

member just what you did that afternoon and at that time?"

"I didn't look at the clock, except at half-past four. At that time I put the stew on the edge of the stove and went back into the sitting-room to sew. I was sewing at the machine all afternoon. After a little while, I don't know what time it was, but it must have been about five, maybe five or five or ten minutes to five, or five or ten minutes after (I really can't say) I went to brisk up the fire and I heard the noise like an auto tire bursting.

"Had it begun to rain then?"

"I don't know. It was getting very dark. The storm had been coming up for some time and I had pulled down the blind in the sitting-room and turned on the light to see to sew. All I know is that it was raining quite hard when I got through what I had to do in the kitchen and went back to my work. It must have been about half-past five then."

"That's positively the nearest she could get to it." I told Gregory, "I believe she did the best she could."

Then all we know is that the shot was fired between ten minutes to five and ten after. The rain began about five minutes after five. When the girl in blue came out of the house the first drops were just about to fall, according to Jessie's evidence. So the girl in blue was in the house during part of that twenty minutes. But that proves very little. Twenty minutes is a big latitude——"

"But why did she go in without knocking and come out running?"

"And why did she continue to run so swiftly and so blindly that she ran into a young man and nearly knocked him off his feet——"

"Whatever are you talking about?" I asked in pure amazement.

Gregory grinned (he has an annoying grin) and handed me a small newspaper clipping which he took from his pocket with the greatest care. "Look at that," he said. "My contribution to the knowledge of the firm."

The clipping was from the personal column of my old paper *The Argus* and read as follows:

"If the lady who stumbled against an awkward young man on Stanley Street last evening will phone S. 1702 or call at 17 Wilson Arcade he will be pleased to return her lost property."

"What's the answer?" I asked thoroughly puzzled.

"Perhaps nothing, and perhaps a great deal. Can't you see! I clipped that out of the personal column this morning. I always clip out unusual personals. It's a useful habit. Besides the name 'Stanley Street' struck me. Do you know where Stanley Street runs?"

"Why—by Jove, yes, it is the street which crosses Richly Road at the corner next to No. 3. It's the——"

"It's the street that the girl in blue ran down when she came out of the Simmons house. Now I ask you—is it likely that there would be two young ladies running madly down Stanley Street and bunting into polite young men with such force that property of value is dropped during the impact? What do you think?"

I sprang up and reached for my coat.

"I think we can't get to 17 Wilson Arcade too soon," I said. I had quite forgotten that I did not favour the taking up of this case.

"Of course there is nothing *romantic* about this murder," began Gregory slyly but——"

"Oh have a heart!" I adjured him, and we set out together with old scores forgotten.

(To be continued.)