The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY By Harold MacGrath

$10,000 FOR 100 WORDS.

"The Million Dollar Mystery" story will run for twenty consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouser Film company it has been made possible for only to read the story in this paper but also to see it each week in the theatres showing picture theatres. For the solution of the mystery, $10,000 will be given by the Thanhouser Film corporation.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE CONTEST.

The prize of $10,000 will be given for the most acceptable solution of the mystery from a list of the best solutions received from those who read the story and the last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to The Thanhouser Film corporation, corner of Lexington and New York avenues, Jersey City, N. J., not later than midnight, Jan. 15. This allows several weeks after the last chapter has been published.

A board of three judges will determine which of the many solutions received is the most acceptable. The judges will be Harold MacGrath, Lionel Barrymore, and Miss Mae Talbot.

The best twenty solutions will be published in the newspapers, and a committee of three will be appointed by the judges to decide upon the most acceptable solution of the mystery. The first five prizes, which will be awarded by the judges, will be given to the five persons having the nearest to the correct solution, as well as the most acceptable solution, as judged by the judges, and the remaining prizes will be awarded in the order of merit.

The solution of the mystery must be in the hands of the judges by midnight, January 15, 1914.

Solutions in the mystery must not be more than 100 words long. Here are some questions to be kept in mind in connection with the mystery as found in the stories:

No. 1. What becomes of the automobile?

No. 2. What becomes of the Arrowpoint?

No. 3. Who does Florence marry?

No. 4. What becomes of the Russian countess?

Anybody connected either directly or indirectly with "The Million Dollar Mystery" will be considered as a contestant.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Stanley Hargreave, millionaire, after a miraculous escape from the den of the gang of brilliant thieves known as Black Hundred, lives the life of a recluse for eighteen years. Hargreave accidentally meets Braine, leader of the Black Hundred. Knowing Braine will try to get him, he escapes from his own house by a balloon. Before escaping he writes a letter to the girls' school where eighteen years before he mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. That day Hargreave also drawes one million dollars from the bank, but it is reported that this dropped into the sea when the balloon he escaped in was punctured.

Florence arrives from the girls' school. Countess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims to be a relative. Two bogus detectives call, but their plot is foiled by Norton, a newspaper man.

By bribing the captain of the Orient Norton lays a trap for Braine and his gang. Countess Olga also visits the Orient's captain and she easily falls into the reporter's snare. The plan proves abortive through Braine's good luck, and only hirelings fall into the hands of the police.

After failing in their first attempt the Black Hundred trap Florence. They ask her for money, but she escapes, again foiling them.

Norton and the countess call on Florence the next day, once more safe at home. The visitors having gone, Jones removes a section of flooring and from a crevice takes a box. Pursued by members of the Black Hundred, he sinks to the water front and succeeds in dropping the box into the sea.

Countess Olga, scheming to break the engagement existing between Florence Hargreave and Norton, invites them both to her apartments and pretends to faint in the reporter's arms. Florence appears in the doorway just at the planned moment, and as a result gives Norton back his ring.

Accomplices of Braine succeed in kidnaping Florence while she is shopping and hurry her off to sea. Norton receives a wireless later informing him that the girl had leaped into the sea and been drowned.

Florence is picked up by a dazed condition by a party of fishermen. The Black Hundred locate her and Braine, discovered as her father, succeeds in taking her back to sea with him. Florence sees her on the boat and is rescued by a ship on which Norton has been shanghaied.

Through Wire to Have Monopoly

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN Jones learned the news that Florence was safe he was in a state of excitement bordering on hysteria. He was so elated and the wife who had been the recipient of a few of the adjectives had been found. There was a great slap in authority that had happened. Doubtless they had fiddled among the immigrants, who, all a little foreign, would have foolish stories to tell officers on board. There was no doubt in Jones' mind that the girl had landed safely at Madrid.

As for Sonia, she did have hysterics. She went about the room, wailing and laughing and wringing her hands. You would have thought to her actions that Florence had just died. The sight of her stirred the sarcastic lips of the butler into a smile. But he did not remonstrate with her. In fact, he rather envied her freedom in emotion. Man cannot let go in that fashion; it is a sign of weakness and he dared not let even Sonia see any sign of weakness in him.

