

"You think so?" he replied — "Well, I
Thought likewise, mangre Lanciotto,
And Yorick, — though his Cassius nigh
Won Hamlet's motto.

"But would you learn, as I, his clue
To nature's heart, and judge him fairly, —
Go see his rustic bard, go view
His Man o' Airlie.

"See that defenseless minstrel brought
From hope to wan despair, from laughter
To frenzy's moan: — the image wrought
Will haunt you after.

"Then see him crowned at last! If such
A guerdon waits the stricken poet,
'T were well, you 'll own, to bear as much —
Even die, to know it."

"Bravo!" cried I, — "I too the thrill
Must feel, which thus your blood can waken."
And once I saw upon the bill
That part retaken;

But leagues of travel stretched between
Me and that idyl played so rarely:
And then — his death! nor had I seen
"The Man o' Airlie."

My failure; not the actor's, loved
By all to art and nature loyal;
Not his, whom Harebell's passion proved
Of the blood royal.

Edmund Clarence Stedman.

THE HOUSE OF MARTHA.

XLI.

MISS LANISTON.

AT eight o'clock that evening I was
at the house of Miss Laniston. The
lady was at home, and received me.
She advanced with both hands ex-
tended.

"Truly," she exclaimed, "this is the
most charming instance of masculine
forgiveness I have ever witnessed."

I took one of her hands; this much
for the sake of policy. "Madam," I
said, "I am not thinking of forgive-
ness or unforgiveness. I am here to
ask a favor; and if you grant it, I
am willing that it shall counterbalance

everything between us which suggests forgiveness."

"Dear me!" she cried, leading the way to a sofa. "Sit down, and let me know my opportunities."

I did not want to sit down, but, as I said before, I felt that I must be politic, and so took a seat on the other end of the sofa.

"My errand is a very simple one," I said. "I merely want to know the address of Mother Anastasia in Washington."

The lady folded her hands in her lap, and looked at me steadily.

"Very simple indeed," she assented. "Why do you come to me for this address? Would not the sisters give it to you?"

"For various reasons I did not care to ask them," I replied.

"One of them being, I suppose, that you knew you would not get it."

I did not reply to this remark.

"If you know the address," I inquired, "will you kindly give it to me? It is necessary that I should have it at once."

"To telegraph?" she asked.

"No, I am going to her."

"Oh!" ejaculated the lady, and there was a pause in the conversation. "It does not strike me," she said presently, "that I have any authority to tell gentlemen where to find Mother Anastasia, but I can telegraph and ask her if she is willing that I shall send you to her."

This proposition did not suit me at all. I was quite sure that the Mother Superior would not consider it advisable that I should come to her, and would ask me to postpone my communication until she should return to Arden. But Arden, as I had found, would be a very poor place for the long and earnest interview which I desired.

"That would not do," I answered; "she would not understand. I wish to see her on an important matter, which

can be explained only in a personal interview."

"You excite my curiosity," said Miss Laniston. "Why don't you make me your confidante? In that case, I might decide whether or not it would be proper to give you the address."

"Impossible," I said,—"that would be impossible."

Miss Laniston's eyes were of a blue gray, and very fine ones, and she fixed them upon me with a lively intentness.

"Do you still hope," she asked, "to marry Sylvia Raynor? Surely you must know that is impossible. She is now a member for life of the sisterhood."

"I know all that," I replied impatiently. "It is not about that matter that I wish to see the Mother Superior."

"Is it then about Mother Anastasia herself? Do you wish to marry her?"

I sprang to my feet in my excitement. "Why do you speak to me in that way," I exclaimed, "and about a woman who is at the head of a religious institution, and whose earthly existence is devoted to it?"

"Not at all," quietly answered the lady. "Mother Anastasia is not a life member of the sisterhood of the House of Martha."

At these words my blood began to boil within me in a manner which I could not comprehend. My eyeballs seemed to burn, as I stood and gazed speechlessly at my companion.

"You take such an interest in these sisters," she said, "that I supposed you knew that Mother Anastasia joined the sisterhood only for a term of years, now nearly expired. She was made Mother Superior because those who helped form the institution knew that no one else could so well fill the place, especially during its first years. I was one of those persons."

