

The Free Press' Short Story

The Secret of Kenderley Court

FLORENCE KERRIGAN

FRANCES KENDERLEY stopped at the door of her brother's room, paralyzed with terror. Some one was in the hall. The sound of footsteps in the hall had awakened her. She had thought of her brother Philip who sometimes worked in his sleep. Now she was sure it was not Philip.

A luminous white figure suddenly appeared out of the blackness of the hall, a figure shrouded in misty drapery that glowed with a bluish light. An arm raised and pointed out straight toward Frances. "Find the secret," came the spectral tones. "It is for you."

Frances screamed in spite of all she could do. Almost immediately her brother's door opened. The figure vanished as suddenly as it had appeared. Frances leaned heavily on her brother's arm. "What's the matter?" asked Philip.

Frances looked at him and his eyes fell. They had no words between them. "You saw it, too," she accused him. "Yes," admitted Philip. "But—" He stopped. He found nothing to say.

"What was it? Is it true, Phil? Do you suppose the house is haunted?" Philip looked at his watch. "Three o'clock. Let's get some coffee."

Frances clung to his arm as they traversed the long, echoing hallways of the old house. Seated in a comfortable chair in the kitchen, sipping the aroma of boiling coffee, she began to feel less frightened.

"It's perfectly ridiculous," said Philip. "Neither you nor I are to be frightened away from here by any apparitions like that, real or faked!"

They had been at Kenderley Court for almost a month. Frances was no longer afraid at night, for the ghostly visitor had not appeared a second time. One night, just as the fourth week was drawing to a close, Philip awoke with a start. He heard something in the hall, a gentle "tap-tap-tap" at his door.

He sprang up, hastened to the door, and opened it. He could see nothing, but he sensed a presence there in the dark, and he heard the movement of garments. An instant later a ghostly figure appeared at the head of the stairs.

As before, it was shrouded in a phosphorescent glow which blurred the outlines of the figure and made it impossible to distinguish the features. It paused for a moment at the head of the stairs, raised an arm and beckoned unmistakably.

Down the stairs, lightly and softly, along the hall, and into the library it went. Philip reached the doorway and saw it standing on the hearth of the great, old fireplace. It pointed down. Philip started toward the place, but suddenly the figure was gone.

A chill that was not entirely due to the midsummer wind ripped up and down his back. Philip turned and went back to his room, in rather unbecomingly haste. He decided to say nothing to Frances, but to see if the figure really meant to show him the secret opening.

The next morning with Frances an interested spectator, he began to examine the fire place. It was of large flat stones, set in mortar, and apparently as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. Suddenly he felt one of them give beneath his fingers. He pushed harder, and a large section slid back.

"Clever!" gasped Philip. "No wonder Great-great-great-uncle Abner got away with the plans. Down that hole, trapdoor shut, fire kindled above it, and who would suspect? Coming down!"

of satisfaction. He dug down with his fingers and in a little while drew out a tin box. Frances gasped at the brightly colored stones sparkling in the light of the flash. In the midst of them was a folded paper. Philip read the few lines it contained:

I, Sir Peregrine Kenderley, have this day captured and put to you a sword ye crave of ye "Nancy Eye," and taken from ye—shippe aneche rubyas and othere precious stones as were aboard. Here let them rest.

"Hm," said Philip, holding the paper closer to the light. He glanced up and the paper fell from his hand. In the doorway stood the figure of a slim young man. He was dressed in a coat of black leather, high leather boots, and a broad-brimmed hat, with a silver buckle in front. He looked exactly like the portrait of Sir Peregrine in the library, even to the tiny curled moustache and little round spot of beard on his chin.

Philip sprang forward and knelt beside the slim, boyish figure, and looked for the wound. Instead he found the ball which had buried itself in the floor within an inch of the booted foot; nevertheless the missile had failed dead away, and his moustache had dropped off.

Philip looked at the girl sternly, and she looked very small and appealing from the big chair in which Frances had put her. "What's the idea? You may not know it, but in the time of Sir Peregrine, men did not use Palmer's, nor write on paper bearing the watermark of Ravenwood Bond."

"The dark head dropped. "It was just as I did the ghost with phosphorescence, and I disappeared by wrapping myself in a black cloak with a hood." She turned to Frances appealingly. "I knew all the traditions, one time I discovered the passage by accident, and when I heard you were coming I thought it would be a romantic adventure."

Suddenly Frances understood the loneliness of the romantic girl and she threw her arms about her impulsively. "Why, my dear—" "I'm Diantha Hilliard. My father calls me Dan."

Philip's face relaxed. Some weeks later, Frances appeared at the door of the room Philip had fixed up as a studio. "Why the sudden energy, inspiration?" Philip smiled. "I'll tell you, Sis. I did find treasure down there, beside our dear little cousin." He pulled a small book from his pocket. "This is the diary of the man who compiled the history of the Kenderleys. He says 'The curse of the Kenderleys has been madness. I have had to fight it all my life. It is easy to call it something else and wait for a different mood or for inspiration, but I am conquering it. I thought about it and then I was honest with myself and decided to get to work.'"

The Cancer Crusade Fighting the Great Scourge with Knowledge—A Campaign to Win Out Ignorance, Fear and Neglect. By J. W. S. McCullough, M.D., D.P.H.

TREATMENT OF CANCER NO. 2. More than 40 years ago, a man and a woman were engaged in the boiling of some sort of chemicals in iron cauldrons in an old shed at the outskirts of Paris, France. They gathered wood from whatever source they could in the neighborhood. The neighbors were curious about this pair. They evidently were poor.

By this discovery Marie Curie, a thin, delicate, wisp of a woman, made herself one of the great benefactors of mankind. Radium is made from pitchblende, a black-looking substance containing the oxide of uranium. The richest source of pitchblende is on the shores of Great Bear Lake in North West Canada.

Radium element is usually put up in small tubes of platinum-iridium which are placed in or about the growth to be treated. The dose of radium and of radium itself can be accurately measured. Their effects are the same. Radium, radon and x-rays kill the cancer cells, because the latter are constantly dividing and are therefore less resistant to the action of the rays than healthy, normal cells.

Europe has had few days of peace if any since peace was officially declared. Salvador de Madariaga

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A SIMPLE IMPROVEMENT. A small room, which is broken by numerous windows and doors, may gain a unity of effect if the curtains are the same color as the walls and no draperies are used. If curtains may not be obtained in the desired color, the natural shade of the cloth may be dyed.

'SALADA' TEA is delicious

Explorer Lands at Winnipeg on Second Search Flight



Sir Hubert Wilkins, noted Arctic explorer and H. Hollick-Kenyon, well-known Canadian flier, are shown in the upper photograph. Enthusiastic on its footage is the "USAR" of the Arctic. Before leaving for the north, Sir Hubert Wilkins will fly to Montreal to make last minute arrangements and to meet W. H. Wilson, Toronto, who will act as radio operator for the search party.

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