

composition, disregard of rythme, or straining for rythme. With her to the making of books there was no end, until she collapsed. It is doubtful if anyone knows the names of all her published poems. They were a great multitude and everyone found ardent admirers—and critics. The world is better because Ella Wheeler Wilcox lived.

This biography was written by the brother of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, M. P. Wheeler, Company "G," 29th Wisconsin Volunteers, Windsor, Wisconsin.

MRS. MARY BAKER CAMERON

Author—Lillian H. Van Auken
LaCrosse

Mary Baker Cameron came to La Crosse in the year of 1857, a bride of a year, having been married on February 21, 1856 to Angus Cameron at Urbana, Steuben County, N. Y., and they both entered heart and soul into the activities of this rapidly growing village. She came of Revolutionary stock, her father, William Baker, was the son of Judge Samuel Baker, a soldier, who served with distinction in the Revolutionary War and who settled in Urbana in 1790. Her mother was of Dutch descent and a cousin of President Martin Van Buren. Her Colonial ancestor who entitled her to become a Colonial Dame was Thomas Topping, who was a member of the first council of the first governor of the colony of New York and was an assistant of the General Court of Connecticut in 1678 and 1684. She belonged to the Colonial Dames of New York and was made the first Vice-President of the Colonial Dames of Wisconsin.

Mr. Cameron attended the Wesley Academy at Lima, N. Y., also the Genesee Academy. He was admitted to the Bar in Buffalo and practised law in Rochester, N. Y., thus he was fully prepared for the honors which the State of Wisconsin bestowed upon him and which were graciously shared by Mrs. Cameron. Mr.

Cameron served two terms as State Senator, namely the years of 1863 and 1864 and the years of 1871 and 1872. He was a delegate at large to the National Republican Convention at Baltimore in 1864. He was a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly during the years of 1865, 1866 and 1867 and Speaker of the House during the latter year. He was one of the Regents of the Wisconsin State University from 1866 to 1875. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1875 and was re-elected to fill out the unexpired term of Matthew H. Carpenter, thus serving ten years in the U. S. Senate. Senator Angus Cameron's name will go down in history as one of the distinguished men of the State of Wisconsin.

During all these years, Mrs. Cameron spent in public life, she made many friends and she possessed a "Rooseveltian" memory for recalling names and faces. As the popular wife of Senator Cameron in his home State as well as at the Capitol at Washington, D. C., together with the independent name she made for herself as the first Regent and Founder of the La Crosse Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as being the first National Vice-President General elected from the state of Wisconsin by Continental Congress held at Washington in 1898, also her appointment as the first Vice-President of the Colonial Dames for the State of Wisconsin will cause her name to go down in the history of the State as one of her favorite and famous women.

Six years after the memorable vote cast by the Sons of the American Revolution excluding women the right of becoming members of this newly-formed patriotic society thus causing the daughter descendants of the Revolutionary soldiers to band themselves together and form a separate organization, the D. A. R. spirit reached La Crosse, through the untiring zeal of Mrs. Angus Cameron. Her enthusiasm led her to give several preliminary social functions. She gave a reception to a large number of ladies she deemed eligible, at the same time urging them to search their family records so that they could become charter members of the La Crosse Chapter

and pointing out the necessity of preserving for posterity those principles their forefathers had fought for. She fully realized in those days the lack of reverence maintained for the flag and to instill greater patriotism presented each departing guest with one. This was followed by an elaborate colonial costume party given on February 14, 1896. Historical tableaux, minuet dancing and a colonial repast were the features of the evening. Her earnest efforts were successful and the La Crosse Chapter of the D. A. R. was organized under the direction of Mrs. James S. Peck of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on December 11, 1896—the national number being 291.

I can not paint in words the beautiful picture Mary Baker Cameron has imprinted on the memory of the sons and daughters of the early settlers of La Crosse. Her personality, great charm, her regal beauty can never be forgotten, but greater still was her humaneness. On her yearly home-comings, she did not wait for others to bow down but her greeting was given with a spontaneity to rich and poor alike and with it came a feeling of being lifted a step higher. She was rich in spiritual gifts.

To quote the master novelist, W. D. Howells, who says, "It is the unplanted goodness that saves—the seed of righteousness treasured from generation to generation and carefully tended by disciplined fathers and mothers in the hearts where they have dropped it. The flower of this implanted goodness is what we call civilization;" and surely it was always Mrs. Cameron's aim to raise the standard.

In a rose garden, there is always one of greater fragrance and beauty than the rest. Nature's leadership—a similitude befitting Mrs. Cameron. Someone has said, "God gave us memory that we might have roses in December, surely Mary Baker Cameron is one of the roses."

Written by Lillian H. Van Auken, 1923.