So the reporter had found her, and she was safe and sound and on her way to New York. Knowing in this dim something of the reporter's courage, he was eager to learn how the event had come about. When he had had a telephone message from Norton in forty eight hours, he had decided that the Black Hundred had finally succeeded in getting rid of him. It had been everything of a blank for awhile he looked with doubt at seeing the reporter finish the point for his chance. He appreciated the fact that Norton was a skill he had up, and had to take into the power of the press, which included the privilege of seeing everywhere even if one could not change the luck.

As for Florence, the telegram said put it into her pocket, a chance at the case with the [illegible] the war. He changed. Well, he was worth [illegible] his eyes changed out [illegible] he would see only that which was intended for his eyes. Still, it was hard to see that no matter when or where he stood, watching eyes observed and [illegible] movements.

Suddenly, a Jeline devoid of a sense of any humor, Jones stepped away to the telephone and called up her highness the Princess Petra.

"Who is it?"

He was forced to admit, however reluctantly, that the woman had a marvelously pure speaking voice.

"It is Jones, madam."

"I know!"

"Mr. Hargreave's butler, madam."

"Oh! Any more news of Florence?"

"Yes." It will be an embarrassing day for romance when some one invents a phonograph, by which two persons at the [illegible] the conversation may observe the [illegible] of each other.

"What is it? Tell me quickly."

"Miss Gray has been found, and she is on her way to New York. She was found by Mr. Norton, the reporter."

"I am [illegible]! Shall I come up at once and have you tell me the whole amazing story?"

"It would be useless, madam, for I know nothing [illegible] I learned from a telegram. I have just received. But no doubt some time this evening you might pick a call."

Hung up the receiver and smiled. Did [illegible] mean.

No matter, had done nothing.

He hung up the receiver and stared at the [illegible] as if he would force his gaze to go through it to the woman at the other end. Fools and fools! Well, greed was stronger than fear. Treacheries cat! Let her go! Let her venge her girls, dig [illegible]. The day yesterday one, and it was not an instant whereabouts would had that the relief train of Madrid was just as deadly as the [illegible] and far more cunning.

The leaders of the Black Hundred must be destroyed. These were the orders. What good [illegible] were there, to send them to a place from which, with the aid of money and a tremendous secret political pull, they would [illegible] find their way out? They [illegible] the secret and, as one kills off the poisonous [illegible] of the moment. A woman! In the face of reproof there was no sin.

Shortly after the telephone episode which [illegible] the princess she received a [illegible] from Braine, which announced the fact that "Hargreave" had escaped and was coming to New York on train No. 29, and advising her to meet the train en route. [illegible] to do it.

When Sonia Petrovich released Braine, he had [illegible] the [illegible] of mind. [illegible] to the man whose mind was so unbalanced for her good. She had [illegible] a [illegible] money, and had taken him unawares. The man had donned the disguise to find out and by sheer appeals and the threatened Bannock had [illegible] Hargreave. He had not recognized Norton at all. It was only when Bannock explained to the [illegible] of the shanghaied [illegible] that he realized his real danger. Norton [illegible] off the board. After [illegible] he thought it no longer keep up the pretense of being friendly. Norton, by a [illegible] had forced him out into the open. So he made his preparation [illegible] and [illegible] criminal. The [illegible] of the [illegible] it, but the instinct of self [illegible] to take him to own. It was Braine whom he loved and admired, or Norton whom he hated as a dog with rabies hates water. With Norton free, he would never [illegible] to New York openly. This morning, [illegible] at his ease and elegance.

He left the Premier as soon as a boat could [illegible]. The fugitives would make directly for the rendezvous, and thither he went at top speed to arrive ten minutes too late.

"Fool!" said Florence as the train began to increase its speed.

Norton [illegible] and patted her hand. Then he sat back with a sudden shock of dismay. He dived a hand into a pocket, into another and another. The price of the telegram he had sent to Jones was all he had had in the world, and he had borrowed that from a [illegible]. In the excitement he had forgotten all about such a contingency as the absolute need of money.

"Florence, I'm afraid we're going to have trouble with the conductor when he comes."

"Why?"

He pulled out his pockets suggestively. "Not a postage stamp. They'll put us off at the next station. And," with a glance in the little mirror between the two windows, "I shouldn't [illegible] them a bit." He was unknown, for was wearing the suit substituted for his own, and Florence, sartorially, was not much better off.

She smiled, blushed, stood up, and turned her back to him. Then she sat down again. In her hand she held a small dilapidated [illegible] of bankbooks.

"I had them with me when they abducted me," she said. "Besides, this ring is worth something."

"Thank the Lord!" he exclaimed, relieved.

