

went along and she stopped at Mrs. Simmons's gate while she looked at a piece of paper that she had in a shiny purse."

"The address, forby!" declared Macrae. "You're a clever lassie and you'll get your sweetie. And when she went in after making sure that the hoose was right, was that all that you saw of her?"

"No. She came out again. She came running out and she ran down past me round the corner and she was saying 'Oh! Oh!' just like that"—the 'clever lassie' gave a good imitation of someone gasping in fear or pain.

Gregory grinned.

"Where did she go?"

"I dunno. Mother called me in to get my face washed for tea."

"Quite right too. My mother does the same by me. And what did you think when you saw the leddy run out so quick?"

The child's eyes widened.

"I thought old Mother—Mrs. Simmons was a witch——"

"And you went in and told your mother all about it?" interrupted Gregory.

But apparently Jessie had not done that. Why, was not apparent. Probably her mother in the stress of tea-getting was not interested in witches.

"Well," said Gregory, "can you tell us how long the lady was in the house?"

Jessie couldn't tell us this either. Even Macrae could make nothing of her. "Was it a long time, think ye?" he asked ingratiatingly.

Jessie thought not.

"Wad it be a short time then?"

Jessie thought not so very short.

Then I had a bright idea.

"What were you doing while she was in?" I asked casually.

"I walked my dolly down to the corner and back."

"Great head!" said Macrae without a trace of accent. "That would take from five to seven minutes, or there-

abouts. Noo, Jessie, what else did you notice?" Are you sure the leddy's dress was blue?"

The child was quite sure of this.

"Did she have a parcel?"

Jessie had not seen a parcel, but the lady had a blue handbag and a shiny purse that she took the piece of paper out of. Had the lady spoken to her or smiled at her? No, the lady had not noticed her at all. She was a young lady. Her hair was black and she was pretty. Would she know her again? Jessie was very vague upon this point, but thought she might. She didn't know just what time her mother had called her in, but it was just beginning to rain—a few drops had fallen on her doll.

When Macrae and his charge had departed, Gregory ran his hand through his hair.

"I wish to goodness we could get the exact time when that woman next door heard what she thought was a bursting tire," he said. "It would help a lot. I have little doubt in my own mind that it was the shot she heard. You are sure you did your best with her?"

"Yes. I'll read you my notes, exactly as they were taken in question and answer. Here they are:

"You thought you heard a tire burst? What time was that?"

"I don't know."

"About what time was it?"

"About time to brisk up the fire for supper."

"What time do you have supper?"

"As near six as possible."

"About what time do you brisk up the kitchen fire?"

"It depends on what we have for tea."

"What did you have for tea on Monday night?"

"Stew of the Sunday joint."

"How long does stew take to cook?"

"It depends how the meat is——"

"Now, Mrs. Moore, please try to tell me what I want to know. Try to re-