I do not remember a time when my mind was in such a state of ungovernable emotion. Not only was I unable

to control my feelings, but I did not know what they were. One thing only could I comprehend: I must remove this impression from the mind of Miss Laniston, and I could think of no other way of doing it than to confide to her the business on which I wished to see Mother Anastasia. I reseated myself on the sofa, and without delay or preface I laid before her my plan of collaboration with the sisters of the House of Martha; explaining how much better a man could attend to certain outside business than the sisters could do it, and showing how, in a manner, I proposed to become a brother of the House of Martha. Thus only could I defend myself against her irrational and agitating suppositions.

She heard me to the end, and then she leaned back on the sofa and laughed, — laughed until I thought the people in the street must hear her. I was hurt, but said nothing.

"You must excuse me," she said, when she was able to speak, "but this is so sudden my mind is not prepared for it. And so you wish to become a brother of the House of Martha? I would be solemn about it if I could, but really I cannot," and again she laughed.

I was about to retire, but she checked me.

"Do not go," she said; "do not be angry. Forget that I laughed. Now perhaps I can help you. I will make you a promise. If you will agree faithfully to tell me how Mother Anastasia receives your proposition, I will give you her address."

"Promise?" I said severely. "You may remember that this is not the first time you have made me a promise."

"Don't bring up that old affair!" she exclaimed. "What I did then could not be helped. When we had our talk about the sister with whom you had fallen in love, I had no idea she was Sylvia Raynor, the daughter of my hostess. When I discovered the truth,

I had to drop the whole affair. Any person of honor would have done that. I could not help its being funny, you know."

I had become calmer, and was able to be politic again.

"If Mother Anastasia will allow me," I said, "I am willing to promise to tell you what she thinks of my plan."

"Very good," was the reply, "it is a bargain. She is stopping with a friend, Mrs. Gardley, at 906 Alaska Avenue. I address her as 'Miss Raynor,' — I always do when I have a chance, — but I think it will be well for you to ask for 'Mother Anastasia.'"

I arose, and she followed my example.

"Now, then," said she, "we are friends," and her sparkling eyes seemed to have communicated their merriment to the gems upon the white hand which she held out to me.

I took the hand, and as I did so a politic idea flashed up within me. If I must be friends with this woman, why not make use of her? This was a moment when she was well disposed to serve me.

"If you are willing to consider me a friend," I replied, still holding her hand, "you will not refuse to tell me something which I have long wanted to know, and which I ought to know."

"What is it?" she asked.

"What was the trouble which caused Sylvia Raynor to enter the House of Martha?"

She withdrew her hand, and reflected for a moment.

"Man is an inquisitive animal," she answered; "but we cannot alter his nature, and there is some excuse for your wanting to know all about Sylvia. She is out of your reach, of course, but you have certainly taken as much interest in her as a man can take in a woman. The matter is not a close secret, and I suppose I may as well tell you that the cause of her entering the sisterhood was nothing at all out of the

common. It was simply a thwarted love affair. You don't like that, I can see by your face."

"No, I do not like it, and I am very sorry to hear it."

"My dear sir," said she, "you must be early on hand and prompt in action to be Number One with a girl like Sylvia; but then, you know, a Number One seldom counts. In this case, however, he did count, for he made a Number Two impossible."

"Not so!" I cried hotly. "I am Number Two, and shall always continue so."

She laughed. "I am afraid," she said, "that it will be necessary for a brother of the House of Martha to get rid of that sort of feeling."

"How was she thwarted?" I asked quickly.

"The story is briefly this," replied Miss Laniston: "A certain gentleman courted Sylvia's cousin, and everybody supposed they would be married; but in some way or other he treated her badly, and the match was broken off. Then, a few years later, this same person fell in love with Sylvia, who knew nothing of the previous affair. The young girl found him a most attractive lover, and he surely would have won her had not her mother stepped in and put an extinguisher upon the whole affair. She knew what had happened before, and would not have the man in her family. Then it was that Sylvia found the world a blank, and concluded to enter the sisterhood."

"Do you mean," I asked, "that the cousin with whom the man was first in love was Marcia Raynor, Mother Anastasia?"

"Yes," answered Miss Laniston, "it was she. You do not like that?"

Like it! A cold and tingling pain ran through my body, and there sprang up in me an emotion of the intensest hatred for a person whom I had never seen.

