The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY By Harold MacGrath

SHE CHANCED TO LOOK INTO THE CRACKED MIRROR. IN IT SHE SAW SEVERAL FACES.

"I confess! If I wanted to, I'll wager Jones is out there in the hall this minute. I know; it is all for my sake. But it bothers me."

Jones was indeed in the hall; and when he sensed the petulance in her voice, his shoulders sank despondently and he sighed deeply if silently.

At quarter to 8 Florence, being alone for a minute, set fire to a roll and stuffed it down the register.

"Jones," she called excitedly, "I smell something burning!"

Jones dashed into the room, sniffed, and dashed out again, heading for the cellar door. His first thought was naturally that the house incarnate had set fire to the house. When he returned, having, of course, discovered no fire, he found Florence gone. He rushed into the hall. Her hat was missing. He made for the hall door with a speed which seemed incredible to the bewildered Susan's eyes. Out into the street, up and down which he looked. Far away he discovered a rumbling taxicab. The child was gone.

In the house Susan was answering the telephone, talking incessantly.

"Who is it?" Jones whispered, his lips white and dry.

"The princess . . . . ." began Susan.

He took the receiver from her roughly.

"Hello! Who is it?"

"This is Olga Perlikoff. Is Florence there?"

"No, madam. She has just stepped out for a moment. Shall I ask her to call you when she returns?"

"Yes, please. I want her and Susan and Mr. Norton to come to tea tomorrow. Good-by."

Jones hung up the receiver, sank into a chair near by and buried his face in his hands.

"What is it?" cried Susan, terrified by the haggardness of his face.

"She's gone! My God, those wretches have got her! They've got her!"

Florence was whirled away at top speed. Her father! She was actually on the way to her father, whom she had always loved in dreams, yet never seen.

Number 78 Grove street was not an attractive place, but when she arrived she was too highly keyed to take note of its sordidness. She was rather out of breath when she reached the door of the third flat. She knocked timidly. The door was instantly opened by a man who wore a black mask. She would have turned then and there and flown but for the swift picture she had of a well dressed man at a table. He lay with his head upon his arms.

"Father!" she whispered.

The man raised his careworn face, so very well done that only the closest scrutiny would have betrayed the paste of the theater. He rose and staggered toward her with outstretched arms. But the moment they closed about her Florence experienced a peculiar shiver.

"My child!" murmured the broken man. "They caught me when I was about to come

FLORENCE GRAY.

"I refuse!" Even as she had known this vile creature to be an impostor so she knew that he lied, that her father was still free.

Grange blew the whistle. Instantly the room became filled with masked men. But Florence was ready. She seized the lamp and hurled it to the floor, quite indifferent whether it exploded or went out. Happily for her it was extinguished. At the same moment she cast the lamp she caught hold of a chair, remembering the direction of the window. She was superhumanly strong in this moment. The chair went true. A crash followed.

"She has thrown herself out of the window!" yelled a voice.

Some one groped for the lamp, lit it, and turned in time to see Florence pass out of the room into that from which they had come. The door slammed. The surprised men heard the key click.

She was free. But she was no longer a child.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]