerable other publications. At present, a new biography of Samuel Bard, the most famous member of the family, is in an advanced stage of preparation. But thus far nobody has dared to face the harder and, on the other hand, more rewarding task of writing a collective biography of the Bards. We look in vain for the author

who might be willing and able to bring two centuries of family history, with all its ups and downs, together in a single volume, as James Truslow Adams did for the Adams family. Where is the writer who would aptly interpret the spirit prevailing among the Bards in five generations, would describe the intimate associations of these Huguenot descendants with Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, and many other great men of their time, and would tell of the pioneer role they played in the progress of science, the propagation of religion, and the economic development of this country? Such a book would add to our understanding of American social and cultural history and also offer us deeper insight into some problems that are today as burning as they were when the Edict of Nantes was revoked.

The historian who intended to study the Bard family with these points in mind could not content himself with consulting the official records in the institutions with which the Bards were closely connected. He would soon find out that the most relevant material for his task is not available in public or semipublic collections of the city, although, for instance, the New York Historical Society, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the New York Academy of Medicine possess some interesting Bard documents. But the various branches of the family kept the papers of their famous ancestors out of sight. Only in 1938-39 this policy was in part reversed by the generous action of Mr. J. A. Sands, a great-great-grandson of Dr. Samuel Bard. He turned his rich collection of family documents and pictures over to Bard College Library. Having spent his youth in Annandale on an estate adjacent to the College (then St. Stephen's), of which his father was a Trustee, and having been on intimate terms with its founder, John Bard, he felt that this was the right depository for his treasures. For many years, Bard College Library has owned a large part of William Bard's fine personal book collection, and also has been happy to possess two volumes of Samuel Bard's lectures in manuscript and

some other items that John Bard gave to his college. But the new treasures are overwhelming by comparison. Among them are official documents indicative of the careers that some of the first Bards made here in the service of the English kings, and there are others that tell of the even greater achievements of their descendants in the service of scholarship and humanity. Many dozens of deeds and other legal papers show the manifold financial and real estate transactions through which the family acquired its wealth in the eighteenth century. Included in the collection are also portraits of several of the Bards, painted by Miriam Sandys from early originals. But, above all, here we have their most important personal letters, as they were passed from generation to generation.

Apparently Dr. John Bard started to collect his family's letters in the middle of the eighteenth century, possibly when his son Samuel studied at Edinburgh; we find that he numbered some of them later on in his own handwriting. His grandson William seems to have made a new effort to bring the family correspondence together and to find out about the French origins of the Bards. The spirit in which this search was undertaken is defined in another passage of his letter to John Bard, from which we quoted before:

To value ourselves in our ancestry, especially when unsupported by our own merit, and to show to others that we do so, by a proud and haughty air, is the sure sign of a little and trifling mind; while to feel that we owe it to ourselves, to those who have gone before us and to those who are to come after us, to leave unbroken the bright chain of honor of which we are a link, is the sign of a noble and generous one.

Unfortunately, some important parts of his collection were lost in William Bard's own lifetime. His grandson Arthur Sandys (Sands) reports that Jared Sparks when working on his *American Biographies* appealed to his friend William Bard to let him see all the letters that Benjamin Franklin had written to Dr. John Bard in the course of an intimate correspondence extending over half a century. William refused at first, but finally gave in and sent him through his brother-in-law, John McVickar, a selection of the

Franklin letters—and did not get back a single item. The rest of the Franklin letters and also the correspondence of the Bards with Washington and Hamilton vanished in a great fire that destroyed a building in New York in which William Bard had kept part of his properties.

