

The Sting of Envy

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"The Sting of Envy." *The Annals of Iowa* 27 (1946), 318-318.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.6475>

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THE STING OF ENVY

One of the Iowa Civil war "greats"—and there were many—was Major Gen. Samuel Ryan Curtis, of Keokuk, who served his state and country as soldier, congressman and in other high stations. Several years ago THE ANNALS was enabled to present from the Manuscript Division of the Iowa State Department of History & Archives a number of letters written by him during the Civil war period and before, which revealed the trend and character of political controversy and civil movements and proceedings in which he had an important, influential and praiseworthy part.

Following are the extracts from two other letters written by him. The first is an outburst to a friend, Gen. W. K. Strong, dated Keokuk, August 13, 1863, in which he lashes out at envious and snarling critics and detractors who had been particularly venomous. The quotations afford glimpses into the very soul of a harassed and disillusioned man. He said in part:

. . . I think I shall survive these things. I have long since perceived that the higher a man rises in the affairs of this world, the nearer he gets to Hell on Earth. The matter is supposed to change in the next world, when envy, hatred and malice get their deserts below. The union of sapheads, blockheads and copperheads that spend their efforts against me, seem to writhe in agony because they cannot draw me into a public contest that would give some point to their argument.

The next is a paragraph from another letter to the same good friend on the death of his own son in battle, dated also at Keokuk, October 31, 1863:

. . . I feel that there is nothing in this world worth the toil, care and fighting which we have to pass through; still I will go on, trying to do my duty, hoping ultimately to reach a place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest"

The above and many others were not included among those published in recent issues of THE ANNALS.

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