My feelings were such as I could

not express; the situation was one which I could not discuss. I took leave of Miss Laniston without giving sufficient consideration to her expression of countenance and to her final words now to be able to say whether they indicated amusement or sympathy.

XLII.

THE MOTHER SUPERIOR.

Seldom, I think, has a berth in a sleeping-car held a more turbulent-minded man than I was during my journey from New York to Washington. The revelation that the same man had loved and been loved by Mother Anastasia and Sylvia had disquieted me in a manner not easily to be explained; but I knew that I was being torn by jealousy, and jealousy is a passion which it is sometimes impossible to explain.

An idea which came into my mind in the night increased the storm within me. I imagined that the wretch who had made suit to Marcia and Sylvia was Walkirk. He knew a good deal about these women; sometimes I was surprised to discover how much he knew. Perhaps now, acting in a base disguise, he was endeavoring to make of me a stepping-stone to his ultimate success with one or the other. Hound! I would crush him!

My thoughts ran rapidly backward. I remembered how zealous Walkirk had been in following Mrs. Raynor's yacht. He had told me of his conversations with Sylvia, but what reason had I to believe he spoke the truth? That any man should have loved these two women filled me with rage. That that man should be Walkirk was an insupportable thought. I was not only jealous, but I felt myself the victim of a treacherous insult.

It was seven o'clock when I reached Washington, but, although I had ar-

rived at my destination, I could give no thought to the object of my journey until I had discovered the truth about Walkirk. That was all-important.

But of whom should I inquire? I could think of no one but Miss Laniston. I had been a fool not to ask her the name of the man when I was with her; but I would telegraph to her now and ask for it. She might be asleep at this hour, but I believed she was a woman who would awake and answer my question and then go to sleep again.

I immediately went to the telegraph office, and sent this message: "What is the name of the man of whom we spoke last evening? It is necessary that I know it. Please answer at once." She would understand this. We had spoken of but one man.

For nearly an hour I walked the floor and tossed over the morning papers, and then came the answer to my message. It was this: "Brownson. He is dead."

There is a quality in the air of Washington which is always delightful to me, but I think it has never affected me as it did that morning. As I breathed it, it exhilarated me; it cheered and elated me; it rose-tinted my emotions; it gave me an appetite for my breakfast; it made me feel ready for any enterprise.

As soon as I thought it proper to make a morning call I went to number 906 Alaska Avenue. There I found a large and handsome house, of that independent and highly commendable style of architecture which characterizes many of the houses of Washington. I had not yet made up my mind whether I should inquire for "Mother Anastasia" or "Miss Raynor." I did not know the custom of Mother Superiors when traveling or visiting, and I determined, as I ascended the steps, to be guided in this matter by the aspect of the person who opened the door.

It has always been interesting to me to study the character, as well as I can

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do so in the brief opportunity generally afforded, of the servants who open to me the doors of houses. To a certain degree, although of course it does not do to apply this rule too rigidly, these persons indicate the characters of the dwellers in the house. My friends have disputed this point with me, and have asserted that they do not wish to be so represented, but nevertheless I have frequently found my position correct.

I prefer to visit those houses whose door service is performed by a neat, good-looking, intelligent, bright-witted, kindly-tempered, conscientious, and sympathetic maid-servant. A man is generally very unsatisfactory. He performs his duty in a perfunctory manner. His heart is not in it. He fears to say a word more than he thinks absolutely necessary, lest you should imagine him so new in service that he had not lost his interest in answering questions.

But even if the person you ask for be not at home, it is sometimes a pleasure to be told so by an intelligent maid such as I have described above. Your subsequent action is frequently influenced by her counsel and information. Frequently she is able to indicate to you your true relation with the household; sometimes she assists in establishing it.

When the door before me opened, I saw a colored woman. I was utterly discomfited. None of my rules applied to a middle-aged colored woman, who gazed upon me as if she recognized me as one whom she carried in her arms when an infant. Actuated by impulse only, I inquired for "Miss Raynor."

"I reckon," said she, "you's got to de wrong house. Dat lady doan' live hyar."

"Well, then," I asked quickly, "is there a lady here named 'Mother Anastasia'?"

The woman showed thirty-two perfectly developed teeth.

"Oh, dat's she? You means de sister. She's hyar; yes, sah. Want to see her?"

I stated that I certainly desired to see her.

