
The Love Life of Brig. Gen. Henry M. Naglee

Naglee Henry Morris

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THE LOVE LIFE

Morris
Brig. Gen. Henry M. Dagle,

CONSISTING OF A

Correspondence on Love,

WAR AND POLITICS.

Edited by
Mrs. Mary L. Schell

1867.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this volume to the public, it may be proper to prefix a few words in apology. This seems necessary from the character of the correspondence, which is of that description one naturally supposes to be concealed among the shades of privacy, and which is better suited for the "loved one's" ear than for public examination. These letters would never have been published but for the pressure of circumstances. A suit for breach of promise was, some time since, instituted by the lady against the "General;" but her delicate and refined nature dreading to pass the ordeal of a public trial, she resolved to withdraw the prosecution, and (by the advice of friends) to publish these letters in vindication of the honesty of her cause. It is not our purpose here to discuss the principles contained in the accompanying correspondence. That the recipient was justified in believing the purpose of the writer to be honorable, none, we feel assured, can deny. The letters teem with sentiments of an affec-

tionate character. Their tenor is, in the main, of that easy nature people adopt when corresponding with those to whom they are, or anticipate to be, nearly related. Indeed, many passages stress very strongly on points of a marital nature, and which by all law, "human and divine," an ingenuous and confiding woman would be right in considering as an earnest of promised marriage. It is unnecessary to speak particularly of these passages, since the reader can find no difficulty in their discovery, and, in sooth, their number places them beyond the pale of our limited space. Of the letters themselves, viewed with the most good-natured eye, and bearing in mind the fact that heroes are not always remarkable for their intellect, we must admit that they are by no means of a classic style of literature. It is true, that epistles intended only for *one* person are not expected to display a very astonishing amount of ability. This is especially true of love letters, which are written, or supposed to be written, under the wild impulses of passion, and are therefore not to be compared to the disquisitions of the same mind when not influenced by disturbing emotions. This may in part atone for the erratic style which the martial author is so prone to follow in each of his amatory "sketches." His orthography was not as correct as we would have it, so we took the liberty of making a number of judicious corrections. Should any errors, therefore, appear in

the "spelling," they must be tacked to the compositor's and not to the "General's" reputation. His (the General's) style is, if we may use the expression, somewhat Pindaric, since he scorns, like that celebrated poet, all "rules but what himself ordains." He has a singular fecundity of words, and can reel out the most endearing terms of affection with the rapidity of a garrulous and practiced hand in the art of love. In short, these epistles bear the evidences of marked originality; and while they serve to throw a "little light" on his character, they also show what "bushels" of devotion he proposed to the fair recipient. These epistles—the accumulation of years—have ever been regarded by the lady to whom they were addressed, as the sacred mementoes of the man upon whom she had trusted with such certain, but alas! unrequited affection. It was with a struggle she consented to have them made public, and then only when it became imperative for her to defend herself from the calumnies of purchased miscreants. She has endured poverty, reproach and privation, rather than compromise the reputation of the man she loved, notwithstanding their publication would have secured her ample means, and this too while the "amatory penman" was rioting in the enjoyment of superabundant wealth. Yet these tender missives remained locked in secret, bedewed mayhap with many a tear, while Slander sent its hydra