After the very early death of his parents, Arthur Sandys was brought up in the house of his grandfather William Bard and was treated there like a younger son. He acquired a deep interest in the family history. In later life, Sandys traveled extensively in order to establish the genealogical facts about the origins of the Bards. For good reasons, the collection of the family papers was entrusted to him, and he did much to improve it. He also wrote, only for his relatives, a short volume of reminiscences; it contains many interesting details, some of which have been used for this paper, and conveys to the reader the atmosphere of William Bard's home. This manuscript was presented to Bard College Library by his nephew Mr. J. A. Sands a few months ago; it is a most welcome addition to the Bardiana collection. Gifts from other sources have also come in occasionally in recent times. It is hoped that some day those descendants of the Bards who still own family documents and letters will follow the example set by Mr. Sands. Bard College Library—located in Dutchess County where the Bards spent the happiest part of their lives and where now most of them rest from their labors—ought to be a suitable domicile for all their family papers.

To give an indication of the scope and wealth of the Bardiana collection, it may be best to put a few of its choicest items before the reader. Some, perhaps, will interest him because they offer sidelights on historic events; others may appeal to him as documents of the human heart.

WHEN, in bygone days, we learned in school about the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and its consequences, we felt that this was definitely a matter of a dead past; for "tolerance"

had become the watchword everywhere. The times have changed, and once more persecution, migration, and eventual readjustment of large groups are bitter facts. Therefore we look today at the story of the Huguenots with renewed interest and deeper understanding. How did the first Bard who came to this country accommodate himself to the style of life in the New World?

Peter Bard was born in Montpellier, but left his home country in earliest childhood. His father, Benoît, found a refuge for the family in England. Apparently he had friends in the court circles of London and was able to pave the way for his son's later business career. In 1706 Peter Bard went to the Colonies. He had not been there long when he met, in New Castle (Delaware), the young daughter of the English physician Dr. Samuel Marmion who had come to this country only a few years before. To see Dinah Marmion, then fourteen years of age, and to offer her his heart was one thing for Peter Bard. We have his love letters to her; they touch us equally by depth of emotion and beauty of style. One of them has been called publicly "a model of the way a gentleman should write to the lady whom he loves" (by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, after she had seen an exhibit of the Bardiana collection):

To  
 MADAM DINAH  
 MARMION IN PHILADELPHIA  
 DEAR MADAM—

NEW CASTEL May 11th 1707

Tho I am at so great a Distance from you my mind is still with you nor can one minute pass without having a kind Thought of you. I shall be in Little Ease at Least if not in Purgatory till once more I have the happiness of being with you. My Dear Soul do me the Justice to believe that I can not flatter, But that I am so much ingaged to your Dear Person that when I am not with you the whole world seems a Desert and I the most melancholy soul alive; It is by your smiles like ye influence the sun has upon the plants that I subsist nor can I wish to live without them; Therefore Dear Soul lett no Insinuation Influence you to ye disadvantage of him whos utmost ambition is to be Ever your Lover and

Most humble and faithfull servant

P: BARD

Many similar letters were written by Peter Bard till he defeated a wealthy competitor for Dinah's hand. Finally, in 1709, they were married. His feelings for her did not change in later life. When he has to go on business trips, "it is with the most heavy heart that I take leave for some time of my dear Dinah" and he promises to "make all the haste imaginable to return."

Peter Bard must have been a man of unusual abilities; for how could he otherwise have gained the confidence of the leading officials of the Crown so rapidly? He was entrusted with various important missions, given the rank of colonel, and finally appointed judge at the Supreme Court of New Jersey in Burlington. The social distinction he enjoyed is vouched for by various documents; none is more telling than the letter of Charles Gookin, Deputy-Governor of Pennsylvania, who assures Peter Bard that the conversations with him were "among the few agreeable scenes of my life in America." And, in 1733, Benjamin Price wrote to his friend Peter Bard that the Governor of New Jersey, William Cosby, had asked his "advice what Trusty and faithful Gentleman I could recommend to him at Burlington to consult with about state affairs, and out of Regard to him and Justice to you I mentioned your Honor upon which he Expressed himself very well pleased and as I was not the first that had given you so good a Character and then Drank your health." A year later, Peter Bard died, a man only in his fifties.