So there was nothing more to do but be patient and hoping they were. They were quite oblivious to the peculiar interest they caused among the other passengers. This [illegible] young man, in his ragged coat and soiled jersey; this beautiful young girl, in a wrinkled homespun, her glorious blonde hair [illegible], and the way they looked at each other during those bits in conversation peculiar to lovers the world over, impressed the other passengers with the idea that something very unusual had happened to these two.

The Pullman conductor was not especially polite; but money was money, and the stockholders, waiting for their dividends, made it impossible for him to reject it. The regular conductor paid them no more attention than to grumble over changing a $20 bill.

So, while these two were hurrying on to New York, the plotters were hurrying east to meet them. The two trains met and stopped at the same station about eighty miles from New York. The princess, accompanied by Vroon, who kept well in the background, entered the car occupied by the two castaways.

In the mirror at the rear of the car Norton happened to cast an idle glance, and he saw the princess. Vroon, however, escaped his eye.

"Be careful, Florence," he said. "The princess is in the car. The game begins again. Pretend that you suspect nothing. Pretty quick work on their part. And that's all the more reason why we should play the comedy well. Here she comes. She will recognize you, throw her arms around you, and show all manner of effusiveness. Just keep your head and play the game."

"She lied about you to me."

"No matter."

"O!" cried the princess. She seized Florence in a wild embrace. She was an inimitable actress, and Norton could not help admiring her. "Your butler telephoned me! I ran to the first train out. And here you are, back safe and sound! It is wonderful. Tell me all about it. What an adventure! And, good heavens, Mr. Norton, where did you get those clothes? Did you find her and rescue her? What a newspaper story you'll be able to make out of it all! Now, tell me just what happened." She sat down on the arm of Florence's chair. The girl had steeled her nerves against the touch of her. And yet she was beautiful! How could any one so beautiful be wicked?

"Well, it began like this," said Florence; and she described her adventures, omitting, to be sure, Braine's part in it.

She had reached that part where they had been rescued by Capt. Bannock when a thundering, grinding crash struck the words from her lips. The three of them were flung violently to the side of the car amid splintering wood, tinkling glass, and the shriek of steel against steel. A low wail of horror rose and died away as the car careened over on its side. The three were rendered unconscious and were huddled together on the floor, under the upsetted chairs.

Vroon had escaped with only a slight cut on the hand from flying glass. He climbed over the chairs and passengers with a single object in view. He saw that all three he was interested in were insensible. He quickly examined them and saw that they had not received serious injuries. He had but little time. The princess and Norton would have to take their chance with the other passengers. Resolutely he stooped and lifted Florence in his arms and crawled out of the car with her. It was a difficult task, but he managed it. Outside, in the confusion, no one paid any attention to him. So he threw the unconscious girl over his shoulder and staggered on toward the road.

It was fortunate that the accident had occurred where it did. Five miles beyond was the station marked for the arrest of Norton as an abductor and the taking in charge of Florence as a rebellious girl who had run away from her parents. If he could reach the Swede's hut, where his confederates were in waiting, the game was his.

After struggling along for half an hour a carriage was spied by Vroon, and he hailed it when it reached his side.

"What's the trouble, mister?" asked the farmer.

"A wreck on the railroad. My daughter is badly hurt and I must take her to the nearest village. How far is it?"

"About three miles."

"I'll give you twenty dollars for the use of that rig of yours."

"Can't do it, mister."

"But it's a case of humanity, sir!" indignantly. "You are refusing to aid the unfortunate."

The farmer thought it over for a moment. "All right. You can have the buggy for twenty dollars. When you get to the village take the nag to Doc Sanders' livery. He'll know what to do."

"Thank you. Help me in with her."

Vroon drove away without the least intention of going toward the village. As a result when Florence came to her senses she found herself surrounded by strange and ominous faces. At first she thought that they had taken her from the wreck out of kindness; but when she saw the cold, impassive face of the man Vroon she closed her eyes and lay back in the chair. Well, ill and weak as she was, they should find that she was not without a certain strength.

In the meantime Norton revived and looked about in vain for Florence. He searched among the crowd of terrified passengers, the hurt and the unharmed, but she was not to be found. He ran back to the princess and helped her out of the broken car.

"Where is Florence?" she asked dazedly.

"God knows! Here, come over and sit down by the fence till I see if there is a field telegraph."

