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ACROSS THE ISLAND

This Couple Brings Own Ghost Story

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I DROPPED in on my friends Garfield and Margaret Roberts at High Bank last week and ran smack into an interesting ghost story. Ralph Roberts, their son, told about his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Stoshnof, and an experience they had in Bragg Creek which is in "the Foothills" of the Rockies in Alberta.

Phil and Linda have taken over "Grandma's" tourist resort, which is close to the Wood Island ferry terminal, so they are Islanders and their story fits in this column, though it actually happened many miles from here. They've renamed the resort "Hemlock Inn".

Linda, Mrs. Stoshnof, first noticed a rocking chair rocking by itself, with nobody near to manipulate it. But several other strange things followed in the house they had purchased.

There was no lock on the back door, so they used a knife to lock it. But the knife would be removed when they awakened in the morning. They lived there two years in all, and they never did find the knife in the door come morning.

Sometimes they would awaken in bed and find a strange looking red light shining from the bedroom ceiling.

Beautiful Choral Music

BUT THE most interesting manifestation of all was the beautiful choral music that would apparently come out of the walls of the house at times.

I saw Phil's mother next day at the Woodleigh Replicas in Burlington, and she told me about hearing it when she visited Phil and Linda in Bragg Creek. It sounded like a large chorus singing beautiful numbers, she told me.

Last Christmas Phil and Linda went on a trip to the United States. They left the house to a soldier who lived alone. Only he didn't live there very long. Phil and Linda had stayed in the house for two years. They had felt it was "a friendly ghost" that was causing the unusual happenings, Phil told me.

But the soldier sensed no spirit of friendliness. He was stricken with an awesome chill when he entered the bedroom. Once he had been physically forced to his knees in the room, he told the Stoshnof couple.

The bed would rock and shake violently when he got into it. He'd climb out of it and everything was quiet and still. But the violent shaking resumed as soon as he returned.

There was nothing friendly about the ghost so far as the soldier was concerned so he got out of there quickly.

The name "Grandma's" used to intrigue me. I often promised myself that I'd go there for a meal. Now I'm planning to visit the place under the new management – for they also serve meals in the evening. Phil and Linda just might have another ghost story for me.

My visit to the E.W. Johnstone and Son's Replicas was the first in several years and I noted with appreciation the many additions.

London Tower Complex

THE NEWEST addition – it is now under construction – is the Tower of London complex which will require perhaps five years in all to complete.

The White Tower, the central place of the complex, has been completed. It is built on a scale of one to six and, the greatest care has been taken to have complete exactness in the replica construction.

Inside the tower the Crown Jewels are the main attraction. They are the same size, shape and design as the original crown jewels. You couldn't tell them apart unless you had the replicas and the originals side by side, Col. Johnson told me.

Unusual Forerunners

I HAVE heard many fore runner stories but Garfield Roberts told me one that is different. When he was a young lad he recalls that he was lifted up in the air and dropped on the floor one night where he had been sleeping in his bed. He landed on the floor with a resounding thump that was heard down stairs. Later the same night he felt himself being lifted bodily in the bed, to a height of a foot or so. But that time he was not dropped on the floor.

Shortly after his father became ill and the man died in that room.

These unusual stories seem to run in the Roberts family. I may have told this story before, but this time I have more details. His brother, Saw, was a boy of 14 or 15 when one night he saw a girl approach his bed in the room where he was sleeping. In the light that came through the bedroom window he could see the girl clearly enough to note her features. She passed up alongside the bed and vanished through the window that was near the head of the bed.

Years later Sam Roberts – he was about 24 years old at the time went to Lynn, Massachusetts to work. There he met the girl he had seen in the vision some 10 years previously. They kept company for some years, but eventually they drifted apart. Perhaps Sam just was not the marrying kind, for he died a bachelor. But the story is one of the many unusual ones I have heard in my hunt for 'Across The Island' story material.

Once when I was a Member of Parliament I officially opened a Rose, or flower show at Alberton. Never did I feel more out of place, for I am not an authority on flowers though I share the love of most people for the beauty that flowers display. Mrs. Matheson was the one they should have asked, for she was completely at home among flowers even now in her illness which drags on painfully and discouraging, she loves the many flowers – some of them elaborately beautiful bouquets – that come to her bedside.

'My Garden' Book

AND THIS is my approach to a word about “My Garden”, a book written by Mrs. Gordon MacMillan who has long been developing such a beautiful garden at Cornwall.

The book is copyright but I’m sure this talented lady will not object if I quote this impression of hers on what gardening really is:

“Gardening is to me the feel of good humus in my hands; it’s the placing of seeds in this good earth and watching slender spikes of green develop into full-grown plants. It is the place of dawn when garden soil is moist and dark; it is the good pervading warmth of midday. It is the lengthening shadows when day is done, and dusk steals across the fields. It is the brooding beauty of a summer’s evening when stars light the streets of the sky, and the fragrance of the soil is rich and satisfying.”

Then this most capable gardener adds these lines:

“And what a pleasure to meet every day for over thirty years the folk who think in this way about gardening.”

There is much to enjoy, there is much to learn in this book by the warm-hearted lady who writes almost as beautifully as she shapes her flower beds and arrangements.

Mrs. MacMillan speaks, as many of our cottage visitors have spoken to me, about the beautifully kept homesteads all over this province. They ask if there is an explanation. I tell them about the P.E.I. Rural Beautification Society and Lt. Col. E.W. Johnstone who fathered the idea.

I visited Col Johnstone and his son, Archie, at their beautiful “Woodleigh Replicas” in Burlington late last week and enjoyed one of the most interesting talks that always develop when we get together.

This time I learned for the first time, something about how all this development of rural beautification started many years ago, how the first spark of interest was planted in his mind. I’d like to tell you something about this fascinatingly interesting story next week.

Meanwhile to our many visitors may I say you haven’t really seen the Island until you have visited this spot where so many of England’s most famous historic buildings are reproduced faithfully in exact proportions of the original, and where many other interesting things are on display.

The Crown Jewels are arranged as the central show piece inside the latest addition, the White Tower which is the central piece of the Tower of London complex. There are many other towers to be reproduced – the scale is one to six – before the intricate and interesting replica will be completed, perhaps in four or five years time.