He left to his wife a very modest fortune only; in his last will, he appointed her executrix (the document by which she was confirmed as such by the Governor is still in existence). Very little is known about her later life in Burlington, except for the fact that she devoted herself with great zeal and success to the education of her seven children. Portraits of her that existed still in Arthur Sandys's time have disappeared, and only a few of her letters have come to us; they show her as an affectionate mother.

THE TRAVELER who drives leisurely through Dutchess County

on the post road from New York to Albany will like to stop at a weather-beaten Gothic church building that stands out in the open country and combines simplicity of design with dignity and beauty. He will recollect having seen pictures of this church in the newspapers recently; for this is St. James Church in Hyde Park, in which the President of the United States worships and of which he has been senior warden for many years. If the traveler's curiosity is strong enough, he may even enter the church. He will then be surprised to see so many memorial tablets around the walls; as he looks more closely, he will find that one family name occurs on them again and again: Bard. For this church was built on ground donated by Dr. Samuel Bard from his own estate, and he and his family gave most of the money needed for erecting the original church building. Pious man that he was, he used to say: "No equal expenditure of money has ever yielded me so large an interest." When the visitor leaves the church, he may spend another few minutes walking around in the cemetery near by. There he will find buried Dr. John Bard, Dr. Samuel Bard, and many of their relatives.

The association of the Bards with Hyde Park, that even death could not sever, goes back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The great-grandfather of Dr. Samuel Bard, Peter Fauconnier, was one of the original owners of the so-called Hyde Park Patent. He was a Huguenot refugee like Peter Bard, but much shrewder and more successful in his business affairs than Bard. Fauconnier came to America as private secretary to Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, whose cousin, Queen Anne, had appointed him Governor of New York and New Jersey. The influence that Fauconnier had behind the scenes must have been enormous; he soon became Receiver-General of both provinces and apparently understood well how to use his official position for furthering his private interests. We have still Lord Cornbury's warrant of 1704 to the Attorney General of New York on which the patent was based.

TO SAMPSON SHELTON BROUGHTON ESQ.

ATTORNEY GEN<sup>l</sup> OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW YORK

You are hereby required to prepare a Draft of letters patents for Jacob Regnier, Peter Fauconnier, Benjamin Aske, Barne Cosens, and John Persons, for all that Tract of Land on ye East side of Hudsons River in Dutchess County called by ye Indians Eaquaquancsinck, begining at a marked Tree by ye Riverside, thence runing by marked Trees Easterly by ye Side of Fresh Meadow called Mansaking also runing Easterly to a small Creek called Nancapaconnick, and following the said Creek South-erly and Southwest as it runns to Hudsons River by ye Crown Elbow called by the Indians by ye Name of Eaquacsink, (except only such land parcell thereof to which Jane, Wyntie, John, Albert, Anne, Henry and Mary Pauling, children of Henry Pauling deceased and Neiltie his Wife, are duly intituled to) to have and to hold the same unto the said Jacob Regnier, Peter Fauconnier, Benjamin Aske, Barne Cosens and John Persons their heires and assignees for ever, at and under the yearly quit rent of Five pounds currant money of New York, and for so doing, this shall be your sufficient Warrant. . .

CORNBURY

In 1730 the Patent was partitioned. Fauconnier bequeathed his share to his daughter, Magdalene Valteau, from whom her son-in-law, Dr. John Bard (a son of the immigrant Peter Bard), acquired it eventually. His part of the Patent was named "Hyde Park" in honor of Edward Hyde Lord Cornbury, who, as we have just seen, had granted it. Dr. John Bard, in addition to being a distinguished physician, was almost all his life engaged in business transactions which did not always turn out to be successes; in fact, his son Samuel had to come to his rescue more than once. We are, therefore, not surprised to find notices—like a printed advertisement of 1768—that occasionally he wanted to sell the Hyde Park estate "either all together or in distinct farms." But finally he gave up these plans. He turned his medical practice in New York over completely to his son, who had been associated with him for some years, and settled in Dutchess County. He built on his estate, for which he claimed the exclusive use of the name "Hyde Park," the so-called Red House for himself, and led



