

Some family history 1925 →

The Fergusons of 5 Hempstead Way

As we lived in Derbyshire until the 1930s we didn't know our relatives who lived in London until we had to move there ourselves. But one situation arose in about 1928 which I remember clearly concerning our Ferguson ~~cousins~~ first cousins Jock + Helen then about 8 + 5 yrs. old. We never knew their father Uncle Lewis Ferguson. He appears to have been a quiet gentle person, a barrister. His wife was my Aunt Meg, the younger sister of my father, + she obviously was spoilt, unstable + an increasing problem, totally unsuited for domestic responsibility. Uncle Lewis must have realized he was not long for this world so he begged his good friend, Sir John Cameron, Bart (also a barrister) if anything happened to him would ~~he~~ ^{Sir John} please look after his two children, which he did. Uncle Lewis was always very loyal to my Aunt Meg + even though she took desperately to drink he always maintained "There's no doubt about it, my Meg's a girl in a million". And soon enough, Uncle + Lewis died quite ~~so~~ suddenly (I don't know why) leaving Aunt Meg + her two children, she hopelessly addicted to the bottle. The saving grace of the situation was a dear wee hunchback, Nannie, ^{barely out of her teens} who loved Helen, + Helen loved her, + she stayed with them. Of course, far away in Chesterfield my mother (now Granie) became very concerned about the situation + decided she must go to help; my brothers were at boarding schools, and ~~the~~ Riggott's our family home, ^{had to go} went into mothballs for the time being; my father opt to go and live in the Clergy House, a high Anglican Church establishment for celibate clergy, where he could be fed + housed and could commute daily to his job in Sheffield. * And for Frances + me she found a woman in Summersall Lane who undertook to care for us, ~~the only~~ ^{The only} catch to this was

This story strikes everyone as a huge joke as he was not exactly given to religion.

(*)

This woman
 that she cared full time for a totally imbecile young woman,
 bed-ridden I think, but that was the best my mother could do
 and she was told we would never even know the imbecile was
 there. This all worked reasonably well. Daddy used to
 come + visit us at weekends and we made friends with two
 nice little boys next door to play with. But one day, stupid
 little child that I was, while playing outside I flattened my
 nose on the window pane looking into the kitchen, crossed my eyes
 + made a terrible face at our caregiver. She was utterly furious.
 I don't know why. She may have thought her special charge, the
 imbecile girl, had escaped + was peering in at her; we didn't
 know what she thought, but she threatened me with a terrible
 thrashing - I, who had never been thrashed in my life!!
 + I was most indignant about that. Also Frances + I were aware
 that there were weird moaning + sobbing noises coming from
 the room next to our bedroom + whenever these occurred
 our caregiver hurried quickly in + shut the door. But we
 were in curious children + it wasn't until we got back
 home that we found out about "the Girl ~~At~~ ^{At Next} Door".
 Robin, my older brother, when he got to hear about the
 thrashing episode thought it was very funny, but I couldn't see
 anything funny about it! ~~And~~ After a time life at Riggotts,
 in Chesterfield was restored to normal, and at 5 Hampstead Way
 very wisely Mrs Nannie was permanently installed + was a
 tower of strength to Jack + Helen.

Sir John Cameron was a very wise guardian particularly over
 Jack + Helen's education. Helen was sent to Downe House,
 which seemed to suit her alright, + Jack went to a school
 called Stowe, which had only just been founded. Its
 headmaster strongly disagreed with some of the current ideas of
 how boys should be brought up. He thought that all the
 bullying + very bad elements that were accepted as normal
 in boys' schools had no business to be there, so thank goodness
 Jack was spared that kind of schooling. He became a
 journalist, on the Sunday Observer staff. He wrote

3 Under the name John Halcro Ferguson (there being too many Jock Fergusons about) & I frequently ~~say~~ saw his stuff in our paper here "The Colonist", which later became The Times Colonist. He was the Special Correspondent for Latin America, & Syndicated Press, & I would rate him as a Success Story, & on the few occasions when I met him I found him very charming & unassuming.

Helen became a doctor & married Ryland Lambertti & had a son, John, but ^{as} both Jock & Helen died young (of cancer I think) there is no further contact with their families.

Dear Readers -

This is all very badly written but if you can make it out I hope you will add it to the family archives

Janet

Please Robin, will you kindly send the missive, or copy thereof to James, as I've heard that when Samuel was working at Golden Green he got quite interested in our connections there.