

cornucopia, and was worse in consequence. The third night she awakened Cecilia, who slept on an uncomfortable chair-bed in the corner of the room.

'I believe, after all,' she said, 'that the blue cornucopia must have gone to old Lady Stukeley. She was a great friend of my mother's. They lived at Knoll House, Eldingham, Hants. Such a dear old house, my dear. I have lost sight of them. Lady Stukeley died abroad.'

'Knoll House, Edingham, Hampshire.'

Cecilia went to the writing-table and put down the address. She was very sleepy. In the morning she might have forgotten all about it.

She tucked in Miss Wade carefully and tenderly.

'Go to sleep now,' she said. 'I'm glad you have remembered the address. Don't think any more about the blue cornucopia. I am going to get it for you.'

Miss Wade slept till quite late in the morning. The sun was in the room and the sparrows chattering outside. Pratt, Miss Wade's maid, was knocking at the door with Cecilia's morning cup of tea when she awakened. Miss Wade seemed much better, was in a placid mood, and never mentioned the blue cornucopia.

But after breakfast, when the old lady had had her toilet made, and was asleep after the exertion, Cecilia sat down and wrote. She was uncertain at first as to how to address the letter. Finally she made up her mind, and addressed it to the representatives of the late Lady Stukeley, Knoll House, Edingham, Hampshire. Then she wrote her letter. She felt the quaintness of it—a request for the restoration of a piece of china given more than fifty years ago. Why, there might be no one to receive it. Lady Stukeley might have left no representatives.

However, she made her statement simply. Miss Wade was old, in failing health. She had set her heart on finding the missing cornucopia of the pair. It fretted her and prevented her sleeping. If Lady Stukeley's representatives were still possessed of the cornucopia, and willing to part with it, Miss Wade would be glad to buy it back.

After she had posted the letter, without saying anything to her aunt about it, she had a set-back. Miss Wade remembered the cornucopia, though she remembered that it had been broken by a careless maid sixty years ago. So Cecilia's letter had been written in vain.

She said to herself that her letter would, in all probability, be returned to her through the Dead Letter Office. A more experienced person than Cecilia would have discovered ways and means of finding out if there were still Stukeleys at Knoll House, Eldingham; or, if not, where the family had gone to. None occurred to Cecilia. If there was no one there to receive the letter it would come back to her through the Dead Letter Office. So she waited.

However, three days later, just when Miss Wade had begun to fret for the missing cornucopia, Cecilia was informed that a gentleman wished to see her. He was in the drawing-room, and he had sent up his card:

SIR CUTHBERT STUKELEY.

Knoll House, Eldingham; Travellers' and Naval and Military Club.

She went downstairs, a certain feeling of excitement stirring her quiet pulses. At the end of the long drawing-room—Miss Wade lived in a stately Tavistock-square house—a gentleman was standing by the window looking out. He turned about as Cecilia entered. He was tall, dark, with a slightly grizzled head, although he could not have been much more than thirty. He had a kind honest face—at the moment somewhat harassed, as though from recent trouble. Cecilia noticed that he wore a mourning band on the sleeve of his coat.

He smiled, and the smile lit up the sombreness of his face, which, indeed, was not natural to it. He had a curiously-shaped paper parcel in his hand.

'This took some little searching for,' he said, holding it out to her. Plainly it was the cornucopia. 'Knoll is so full of all manner of things. I am so glad I have got it for you at last. How is Miss Wade?'

To her amazement, Cecilia found herself talking

to Sir Cuthbert Stukeley as though she had known him all her life. While they talked a message came summoning her to Miss Wade's room. She left him with an apology. He did not seem in any great haste to be gone.

She went upstairs, carrying the cornucopia in her hand. As soon as Miss Wade heard about its restoration she was all eagerness to see the young man who must be the son of Peter Stukeley, whom she might have married if she would. Cecilia was to go downstairs and insist on his staying for lunch. Miss Wade must get up. Pratt would help her to dress. She felt wonderfully well this morning. Cecilia would see that there was a good luncheon, such as a man needed—no niggling little dishes, but something substantial as well as dainty. She was to go down now and invite Sir Cuthbert to stay for lunch, to see his mother's and grandmother's old friend.

Sir Cuthbert was not unwilling to stay for lunch. He even accompanied Cecilia when she went out to do her marketing. She had explained that she must leave him for that purpose; and he had asked—in a deprecating manner—if he might accompany her. He carried her little basket in which she was to bring back some things the cook could not wait for.

Why, what had happened to Cecilia and to the grey London streets? The shops had never looked so gay before. The sun shone goldenly on the pavements, and the trees in the squares showed a mist of green. The people who passed them by in the street no longer seemed haggard and anxious as they had often seemed to Cecilia. They were smiling and happy. The tulips and daffodils in the flower-girls' baskets made vivid splashes of color on the pavements. Cecilia's own heart was irrationally light. She laughed and was merry. She called her new friend into consultation with her over her purchases. There was a gentle and innocent coquetry about her. Cecilia was looking twenty to-day; and as for Cuthbert Stukeley, the shadow had lifted from his face.

It was the oddest thing to Cecilia to sit and lunch with Cuthbert Stukeley the other side of the table. Old Stevens, the butler, beamed benevolently upon them. He had brought out a bottle of the best Burgundy for Sir Cuthbert's delectation. He remembered Sir Peter and Sir Anthony before him. It was a dull thing to have come down to a family of two ladies who drank only water.

Miss Wade seemed to have taken a new lease of life. That first day Sir Cuthbert Stukeley sat by her sofa upstairs for quite an hour. There were so many things she had to ask and hear about the family; so many memories of them to unpack. Sir Cuthbert's father and mother were both dead; his father long year ago, his mother only recently. That explained the shadow on his face. 'The Stukeleys were always good sons and husbands,' Miss Wade said later. 'I ought to have married Peter Stukeley. If I had I should have been this young man's mother.'

Cuthbert Stukeley was in town for a few weeks. He was unfailingly attentive in his calls at Tavistock square. As though his coming, or the restoration of the blue cornucopia, had given her new life, Miss Wade steadily mended; before the end of the week was downstairs, and the doctor talking of a change to seaside or country.

Cecilia was delighted. Miss Wade might have been the tenderest person to her all these years to see her delight. To be sure, Miss Wade was changed—the old coldness and selfishness a thing of the past.

'You have been a very good child to me, Ciss,' she said, the day she gave her some of her finest lace. 'I haven't been very good to you. But all that is to be changed. We are going to have some new frocks, Cecilia. Do you know that I have only just discovered how pretty you are? A purblind, selfish old woman.'

It was the day she came downstairs. Cecilia ran to her, kissed her, and protested against the lady's really well-deserved description of herself as she had been.

They were discussing the change when Sir Cuthbert came in. Should it be Eastbourne or Tunbridge Wells? Cecilia sat at the writing table, her pen poised above the sheet of note-paper. She was going to write