there a life of active leisure, always adding to the beauty and horticultural value of the place. This idyll lasted until the American Revolution and his own improvident investments once more brought uncertainty into his financial situation and, at last, forced him to start his medical practice again in the city, where he was well received by his old friends and patients. In a letter of October 16, 1781, in which he asks his son urgently for his assistance, he gives many details about the state of his affairs and, in particular, about his constant efforts to improve the Hyde Park estate. He continues:

I have supported my family agreeable to our rank, and hospitably entertained my country friends and neighbors without receiving any aid from the principal or interest of what is owing to me which still remains interred. But still the increasing interest against me has been a corroding thought. I have, therefore, entered with ardor, have lived exceedingly plain, and never have let the sun find me in bed.

Dr. John Bard returned permanently to Hyde Park, a man who had passed the Biblical limit of four score years. Only a short span of life was left to him. Though his earthly possessions had melted away (as we can easily see from the dispositions of his last will), he remained cheerful to the end. It was on the eve of his fatal sickness that he told his family: "I think I am the happiest old man living."

It is a matter of deep regret that Dr. John Bard's earlier correspondence has not been preserved; his written exchange of opinions with men like Benjamin Franklin, his close friend since the start of his medical career in Philadelphia, would certainly have fascinated historian and layman alike. But we have, at least, the satisfaction that John Bard's most significant letters of his middle life have come to us: the correspondence with his son Samuel, who was then studying medicine at Edinburgh with the most famous physicians of the age. This correspondence is a monument of fatherly love and wisdom on the one side, and filial piety and gratitude on the other. Samuel Bard had, indeed, reason to be thankful, for his study abroad was an enormous financial burden for his father, who

was generous enough to procure for his son a far better medical education than he himself had enjoyed. John McVickar, in his early biography of Samuel Bard, his father-in-law, used many of these letters, but omitted others, for reasons that today we are able only to guess.

There is, for instance, the topic of Samuel Bard's eventual marriage, which is discussed with great seriousness by both correspondents, but is not found in McVickar's biography. After his son had left for Europe, Dr. John Bard discovered that Samuel had become secretly engaged "to a certain person." He assured Samuel in his next letter that he did not "endeavor to extinguish in your breast the passion of love," but he explained to him "that marriage ever did and ever will put a sudden end to all the extravagant heights of love, and then you will be convinced that nothing can insure your happiness in that state but a calm, judicious, and dispassionate choice, and that kind of affection which results from reason, judgment and friendship." This letter may not have had an immediate effect, but the years of absence altered eventually Samuel Bard's frame of mind. In February, 1764, he sent a letter to his mother,

upon a subject I would willingly forget, but the consciousness of having acted rashly, and by my imprudence having in some measure involved myself in an engagement, which I now find I cannot keep and from which I am at a loss to find a genteel and honorable way of escaping, makes me often reflect not without uneasiness, upon that foolish action, for I can now call it no better.

He admitted that the young lady "deserved more generosity from me." But,

a public education and a greater knowledge of the world has opened my eyes, and convinced me that ardent love is not the only requisite to happiness in the married state. An easy competency, I find, is absolutely necessary, and if my wife does not bring me that, I am resolved never to marry until I have it myself.

He finally asked his mother for her advice how to avoid this "im-

prudent match." But no sooner had he returned from his five years' absence than he fell again in love with a charming young girl who did not possess the "easy competency" which he had required before—in theory. She was Mary Bard, daughter of his uncle, General Peter Bard. She was then staying in the home of Dr. John Bard, and on the day when Samuel came back from his long voyage, he found her there, a beautiful, lovable young lady. Admiration soon turned into affection, and, finally, all financial barriers to their marriage were overcome. We have a picture of Mary Bard that shows her likeness as a woman of about thirty years; this portrait makes us understand well why Samuel Bard did no longer listen to the sober advice of his father. After more than fifty years of exemplary married life, death separated Samuel and Mary Bard only for one day, and together they rest in one grave at Hyde Park.

