

## Mary E. Selden

(1809 – 25 Apr 1897)

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**Selden.** On April 25, 1897, at 7 o'clock p.m., Mary E. Selden, in the 89th year of her age. Funeral from her residence, 614 19th street northwest, at 12 o'clock Tuesday. Interment private.

### *In Memoriam*

Mary Elizabeth Selden was born on the banks of James river, in the state of Virginia, in the year 1809. Left an orphan at an early age she was the ward of John Tyler (after President of the United States) until her marriage to James M. Selden, also of Virginia. During the fifty years of her widowhood (for her husband died in 1847) she devoted herself unceasingly to her children, and impressed upon them her unusual character and exalted standard. Her example of perfect faith encouraged and exhorted them, as was also the unvarying cheerfulness which made her to the end a sunbeam in her home, and sympathetic companion to the youngest in it. Thus was she made, and thus did she grow, in faith, and charity and patience. Her life, which expired on the 24th of April, was remarkable, not only for the years that it numbered, but for the triumph, which changed trials of the body into victories of the soul and all the misfortunes of time into riches of eternity. Her life had been passed not without toil and tears, and yet was not made weary by the toil nor bitter by the tears, but, on the contrary, deemed only ennobled by the strain and sweetened by the sorrows of her pilgrimage. Year after year had departed from her, but her joy and her hope, her faith and her charity, did not depart. The children and the children's children, whom she had created and blessed by her love, blessed her in return with their own. This was the sweet reward of the habit of good will, of her charity of nature, as of a soul benevolent by birth. No need came in her presence or to her knowledge without exciting in her the longing and the care to relieve it. As the shadow of evening drew around the sunset of this life we could see the stars of evening already in her sky. The flowers upon her bier, which lay afterward like a coverlid upon her grave, were but a copy of the fragrance which her life exhaled. Thus she fell at last into the lap of her mother earth, like the mellowed fruit of all her eight and eighty years.

Beautiful was the 24th of April, with all the beauty of spring and the year's fresh birth. But a rarer beauty gathered around the human life which went out with the dying day. Kind an genial was the life's morning, and sweet the new life imparted as it ascended to the noble parity of noon; and fair, most fair, the parting grace of one who threw the touches of her tenderness on every fleck in the sky, every pain of the flesh, and by kindling these with the light of her own spirit, made them agents of immortality.

L.R.