"She's gone out now, sah, an' dere's no tellin' when dey'll git back. Dey ginerally all gits back 'bout dark. Commonly jist a little arter dark."

"Not return before dark!" I cried. "That is bad. Can you give me any idea where I might find Mother Anastasia?"

"I 'spects you kin fin' her mighty easy. Mos' likely she's at de Patent Office, or at de Army and Navy Buildin', or de White House, or de Treasury, or de Smifsonian, or de Navy Yard, or de new 'Servatory, or on de avenue shoppin', or gone to de Capitol to de Senate or de House, one; or perhaps she druv out to Arlin'ton, or else she's gone to de 'Gressional Lib'r'y. Mos' likely she's at one or de odder of dem places; an' about one o'clock she an' Mis' Gardley is mighty sure to eat der luncheon somewhar, an' arter dat I reckon dey'll go to 'bout four arternoon teas. I doan' know 'xactly whar de teas'll be dis arternoon, but ye kin tell de houses whar dar is a tea inside by de carriages a-waitin',—an' ef it ain't a tea, it's a fun'ral,—an' all yer's got to do is to go inside an' see if she's dar."

I could not refrain from smiling, but I was greatly discouraged. How could I wait until evening for the desired interview?

"If you is kin to de sister," said the woman,—"an' I reckon you is, for I see de likeness powerful strong,—she'll be mighty glad to see ye, sah. Want me to tell her ye'll come back dis evening, if ye doan' fin' her before dat?"

I desired her to give such a message, and went away well pleased that the woman had not asked my name. It was desirable that Mother Anastasia

should not know who was coming to call on her.

I am, as I have said before, much given to the consideration of motives and all that sort of thing, and in the course of the day I found myself wondering why I should have taken the trouble to walk through the Patent Office and half a dozen other public buildings, continually gazing about me, not at the objects of interest therein, but at the visitors; that is, if they were ladies. Why this uneasy desire to find the Mother Superior, when by quietly waiting until evening I was almost certain to see her? But in the midst of my self-questionings I went on looking for Mother Anastasia.

I finished my long ramble by a visit to the gallery of the House of Representatives. A member was making a speech on a bill to establish a national medical college for women. The speech and the subject may have interested some people, but I did not care for either, and I am afraid I was a little drowsy. After a time I took a cab and went to my hotel. At all events, the long day of waiting was nearly over.

Early in the evening I called again at Mrs. Gardley's house, and, to my delight, was informed that the lady I desired to see was at home.

When Mother Anastasia came into the drawing-room, where I awaited her, she wore the gray gown of her sisterhood, but no head covering. I had before discovered that a woman could be beautiful in a Martha gown, but at this moment the fact asserted itself with peculiar force. She greeted me with a smile and an extended hand.

"You do not seem surprised to see me," I said.

"Why should I be?" she answered. "I saw you in the House of Representatives, and wondered why you should doze when such an interesting matter was being discussed; and when I came home, and heard that a gentleman an-

swering your description intended to call on me this evening, I declined to go out to the theatre, wishing to be here to receive you."

I was disgusted to think that she had caught me napping, and that she had been near me in the House and I had not known it, but I said nothing of this.

"You are very good," I remarked, "to give up the theatre" —

"Oh, don't thank me," she interrupted; "perhaps you will not think I am good. Before we say anything more, I want you to tell me whether or not you have come here to talk about Sylvia Raynor."

Here was a blunt question, but from the bottom of my heart I believed that I answered truly when I said I had not come for that purpose.

"Very good," said Mother Anastasia, leaning back in her chair. "Now I can freely say that I am glad to see you. I was dreadfully afraid you had come to talk to me on that forbidden subject, and I must admit that this fear had a very powerful influence in keeping me at home this evening. If you had come to talk to me of her, I should have had something very important to say to you; but I am delighted that my fears were groundless. And now tell me how you could help being interested in that grand scheme for a woman's college."

"I have never given it any thought. Do you care for it?"

"Care for it!" she exclaimed. "I am enlisted in the cause hand and heart. I came down here because the bill was to be brought before the House. If the college is established, — and I believe it will be, — I expect to be one of the faculty."

"You are not a physician?" said I.

"Oh, I have studied and practiced medicine," she answered, "and expect to do a great deal more of it before we begin operations. The physician's art is my true vocation."