ABOUT SAMUEL BARD, the distinguished scholar and leader of his profession, little needs be said here; for it is now common knowledge that, as President Butler has put it, he was "of the early years of King's College and Columbia College a chief ornament" and that in due time he "became the chief practitioner of medicine in the City and Province of New York." The climax of his career as a physician, certainly, was the time when he and his father were called by George Washington to treat him for a serious case of anthrax. Arthur Sandys, in his manuscript of reminiscences, relates what he heard in William Bard's house about this celebrated case. "Washington well knew his dangerous condition and submitted to a painful operation at the hands of the younger Bard, while his father supported the General, and encouraged both by his genial and cheerful presence." And on another page, Sandys goes on to say:

General Washington became warmly attached to both Doctor and Mrs. Bard, and after the war . . . he would go over to the doctor's house in Nassau Street and enjoy a cup of tea with my great-grandparents, and

when there, would take my grandfather William Bard, a child of six, into his lap and hold him there. I have heard my grandfather tell of his clear recollection of Washington's features, as he saw them while seated on the General's lap, leaning his head against his shirt frills. After Dr. Bard retired to Hyde Park, the General and Mrs. Washington exacted a promise from them to visit Mount Vernon. The visit was put off from time to time, till finally, when all was prepared for a start the next day and the trunks were packed and brought downstairs to be put into the carriage, the news came of Washington's sudden death. It was a great grief to all at Hyde Park, for the letters of General and Mrs. Washington, now and then, were much valued.

One of the predominant characteristics among the Bards in five generations was their unusually strong family sense. It was not the clannishness often found in immigrant groups, but a sense of mutual responsibility and deep affection. Like a patriarch, Samuel Bard was living among his relatives at Hyde Park, after he had retired from his burdensome practice in 1798. His venerated personality attracted them to settle near by, and he gladly gave them parcels of his estate where they might build their own homes. His newly married only son, William, established himself in the neighborhood; the large fortune that his wife, a daughter of Nicholas Cruger, had inherited, enabled him to live the leisurely life of a country squire instead of practicing law. In later years, William took over the Hyde Park estate. His father, in a solemn statement made on this occasion, claimed that the whole transaction was the result of mature deliberation and designed to contribute most "to my own and my dear wife's present comfort, and the general interest of my family." Among the other relatives who had homes of their own in the neighborhood were two men of high distinction, his son-in-law, John McVickar, and his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Pendleton.

McVICKAR HAD MARRIED Samuel Bard's younger daughter, Eliza, in 1809. Two years later, immediately upon his ordination, he became the first rector of St. James Church; needless to say to whom he owed this position. This was not the only effort that Samuel

Bard made on behalf of his son-in-law, whose rare qualifications he had found out in the years of daily intellectual exchange. Although the infirmities of advancing age made traveling uncomfortable for him, Samuel Bard went to New York in the fall of 1817 to use all his influence in order to secure for McVickar the professorship of moral and intellectual philosophy in Columbia College that had become vacant by Dr. Bowden's death. There were two rivals who also had influential backing, Samuel F. Jarvis and John Bristed. But Samuel Bard showed himself master of the situation. Here is the report he sent to his son William, who had remained in Hyde Park; the handwriting looks hurried.

