

Outraging One's Friends.

IT is good for a man to have definite opinions, if he comes by them honestly. It is also well to publish them, should their holder think the world may be benefitted thereby. He may

"Sing his songs unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

The sensation that many thinking and good people have been led to sympathize with your best thoughts, through your own writings, must be a very pleasurable one. To receive letters from distant places, and even far off lands, thanking you for happiness conferred, comfort vouchsafed, intelligence quickened, and incentive to right action, is an experience that has cheered many an author's heart, and has more than atoned for harsh criticism or cold neglect in the past. The friends one makes through published books or smaller writings are friends worth keeping, not to be driven lightly from one's side. Happy is the author who understands the truth of this caution.

In all cases of relationship with our fellows, of entertainment, of dependence, of leadership, there is a significant: "Thus far shalt thou go." There is such a thing, even with the kindest hostess, in outstaying one's welcome, and he who has been the delight of thousands may presume long enough to hear the ominous words: "Superfluous, lags the veteran on the stage." Many a clever young business man, elated by success and merited encomium, has gone a step too far, as Benhadad went with Ahab, and has lamented till the day of his death that his presumptuous estimate of himself was not shared by his indulgent employers. Lord Randolph Churchill discovered that his party could do without him, and there is no man in the world whose loss the world cannot healthily survive. Indeed, many institutions would be in a far better condition if some, who imagine themselves indispensable to their existence, were mercifully removed from the scene of their self-conceit. To fall suddenly from the position of an idol to that of a piece of lumber is gratifying to no man, but it is the next to inevitable fate of him who will not be taught, "Thus far shalt thou go." The waves had no respect for the throne of King Canute.

Henry Ward Beecher was a great man in many ways, and came at last to think he could do anything, and still be Beecher. But the paroxysmal kiss, whatever false slanders lay behind it, shrouded his last days in gloom. He who takes a step too far is at the mercy of the commonest scoundrel that lives. Mr. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews*, is exceedingly clever, and thoroughly in earnest as a moral Reformer. He had, and doubtless has still, hosts of admirers, but he killed off fifty per cent of the best of them when he announced himself a full fledged spiritualist. In social reform among the living they were ready to follow and to trust him, but, when he took to necromancing, they cried "Avaunt Sathanas!" Mr. Bok says of Dr. Lyman Abbott that he and Beecher were the only clergymen he knew that could attract young men. Dr. Abbott had many friends besides young men. Thoughtful women and liberal kindly old men were heart and soul with him, until he tore the third chapter of Genesis out of the Bible, made God the author of evil, and gave us the ape for our progenitor. Can this clever genial man be so blind as not to see that he has outraged the feelings of those whom he had helped to educate to higher things? They will not go beyond the altar even with Dr. Abbott leading.

There is another man who was a power in liberal theology, Dr. Henry Drummond. His "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" was a revelation in the harmony of science and religion. His little books, "The Greatest Thing in the World," "The City Without a Church," etc., stirred the souls of thousands, so that few religious writers could compete with him. But *quem diabolus vult perdere prius dementat*, and, confident in his grand powers of persuasion, he writes his "Ascent of Man," a wholesale defence of the evolutionary theory, a large and bitter pill for his admirers to swallow. They have tried to do so for the love of the man, but they can't. He has taxed their powers of endurance beyond its bounds, and now, it is no longer Macaskill of the Highland that he has to reckon with, but thousands of once devoted friends, whose feelings he has outraged.

Last of all, it is our Canadian Grant Allen, who, to put

it mildly, has gone and made an ass of himself. We liked the boy and were proud of him, with his trifles of science, love stories, social reforms, and all the rest of it. Accordingly he got it into his head that he could tell his readers what he liked, and they would say "It is Grant Allen's and therefore it is all right." Impelled by this delusion, he has written "The Woman who Did," a novel with a very inelegant title. But the contents beggar the title. The woman, with Mr. Allen's full approval, and against the right feeling of father, would-be husband, and numberless friends, refuses to submit to the degrading ceremony of marriage, only to lose the man who wished to make her his wife, to have her daughter grow up to curse her, and to commit elegant suicide. Mr. Stead says Grant Allen has knocked out his own brains with a boomerang, which is perfectly true. No sane man, no decent woman, will care to be taught or even amused by a microscopist, who is neither a Shelley nor a Swinburne, a Mill nor a Lewis, no Adonis certainly, that outrages all the conveniences of social life, and casts its necessary restraints to the four winds of heaven. Stronger men than Grant Allen have tried this sort of thing and have failed. He has taken a step too far and the world will show that it can do without Grant Allen. It does not pay to outrage one's friends.

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And She Did.

Dramatis Personæ { Captain Reginald Holko Brandling, V.C.,
Miss Marie Van Stetter,
Host, Hostess, Guests, Servants, etc.

Scene.—An elaborately furnished dining-room. A dinner-party in progress. Captain Brandling seated next to Miss Van Stetter, to whom he has been hurriedly introduced a few minutes before.

Miss Van Stetter (aside).—Not a bad-looking man, but looks awfully stupid.

Captain Brandling (aside).—Pretty little girl, but looks rather upish. (Aloud).—Rather a neat little crib this, Miss Van Stetter.

Miss Van Stetter (looking round on priceless objects of art).—Very neat indeed, almost painful in its extreme simplicity, don't you think, Captain Brandling?

Captain Brandling.—Haw. (aside) Thought she seemed rather inclined to be pert.

[Silence of several minutes, during which Captain Brandling consumes his fish, and stares in an abstracted manner at the table cloth.]

Miss Van Stetter (aside).—What a hateful man! He is daring to disapprove of me. (Aloud) Hadn't we better talk about something?

Captain Brandling (solemnly fixing his eyeglass).—By all means. Er—will you suggest a subject, or er—shall I?

Miss Van Stetter (flippantly).—You do remind me so of our old teacher who always used to begin our literature lessons like that.

Captain Brandling (stiffly).—Really (Sees an opening for retaliation). And do you like going to school?

Miss Van Stetter (indignantly).—What, do you — ? (bursts out laughing) Captain Brandling, I positively admire you. You very nearly succeeded in making me angry, and no one ever does that.

Captain Brandling (thawing considerably).—Thought that'd fetch you, always makes my sisters awfully wild.

Miss Van Stetter.—Well, I forgive you, and now what subject can you talk about best; how would "Is marriage a failure" do?

Captain Brandling (freezing again).—Extraordinary young woman this! (Aloud) Really can't say; never tried; haven't any particular desire to make the experiment.

Miss Van Stetter.—Oh! Then you are one of those delightful creatures called "A confirmed bachelor"; the depository of the love-secrets of half the girls of your acquaintance, and all the children call you "Uncle Charley."

Captain Brandling (rather annoyed).—Possibly they might only my name doesn't happen to be Charley.

Miss Van Stetter (frivolously).—Isn't it? Oh that doesn't matter in the least. Ha! ha! Do you know I shall always think of you in future as Uncle Charley?

Captain Brandling (frostily).—That is very good of you. (Aside) What the devil kind of an old fogey does the little woman take me for, confound her.