"And you will leave the House of Martha?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied. "The period for which I entered it has nearly expired. I do not regret the time I have spent there, but I must admit I shall be glad to leave the sisterhood. That life is too narrow for me, and perhaps too shallow. I say nothing against it in a general way; I only speak of it as it relates to myself. The very manner in which I rejoice in the prospect of freedom proves to me that I ought to be free, and that I did a wise thing in limiting the term of my sisterhood."

As Mother Anastasia spoke there was a glow of earnest pleasure upon her face. She was truly very happy to be able to talk of her approaching freedom.

I am a prudent man and a cautious one. This frank enthusiasm alarmed me. How deftly she had put Sylvia out of sight! How skillfully she had brought herself into full view, free and untrammelled by vows and rules, — a woman as other women!

The more I saw of Mother Anastasia the better I liked her, but I perceived that she was a woman with whom it was very necessary to be cautious. She was apt, I thought, to make convictions of her presumptions. If she presumed that my love for Sylvia was an utterly hopeless affection, to be given up and forgotten, I did not like it. It might be that it was hopeless, but I did not care to have any one else settle the matter for me in that way, — not even Mother Anastasia.

"Of course," I remarked, "I am glad that you have concluded to withdraw from a vocation which I am sure is not suited to you, and yet I feel a little disappointed to hear that you will not continue at the head of the House of Martha, for I came to Washington on purpose to make you a proposition in regard to that institution."

"Came to Washington on purpose to see me and to make a proposition! What can it possibly be?"

I now laid before her, with considerable attention to detail, my plan for working in coöperation with the House of Martha. I showed her the advantages of the scheme as they had suggested themselves to me, and as an example of what could be done I mentioned Sylvia's fancy for typewriting, and demonstrated how easily I could undertake the outside management of this very lucrative and pleasant occupation. I warmed up as I talked, and spoke quite strongly about what I — and perhaps in time other men — might do for the benefit of the sisterhood, if my proposition were accepted.

She listened to me attentively, her face growing paler and harder as I proceeded. When I had finished she said: —

"It is not at all necessary for me to discuss this utterly preposterous scheme, nor even to refer to it, except to say that I plainly see its object. Whatever you may have persuaded yourself to think of your plan, I know that its real object is to reëstablish a connection with Sylvia. You would know, if you would allow yourself to think about it, that your absurd and even wicked scheme of typewriting, companionship in work, and all that stuff could only result in making the girl miserable, and perhaps breaking her heart. You know that she loves you, and that it has been a terrible trial to her to yield to her conscience and do what she has done; and you know, furthermore, — and this more than anything else darkens your intention, — that Sylvia's artless, ingenuous, and impulsive nature would give you advantages which would not be afforded by one who did not love you, and who better understood the world and you."

"Madam," I exclaimed, "you do me an injustice!"

She paid no attention to this remark, and proceeded: "And now let me tell you that what you have said to me to-night has changed my plans, my

life. I shall not leave Sylvia exposed to your cruel attacks, — attacks which I believe will come in every practical form that your ingenuity can devise. It was my example that brought that girl into the House of Martha, and now that she has vowed to devote her life and her work to its service I shall not desert her. I will not have her pure purpose shaken and weakened, little by little, day by day, until it falls listless and deadened, with nothing to take its place. Therefore, until I know that you are no longer a source of danger to her, I shall remain Mother Superior of the House of Martha; and rest assured that while I am in that position Sylvia shall be safe from you." And with that she rose and walked out of the room.

XLIII.

WAS HIS HEART TRUE TO POLL?

Never before had any one spoken to me as Mother Anastasia had just done. Never before had I felt as I felt in leaving the house where she had so treated me. I did not admit all that she had said; and yet, not even to myself could I gainsay her statements. I was not convinced that I had been wrong, but I could not help feeling that she was right. I was angry, I was mortified, I was grieved. The world seemed cold and dark, and the coldest and darkest thing in it was the figure of Mother Anastasia as she rose to leave me.

When I reached New York, I bethought myself of my promise to Miss Laniston. It tortured my soul to think of what had happened; I knew it would torture it still more to talk of these things. But I am a man who keeps his promises; besides, I wanted to see Miss Laniston. I did not like her very much, but the people whom I did like seemed to be falling away from me, and she was a woman of vigorous

spirit, to whom one in my plight would naturally turn. That she could give me any encouragement was not likely, but she might offer me an enheartening sympathy; and, moreover, she was well acquainted with Mother Anastasia, and there were a good many questions I wanted to ask about that lady.