MY DEAR WILLIAM:

My time and my thoughts have been so much occupied by my book and the other more important business I am engaged, that I have really been able to attend to nothing else. Your dear mother I am afraid will think I neglected, but tell her I am endeavoring to increase her happiness in that of our children—and I know she will excuse me. On Monday the nomination of the candidates takes place. The Bishop [Hobart] has promised me to nominate McVickar, and I hope with tolerable prospects. Since I last wrote, I have seen Doctor Romeyn and Mr. Fish who both I believe are warmly in our interests. Doctor Post I am not sure of, I have seen him, and although he made me no reply directly, I thought he is or may be our friend through Doctor Bowen. I shall see Clement Moore today or tomorrow, and I think shall be able to convince him Bristed has no chance, in which case I have no doubt of his vote and interests, and if I can but get him to engage warmly for us, I have very little doubt, but that we shall succeed. Henderson told me he thought we had a good chance, which includes his wish and his opinion. If I could hope it did those of Mr. King, I should say we are safe. But McVickar must come to town at least as soon as I have requested him . . . so as to preach here on Sunday the 19th. I do not wish him in the least to solicit his own election, but only to show himself, to appear at church and to visit his friends. This I think important. . .

I am anxious of my long absence. . . . but I consider John McVickar's election a matter of so much consequence to our general happiness as well as his, that I must not have to condemn myself for having in the least neglected it. . .

God bless you!

S. BARD

I open my letter to say McVickar must come and bring with him half a dozen of his best sermons. I remember one since his return from Albany which we all admired, for the beauty and propriety of some happy similes from nature.

Samuel Bard's efforts were not in vain; John McVickar was elected on the second ballot and could enter upon his great career at Columbia College. It may be noted here that a dozen years later William Bard tried to do McVickar a similar service. The correspondence of Bishop Hobart, now deposited at the New York Historical Society, contains two letters by William Bard, in which he presses the claims of his brother-in-law to the presidency of Columbia College. He praises there his "talents of a supreme order, zeal in the performance of what he undertakes, dignity of manner, kindness of heart, purity of character and calmness of temper." But this time McVickar was defeated.

Only one more instance of Samuel Bard's unending fatherly love may be cited here. The last years of his life were darkened by the financial troubles in which Judge Johnston, the husband of his elder daughter, Susan, had become involved. He tried to help him and his family in various ways. On the last day of his life he was concerned still about these vicissitudes. His own wife, Mary, had just died, and so he decided to draw up a codicil to his will. In it he tried to safeguard the interests of his daughter Susan in particular. With a trembling hand he wrote his name under the codicil—the last signature of Samuel Bard that we have.

AMONG THE EXECUTORS of Samuel Bard's will was his brother-in-law Nathaniel Pendleton, who was then also living in Hyde Park. A native of Virginia, he fought gallantly in the Revolutionary army, was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and later on distinguished himself in the field of law. In the fall of 1795 Washington planned to make him Secretary of State, but Alexander Hamilton objected strongly. "Judge Pendleton," he informed the President, "writes well; is of re-

spectable abilities, and a gentleman-like smooth man. If I were sure of his political views, I should be much disposed to adopt his appointment under the circumstances, but I fear he has been somewhat tainted with the prejudices of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, and I have afflicting suspicions concerning those men." But, in the course of time, Hamilton's feelings for Pendleton changed considerably, and he chose him as his second in the fatal duel with Aaron Burr. The Bardiana collection contains Pendleton's report on the duel to his nephew and friend William Bard, who had been a client of Hamilton's. This letter by Nathaniel Pendleton adds to our knowledge of a sad hour of American history.

NEW YORK, July 26, 1804

MY DEAR WILLIAM:

The letter you wrote me did indeed give me a great deal of consolation under the deep affliction I suffered for the loss of our excellent, our noble friend. And although I know I suffered a more keen anguish from the agency I had in the causes that preceded it, yet I feel now that it was impossible for me to have declined, or even to have hesitated for a moment whether I would decline it. You know that besides the love, the admiration and respect I always had for the amiable qualities, the sublime talents, the generous spirit of that man, I was under particular obligations to him for particular acts of kindness, and of late also much more in the habits of confidence with him than any other man in New York. While these considerations left me no room to doubt whether I should accompany him, they have very much increased the anguish of mine produced by the result. I am much gratified that my friends not being acquainted with all the motives which I had, still think I could not have declined the office. The truth is that General Hamilton had made up his mind to meet Mr. Burr before he called on me, provided he should be required to do what his first letter had declined; and it was owing to my solicitude and my efforts to prevent extremities that the correspondence was kept open from the 23 June to the 27th. I have, therefore, the satisfaction of knowing I did all I could to prevent it, and this seems universally known and acknowledged.

