

MRS. HALL SAYS SHE WAS NOT NEAR MURDER FARM

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made yesterday he said, "I won't comment on that."

Mr. Pfeiffer spoke of the telegram said to have been sent by Hall to New York and to Henry Stevens early in August, and said so far he has not been able to find that there were any such messages. If there was he thought the one to New York was sent to Mr. Hall's sister, Mrs. Paul Bonner, who lives in Park avenue, but Mrs. Bonner did not remember receiving any such message about the time mentioned.

In the efforts to substantiate the Gibson story there has been brought into the case in a measure, Mrs. A. C. Fraley, who lives on De Bussy Lane about 170 yards above the turn into Lovers lane. Her house stands on a knoll and actually overlooks what is believed to have been the scene of the murder. Yet Mrs. Fraley has said from the day the bodies were discovered that no member of her family heard or saw anything on the night of the murder. But Mrs. Fraley appears as one holding something back, especially when she discusses Mrs. Gibson, whom she knows.

There is another significant thing about Mrs. Fraley. She said to an interviewer: "If they had been at home where they belonged they would not have been killed." The reference was to Hall and Mrs. Mills and the remarkable thing about the utterance is that Mrs. Gibson is believed to have been seen remark to more than one interviewer.

Optimism of Mrs. Gibson.

Opinion seems to be divided equally among the neighbors Mrs. Jane Gibson as to the veracity of her statements and much discussion has arisen throughout the farm country bordering on Hamilton road and near DeBussy Lane as to whether she actually did see what she has told the authorities. Prosecutor Mott in an interview yesterday morning said: "I have noticed a tendency to discredit Mrs. Gibson's statements and I know where it comes from." He refused to be pinned down to making any definite statement regarding that tendency, but it is a fact that since the statements of Mrs. Gibson have been made public every effort has been made by numerous persons to point out that she veers in her statements of events, that she is overloquacious, that her business dealings along Hamilton road have shown keen bargaining ability, and that all in all she would make a good witness for the defense to tear her testimony to pieces.

Contrary to this, however, are numerous statements from mothers who have lived near her for many years, and who state positively that while she is rather peculiar in some respects and never took occasion to insinuate herself into what little social atmosphere there may be around the farm district, she has always been known as an honest, hard-working woman, fearless of any intruders, who now and then were seen in the neighborhood, and who in general minded her own business and was fair in her dealings with such persons with whom she may have come in contact.

If one goes to the farm country near where Mrs. Gibson lives one can hear any sort of story about any person, and just so is the case with the descriptions that different people have given of the woman farmer.

One neighbor, Joseph G. Baier, whose standing is good in the community, both in the section as well as in New Brunswick proper, said to-night that he had every reason to believe the woman was just seeking notoriety, that she could not be telling the truth and that she had simply decided it would be profitable to appear in the spotlight. Mrs. Baier added that she had heard stories of sharp practices by Mrs. Gibson in small business deals.

Despite these second and sometimes third hand stories, numerous personal opinions of a derogatory nature the fact remains that when THE NEW YORK HERALD reporters sought to pin these persons down they refused to make any flat statement. They admitted also that it was quite possible Mrs. Gibson had

actually seen all that she said she had seen and that she was on the scene at the time of the shooting. They had often seen her riding her mule across the farm land in the neighborhood and had met her on more than one occasion. As one woman said: "Well, I suppose it is like this: If a person evades the truth once it is hard to believe him or her after that."

Another neighbor whose place is only a few hundred yards from the Gibson farm said he had known Mrs. Gibson as a neighbor for six or eight years and she had always lived where she is now, had always minded her own business, had been honest in her dealings with every one in the vicinity, and when on several occasions she had come to his house to borrow farm implements or machinery she had always insisted on paying for the accommodation. Mrs. Gibson had hired an automobile now and then to go in to New Brunswick and had paid the regular rates. She had been seen riding over the country at night on her mule or her young mare and worked hard all day in the fields, or about her house.

"This stuff of people coming out now and saying her statements are not true seems to be all bunk," he said. "Why, she has always been known around here as being honest, and never gets into the little gossiping that goes on. Because some people don't know anything about her they immediately take it that she is a woman of mystery and therefore of questionable character. As far as I know she is a hard working woman who minds her own business and never bothers any one."

Each person questioned about the

woman spoke of the details of her story and commented one way or another on it. Even the most skeptical of the neighbors are willing to admit that it is possible she is telling the truth about the shooting on the night of September 14. They say also that they were positive the killing could not have been one done by "bumwhackers" or by tramps or holdup men, for the neighborhood for miles around has been notably free of any such persons.

Everyone in the farm district knew that the neighborhood of Easton avenue and DeBussy lane was a notable meeting ground for couples and it was nothing unusual to see several automobiles, their lights extinguished, standing in and about the lane. Nevertheless, it was never made the hangout for gunmen or for any stray tramps and there had never been any trouble there until the night of the shooting of Hall and Mrs. Mills. Most of the people out there had known Hall and his wife by sight, and it is not unusual that Mrs. Gibson or any one else coming upon either of them in that neighborhood would have mistaken them or failed to identify them in the circumstances related by Mrs. Gibson.

