

The Blue Cornucopia

(Continued). 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 looked in Miss Wade's study 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 her toilet made, and was asleep after the extra one, Cecilia sat down and wrote. She was uncertain at first how to address the letter. Finally she made up her mind and addressed it to the representative of the late Lady S. Skeley, Knoll House, Elingham, 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 Skeley might have left no representative.

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 frustrated her and prevented her sleeping. If Lady Skeley'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. 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 Skeleys at Knoll House, Elingham, 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, he had sent up his card.

Sir Cathbert Stukeley. Cecilia went down to meet him. Knoll House, Elingham, Travelers' and Naval and Military Club.

She went downstairs, a certain feeling of excitement stirred 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 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's 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 soberness of his face, which indeed, was not natural to it. He had a curious shaped paper parcel in his hand.

"This took some little searching for," he said, holding it out to her. Plainly it was the cornucopia. Cecilia was 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 Cathbert 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 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 he would. Cecilia was to go downstairs and insist on him staying for luncheon. 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 inviting. She was to go down and invite Sir Cathbert to stay for luncheon, to see his mother's and grandmother's old friend.

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

Why, what had happened to Cecilia and to the gay London streets? The steps had never looked so gay before.

An Ancient Foe

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The sun shone gold on the pavement, and the trees in the squares showed a mist of green. The people who passed them by in the streets as they had often seemed to Cecilia. They were smiling and happy. The tulips and daffodils in the flower girl's baskets made vivid splashes of color on the pavement. 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 inquiry about her. Cecilia was looking twenty today; and as for Cathbert Stukeley, the shadow had lifted from his face.

It was the oddest thing to Cecilia to sit and laugh with Cathbert Stukeley at 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 Cathbert'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. The first day Sir Cathbert 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 Cathbert's father and mother were both dead; his father long years ago, his mother only recently. That explained the shadow on his face. The Stukeleys were always good sons and husbands, Miss Wade said. "I ought to have married Peter Stukeley, if I had I should have been the young man's mother."

Cathbert Stukeley was in town for a few weeks he was unwillingly attentive to his call 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 she 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 colds, and selfishness a thing of the past.

"You have been a very good child to me, Cecilia," she said, the day she gave her some of her finest lace. "I haven't been very good to you. But all this 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 published, selfish old woman."

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

They were discussing the change when Sir Cathbert 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 and engage rooms. Easter was coming; and at Easter every place would be full. Eastbourne or Tunbridge Wells? Miss Wade favored the Wells; she had had glorious times there long ago.

"What's the matter with Knoll?" asked Sir Cathbert, sitting down by the old lady's sofa and taking her hand. "I assure you that you and Miss Cecilia would be very comfortable at Knoll. The air is bracing, the country beautiful; and we have a very good dog within easy reach. Think of it."

"I should love it," said Miss Wade, with great animation. Why, she had gone back twenty years since the son of her lover had come to remind her of her youth. "What do you say, Cecilia?"

Cecilia in her secret heart was uplifted. It had occurred to her coldly that she was going to miss Cathbert Stukeley to miss him badly. But—bourne—Tunbridge Wells; and Cathbert Stukeley gone away! For the first time the youth in her hurried out against the perpetual companionship of old ladies which had fallen to her lot all the days of her life, till it had been broken up by the coming of Cathbert Stukeley.

He took charge of them on the journey as though he had been the son of hers. Miss Wade said he ought to have been married to her.

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India's Catholic Population
Some interesting figures as to the number of Catholics in India are given in the excellent Catholic Directory of India for 1913, a publication which has now reached its 63rd year. According to the diocesan census, the number of Catholics in India is 1,989,927, a figure which by the Indian Government census is reduced to 1,904,006. Various explanations are set forth to account for this discrepancy, amounting to 84,921. It is stated that neither total is absolutely correct. Again in regard to Ceylon the Government census credits Catholics with 339,300 souls, which is 17,237 more than appears in the diocesan census. Here the discrepancy is accounted for partly by the fact that at the excess includes the 'Old Catholics' and the large flourishing Coolie population from India which the Ceylon missions can scarcely reckon. After further discussion, the writer considerably leaves the reader to judge for himself which totals seem to him the more likely. He then adds: "If we adopt the ecclesiastical total and add the Catholics of French and Portuguese India, we obtain 2,633,156 Catholics for 1911. If we subtract from this total the number of Europeans, Burgesses and Barmas as known from the Government census, some 2,206 in French India, and 13,704 in Portuguese India, a total of 114,512—there remains in the area surveyed 2,518,644 native Catholics. Considering that there are 35,353 catechumens, we find that in 1911 there were 2,423,296 baptised native Catholics in the 41 Catholic missions concerned." Alongside his we may note that the Protestant Churches are assigned 1,504,644 native members by the Government census, whilst Church statistics place the figure at 1,617,617. Finally, the writer points out that during the 10 years between 1901 and 1911 the Catholic membership in India has risen from 2,202,000 to 2,633,000. "This marks," he says, "an increase of 431,000, or 20.5 per cent., an encouraging result in itself, and yet one that makes us wish the Catholic world would give proportionately as much practical attention to this part of Asia as it does to, say, the missions of Africa and the isles of the Pacific; and one that calls for self-help and self-explanation on the part of the Indian Catholic community on a grander scale than ever."

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