The coroners' inquest have been sitting here ever since the day after his death. They have examined many witnesses and among others myself. But on my representations that what I could say would be of a nature

necessarily to implicate myself, they acquiesced and examined no farther. . .

I wish it were in my power to comply with your father's request of coming up to Hyde Park. Never did my spirits require to be tranquilized by quiet and repose more than at present, but my business forbids. . .

Adieu.

Yours truly,  
NATH PENDLETON

WILLIAM BARD was not long to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of Hyde Park after his father's death. Within a few years he discovered that to have a house in New York City and to keep up a large estate were more than his finances permitted after various losses he had suffered. He left the decision whether to live in the city or at Hyde Park to his children, who were only too happy to give up the country life. With a heavy heart, William Bard then sold the estate to the physician Dr. David Hosack, who had been associated with his father in New York. A great chapter of the family history ended. About twenty years later John Bard tried hard to get the family property back; but Mr. Langdon, who then owned the place, was not willing to relinquish it.

Since he was only in his late forties when he settled in New York, William Bard did not want to stay idle. But for what type of work was he fitted? His interest in law was limited; at heart, he was a scholar whose love belonged to his beautiful book collection. There were apparently two possibilities. One was the prospect of the presidency of Columbia College, which seemed to offer itself after Mr. Harris's death. Although the official records do not contain any information, it seems that there were at least informal inquiries about his availability. William Bard had graduated from Columbia College in 1797 and had recently shown his interest in the affairs of his alma mater by an address given before the Columbia alumni. In three different places statements are to be found about his candidacy. A church journal mentions in an obituary of William Bard that he "was more than once thought



of for Columbia's presidency." The usually reliable *Historical Notes* of St. James Parish, Hyde Park, go even so far as to say, "He was pressed to take the Presidency of Columbia College, but he knew he had not the dominating character for such leadership." And Arthur Sandys, who had the best sources of information at his disposal, also says: "About the same time Columbia College urged on him the presidency of that institution."

But William Bard used his talents in quite a different way; he did, however, remain deeply attached to Columbia and served as a Trustee of the College from 1840 to his death. Apparently through a relative, he became interested in the life insurance business, which was then in its infancy in the United States. Bard helped in forming the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, which under his presidency became the acknowledged leader in the life insurance field. "While I presided over it, it rose to be a great and important company," he later on said with justifiable pride. "I first suggested the plan of the institution. I had been almost exclusively the creator of its business in life insurance." Being gifted in the field of statistics, he also took over the just innovated office of actuary of the company, which he held almost to his death. But he was forced to resign from the presidency in 1843, after enormous defraudations of a trusted secretary had been discovered. This accident saddened the evening of William Bard's life, although his own honorable conduct had not been doubted. The golden age of the family was over.

**THE LAST BARD:** We know three pictures of John Bard, the founder of St. Stephen's College. One shows a charming young man of tender features; one might almost guess it to be the likeness of a poet of Byron's time. The second portrays a country gentleman on the heights of life; the third, an old man on whose face the disappointments of his past seem to be engraved. These three pictures tell John Bard's whole story. He had a sheltered youth; William Bard was a very well-intentioned and understanding father.