I found Miss Laniston at home, but I was obliged to wait a good while before she made her appearance.

"If you were any other man in this world," she said, "I should have felt obliged to excuse myself from seeing you, for I am engaged on most important business with a modiste who is designing a gown for me; but I am perfectly wild to hear about your interview with Mother Anastasia, and I was afraid, if I sent you away, that you would not come back again; so tell me about it, I pray you. I know you have seen her, for you look so uncommonly glum. I am afraid that you have not yet become a brother of the House of Martha."

There was nothing inspiring about this badinage, but I braced myself to the work, and told her what had happened in Washington.

"This is truly dreadful," she declared. "Of course I had no idea that Mother Anastasia would consider your plan as anything more than the wild outreachings of a baffled lover, but I did not imagine that she would take it in this way. This is very bad."

"It is," I answered. "Everything is knocked from under me."

"Oh, bless you," said the lady, "I was n't thinking of you, but of Mother Anastasia. It was the happiest news I can remember when I heard that she was soon to drop that name and all that belonged to it, and to begin a life in which she would be a woman among her peers, no matter with what sex they happen to be classed. But if she stops short and remains in that miserable House of Martha, the result is bound to be disastrous. If she believes

it is necessary to spend her life in protecting Sylvia from your assaults, she is the woman to spend her life in that way."

"What her friends should do," said I, "is to convince her that it is not necessary."

Miss Laniston gazed upon me fixedly. "You think it would be a great pity for a beautiful woman—a remarkably fine woman like Mother Anastasia—to hide herself away in that make-believe convent?"

"Indeed I do," I answered, with animation.

"And since one fine woman is shut up for life in that prison, you think it a shame that another one should remain within its walls?"

I assented warmly.

"Now, then," remarked Miss Laniston, rising, "it is absolutely necessary for me to go to the Frenchwoman, who I know is fuming for me, and whose time is very precious. I shall be with you again in about twenty minutes, and during that time I wish you would make up your mind with whom you are in love, Mother Anastasia or Sylvia Raynor. When that point is settled, we will see what can be done."

It was a man of a bewildered mind who was left alone in that drawing-room. I did not understand what had been said to me, but now that ideas of this kind had been put into words there seemed to be a certain familiarity about them. How dared she speak to me in that way? What ground had she for such words? And yet—Sylvia was shut up for life in the House of Martha. I could not gainsay that.

I could not put my thoughts into form, and, with my mind in chaos, I strode up and down the room until Miss Laniston returned.

"What an uneasy person you are!" she said. "Have you settled that little point?"

"Settled it! There is nothing to settle."

She laughed. "I am not so sure about that. I thought I saw a change in the wind when you were here last, and it is natural enough that it should change. What is the good of its blowing steadfastly from the north, when the north is nothing but ice?"

"You have no right to talk in that way!" I exclaimed angrily. "I utterly repudiate your supposition."

"Come, come," she said, "let us be practical. I really take an interest in you, you know, and, besides that, I take an interest in my friends; and it is quite plain to me that you must not be allowed to wander about in a detached way, making all sorts of trouble. You have made a good deal already. So if we must consider Sylvia Raynor as really out of the race, on account of being tied up by her sisterhood obligations, we must turn our attention to Mother Anastasia, who probably has not yet done anything definite in regard to retaining her position in the House of Martha. If anything can be done in this direction, it will be quite satisfactory, because, if you get the ex-Mother Superior, of course you will be content to leave the young sister alone."

"Madam, you insult me!" I cried, springing to my feet.

"By which, I suppose," she answered, "you wish me to understand that your heart is true to Poll,—by Poll meaning Sylvia Raynor."

"You know that as well as I do," I replied. "I have taken you into my confidence; I have told you that I love her, that I shall always love her; and it is unwomanly in you"—

"That will do," she interrupted,—"that will do; don't say hard words to one of your best friends. If you will continue to be true to Poll, not as the sailor was in the song, but constant and steadfast in all sorts of weather, and without any regard to that mere material point of eventually getting her

for your own, why then I am your fast friend to the end, and will do everything that I can to soften your woes and lighten your pathway; and all the reward I desire for my labors is the pleasure of knowing that there is at least one man in the world who can love truly and unchangeably without seeing any chance ahead of him of winning the woman he loves. Do you think you can fill that position?"