Near By, Heard No Shots.

A significant point in the stories told by neighbors and the tale of Mrs. Gibson came to light yesterday when Mrs. A. C. Fraley, who lives only a few hundred yards from the actual spot of the slaying, said that she had not heard anything on the night of September 14—no shots, no screams or anything unusual—despite the fact that she, her daughter, her son and several others were up until long after the hour the crime was committed.

In commenting on the whole affair she made a remark to the effect that "if they (Hall and Mrs. Mills) had been at home where they belonged they would not have been killed." This remark is

almost identical with one that Mrs. Gibson made several times to some of the reporters who have interviewed her. Yet Mrs. Fraley laughs heartily when she speaks of the Gibson story and does not hesitate to brand it all as an untruth.

Speaking of the fact that none of her family heard anything unusual on the night in question, Mrs. Fraley said yesterday: "No, we did not hear any shots on that night, nor any screams. Our windows were all open, but we sleep upstairs at the back of the house, and that is away from the scene. The front rooms of the house had been occupied by boarders, but I believe they had gone home to Newark before the date of the shooting."

She was asked if she knew Mrs. Gibson and said she did and that she had seen her recently when she bought some corn buds from her. "I saw her lately and she never spoke to me about anything she is supposed to have seen that night of the murder."

Mrs. Fraley, when asked what she thought of Mrs. Gibson's story, said: "Just wait until they get through with her." She was asked if she meant the authorities, and she replied, "Never mind." She added that Mrs. Gibson has been reading the papers and has merely memorized them to tell her

story. "I don't see how she could tell such a story," Mrs. Fraley replied. When Mrs. Gibson was told what Mrs. Fraley had said about her veracity, Mrs. Gibson said: "It is very easy to have been in bed and heard nothing. You watch and you'll see what comes. It will all come out. There are others who know and are holding back."

One of Mrs. Gibson's neighbors said that the young man now known as William Gibson and said to be Mrs. Gibson's son, went to the local school and was known as Willie Eastman. They say that he may be her son by a former marriage, but they know so little about the domestic relations of the woman that this was merely conjecture on their part. It was definitely established, however, that the boy did go under the name of Eastman.

It is probable that Mrs. Fraley knows considerably more than she is willing to divulge. She has already been questioned by the authorities, who have successfully covered up the fact and have instructed Mrs. Fraley to deny any suggestion that she knows anything. In this respect the tendency in certain quarters to discredit the story would be significant, as would some of the heretofore unexplained remarks of Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Fraley.

Despite the fact that denial has been made by the authorities that threats have been made to Mrs. Gibson because of the part she is playing in the investigation, it became known to-night that she had received a telephone message the night before last in which she was warned to cease her efforts regarding the case and that it would be better for her if she were not so active or gave such testimony. The voice which she said the message was that of a woman and the conversation went as follows: "Hello, is this Mrs. Gibson?" "Yes."

"Remember there is one more bullet left in the gun and that is for you." Then the receiver was immediately hung up and efforts to trace the origin of the call failed. Mrs. Gibson at once notified the prosecutor's office and the State troopers, and two of their men were sent to the vicinity of the farm to protect the woman from any attempt at violence and to prevent any one from visiting the farm.

It is said that threatening letters have been received by the woman, but the authorities have repeatedly denied this and have laughed at the suggestion that any one was attempting to intimidate Mrs. Gibson. There is also a story that the woman was visited a day or so ago by a "tall thin man with a thin face,"

who advised her that it would be much more worth while if she did not testify along the lines on which she had already given evidence.

Neither Prosecutors Stricker nor Beckman was at the local Court House when Mason arrived, and the latter had considerable difficulty in finding any one there at all. A clerk finally advised Mason after the latter had made a round of doors and knocked on each one that there was no one on duty today. The State troopers had also disappeared and the Court House was quiet, a few newspaper men lounging around the front waiting for something to happen.

As Mason was about to leave the court house Detectives Totten and David arrived and after a few minutes' conversation they left with Mason in an automobile and were gone for about an hour. Shortly before noon they returned and announced that the work of the Hall-Mills case was through for the day as far as they were concerned. Just as Mason was about to leave for the train Pfeiffer arrived.

The two conferred for about fifteen minutes and upon their reappearance Mr. Pfeiffer stated that the nature of the conversation was confidential and would not disclose any of it. According to Mason, Mr. Pfeiffer had given him a message to deliver to Mr. Mott. Then Mason started for Newark and stated that he would study over certain phases of the case during the weekend and would be ready to get right down to work when he and Mott arrived here on Monday.

EVENTS TO-DAY.

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, every hour for children, Anna C. Chandler, 2 and 3 P. M. American Institute of Forensic Lectures by J. A. Fowler on "Our Mental Mirror," 125 West Forty-second street, 4 P. M. Spiritual and Ethical Society, meeting, Hotel Astor, 5 P. M. East Broadway Boys' Association, dance, Hotel Astor, 8 P. M.

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