John was educated by tutors, then traveled extensively in Europe and early married Margaret Taylor Johnston, daughter of a prominent merchant and civic leader in New York. The wealth she brought to him made John Bard financially independent. Since the property of his ancestors at Hyde Park was no more available, he acquired another estate more in the north of Dutchess County, called Blithewood, which he renamed Annandale. Following the traditions of his family, he took an ardent interest in the work of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and his wife constantly assisted him in his endeavors. He built on his estate, at great expense, the beautiful chapel which was then to form the nucleus of a training school for the ministry in New York State. The early history of St. Stephen's College need not be told here. Suffice it to say that John Bard was in all his efforts guided by his uncle John McVickar, but for whose wise counsel and powerful support he never would have been able to establish the College. This statement does not detract anything from the merits of other men active in the beginnings of St. Stephen's, like Bishop Horatio Potter and John V. L. Pruyn. A letter written by John McVickar to his nephew links the family idyll of Hyde Park with the new venture in Annandale, and therefore may deserve quotation here. John Bard had invited McVickar to preach on All Saints' Day, 1861, in the College chapel.

IRVINGTON, 5th October 1861

MY DEAR JOHN:

I address you as of old, for your letter and request appeal to the olden time, when we were one family at Hyde Park, a period that I look back to in my life as something beyond the ordinary picture of family union and enjoyment. But, with all these feelings, leading me to accept, I must decline the invitation to preach the All Saints' lecture (were I to do it, I am afraid it would be nothing but a leaf out of Memory's book of the Hyde Parke circle). But, be it what it might, I have no leisure for it. My college duties are new begun—and Fridays are my days of necessary attend and lecture there. . .

With affectionate regards to your wife (whom I promise henceforward rightly to address) and love from the girls—

I remain very truly

Your affectionate uncle

JOHN McVICKAR

While St. Stephen's College slowly began to prosper, heavy clouds were gathering over the head of its founder. His only son died in adolescence, and his financial situation deteriorated. He was a devoted servant of the Church and a lover of books, not a man thinking in terms of money. Finally, he left his estate and went to Europe, to return only after many years to his home country. Before the new century dawned, the last of the Bards was buried in Annandale.

John Bard had labored so hard for his college and had given it so much of his heart, his thought, and his fortune, that people often referred to it as "Bard's College." When he went abroad, he said that he wished to disabuse men's minds of this idea, and throw the burden of his responsibility on others. In this he succeeded, but later generations felt once more that the debt of gratitude owed to him and his family could not be repaid better than by bestowing upon the College his name with all its historical implications. And so "Bard's College" became officially Bard College.

*The works by G. O. Seilhamer and A. E. Helffenstein have been consulted for the genealogy of the Bard and Fauconnier families. The articles devoted to John, Samuel and William Bard in the Dictionary of American Biography are fairly useful. For Samuel Bard, we have the biography by John McVickar, which is still valuable as a human document; the same may be said about the essays on Samuel Bard by Samuel L. Mitchill and H. W. Ducachet. The best recent interpretation of this greatest of the Bards was published by Milton Halsey Thomas in the COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY QUARTERLY, Vol. XXIII, 1931. The same volume contains also first-rate studies on "The Professions in New York in 1800," by Harry J. Carman, and on "The Reverend John McVickar," by Joseph Dorfman and R. G. Tugwell. A full-length biography of McVickar was written by his son William. The Historical Notes of St. James Parish, Hyde Park, compiled by E. P.*

Newton, are among the best sources we have on the life of the Bards in Hyde Park, while Sidney I. Pomerantz's book, *New York, an American City, 1783-1803*, provides the background for the understanding of their professional career. Real gold mines are the yearbooks of the Dutchess County Historical Society; articles by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds (1928), George Genzmer (1936), and Henry T. Hackett (1939) deserve specific mention. Reminiscences of St. Stephen's College were written by George B. Hopson, who was a professor there for fifty years. Finally, the author wants to express his gratitude for personal advice to Mr. J. A. Sands, donor of the Bardiana Collection, Mr. Milton Halsey Thomas, Curator of the Columbiana Collection, and Rev. Frank R. Wilson, rector of St. James Church, Hyde Park.