I looked at her sternly, and answered: "I have said all upon that point that it is necessary to say. When I love a woman, I love her forever."

"Very good," said Miss Laniston,—"very good; and I dare say your little side flights did n't mean anything at all. And now I shall talk with Mother Anastasia as soon as possible, and make her understand that she has no right to sacrifice herself to Sylvia or any one else. If I can get her started off on the right road, I will see what I can do with the new Mother Superior, whoever she may be. Perhaps you may yet be able to establish that delightful brotherhood of the House of Martha. Any way, I promise you, you shall have something. It may not be much and it may not be often, but it shall be enough to keep your love alive; and that, you see, is my great object. I want to make of you a monument of masculine constancy."

As I took leave of her, Miss Laniston gave my hand a vigorous pressure, which seemed to me to indicate that her intentions were better than her words. As I went away my mind was quieter, though not cheered. There was in it a certain void and emptiness, but this was compensated for by a sense of self-approbation which was strengthening and comforting. I was even able to smile at the notion of the interview between Miss Laniston and Sister Sarah, when the former should propose my plan of the brotherhood.

Frank R. Stockton.

THE QUEEN'S CLOSET OPENED.

THERE lies before me a leather-bound, time-stained, dingy little quarto of four hundred and fifty pages that was printed in the year 1656. Its contents comprise three parts or books. First, "The Queens Closet Opened, or The Pearl of Practise : Accurate, Physical, and Chirurgical Receipts." Second, "A Queens Delight, or The Art of Preserving, Conserving, and Candyng, as also a Right Knowledge of Making Perfumes and Distilling the most Excellent Waters." Third, "The Compleat Cook, Expertly Prescribing the most ready wayes, whether Italian, Spanish, or French, For Dressing of Flesh and Fish, Ordering of Sauces, or Making of PASTRY," — "pastry" in capitals, as is due so distinguished an article and art.

This conjunction of medicine and cooking was far from being considered demeaning to the healing art. A great number of the cook-books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were written by physicians. Dr. Lister, physician to Queen Anne, wrote plainly, "I do not consider myself as hazarding anything when I say no man can be a good physician who has not a competent knowledge of cookery."

This book contains a long, pompous preface, in which it is asserted that these receipts had been collected originally for "her distress'd Sovereigne Majesty the Queen," Henrietta Maria; that they had been "laid at her feet by Persons of Honour and Quality;" and that, since false and poor copies had been circulated during the queen's banishment, the compiler — who "fell with the Court," not being able to render his beloved queen any further service — felt that he could "prevent all disservices" by giving in print to her friends these true rules. Thus could he keep the absent queen in their minds; and also he

could give a fair copy to her, since she had lost her receipts in her flight. He complains, however, that some are "altered and corrupted by the failing of printing, some disordered, others false Printed: which kind of dealing I must impute to the most unfortunate customes of Printers, whose triviall excuses cannot free me from the highest misfortune that may befall me on this earthe should my Royall Mistress be displeased."

The preface is signed with initials only, W. M. Do they stand for the "little Vill Murray" of the queen's letters, the Will Murray so often mentioned in Evelyn's Diary as a faithful friend and letter-carrier for the king and queen? Or was W. M. Walter Montagu, the queen's almoner, who wrote for her pleasure *The Queen's Pastoral*, and remained her true follower through all her adversity? Though W. M. blamed the printer, I cannot. Clear and black is the type and firm the paper; and as for the bookbinder, let me, though rather late in the day, sound the praises of Nathaniel Brook at *The Angel* in Cornhill. Securely sewed, firmly glued, strongly backed, his work has stood the hard wear and tear of two centuries, and is still in good condition. The portrait of the queen, on the first page of the book, is said by Agnes Strickland to be a good likeness. It shows the royal widow in a black gown, a black veil with a triangular frontlet, a straight white cape, and one jewel, a cross. Doubtless the book was published with the hope of endearing the queen to the middle classes, who would care more for her skill in medicine and cooking than for her courage and magnanimity; especially would the book interest the people since it stated that she had practiced these receipts personally in her leisure hours.