They had already erected one, and his message went off with a batch of others. This time he was determined not to trust to chance. The shock may have brought back Florence's recent mental disorder, and she may have wandered off without knowing what she was doing. On the other hand, she may have been carried off. And against such a contingency he must be fortified. Money! The curse of God was upon it; it was the trail of the serpent, spreading poison in its wake.

By and by the princess was able to walk; and, supporting her, he led her to the road, along which they walked slowly for at least an hour. They might very well have waited for the relief train. But he could not stand the thought of inactivity. The princess had her choice of staying behind or going with him. He letted the woman, but he could not refuse her aid. She had a cut on the side of her head, and she limped beside.

They stopped at the first farmhouse, explained what had happened, and the mistress urged them to enter. She, she had seen no one, and certainly not a young woman. She must have wandered off in another direction. She ran into the kitchen for a basin and towel and proceeded to patch the princess' hurts.

She was extremely uneasy. That she should be under obligation to Norton galled her. There was a spark of conscience left in her soul. She had tried to destroy him, and he had been kind to her. Was he a fool or was he deep, playing a game as shrewd as her own? She could not tell. Where was Vroon? Had he carried Florence off?

An hour later a man came in.

"Hullo! More folks from the wreck?"

"Where's the horse and buggy, Jake?" his wife asked.

"Rented it to a man whose daughter was hurt. He went to the village."

"Will you describe the daughter?" asked Norton.

The princess twisted her fingers.

The farmer rudely described Florence.

"Have you another horse and a saddle?"

"What's your hurry?"

"I'll tell you later. What I want now is the horse."

"What is to become of me?" asked the princess.

"You will be in good hands," he answered briefly. "I am going to find out what has become of Florence. Is there a deserted farmhouse hereabouts?" he asked of the farmer.

"Not that I recollect."

"Why, yes, there is, Jake. There's that old hut about two miles up the fork," volunteered the wife. "Where the Swede died last winter."

"By Jings! I'm going into the village and see if that man brought in the rig."

"But get my horse first. My name is James Norton, and I am on the Star in New York. Which way do I go?"

"First turn to the left. Come on. I'll get the horse for you."

Once the horse was saddled, Norton set off at a run. He was unarmed; he knew all about this fact. His one thought was to find the woman he loved. He was not afraid of meeting a dozen men, not while his present fury lasted.

And he fell into an ambush within a hundred yards of his goal. They dragged him off the horse and battered and mishandled him into the hut.

"Both of them!" said Vroon, rubbing his hands.

"I know you, you Russian rat!" cried Norton. "And if I ever get out of this I'll kill you out of hand! Damn you!"

"O, yes; talk, talk; but it never hurts any one," jeered Vroon. "You'll never have the chance to kill me out of hand, as you say. Besides, do you know my face?"

"I do. The mask doesn't matter. You're the man who had me shanghaied. The voice is enough."

"Very good. That's what I wished to know. That's your death warrant. We'll do it like they used to do it at the old Academy: tie you to the railroad track. We shall not hurt you at all. If some engine runs over you heaven is witness we did not guide the engine. Remember the story of the boy and the cat?" with sinister amiability. "The boy said he wasn't pulling the cat's tail, he was only holding it; the cat did the pulling. Bring him along, men. Time is precious, and we have a good deal to do before night settles down. Come on with him. The track is only a short distance."

"Jim, Jim!" cried Florence in anguish.

"Never you mind, girl; they're only bluffing. They won't dare."

"You think so?" said Vroon. "Wait and see." He turned upon Florence. "He is your lover. Do you wish him to die?"

"No, no!"

"We promise to give him his freedom twelve hours from now on condition that you tell where that money is."

"Florence!" warned Norton.

Vroon struck him on the mouth. "Be silent, you scum!"

"It is in the chest Jones, the butler, threw into the sound," she said bravely. And so it might be, for all she knew.

Vroon laughed. "We know about where that is."

"Florence, say nothing on my account. They are not the kind of men who keep their word."

"Eh?" snarled Vroon. "We'll see about that." He glanced at his watch. "In half an hour the freight comes along. It may become stalled at the wreck. But it will serve."

Norton knew very well that if need said must they would not hesitate to execute a melodramatic plan of this character. It was the way of the Slav; they had to make crime abnormal in order to enjoy it. They could very well have knocked him on the head then and there and have done with him. But the time used in conveying him to the railroad might prove his salvation. Nearly four hours had passed since the sending of the telegram to Jones.

They bound Florence and left her seated in the chair. As soon as they were gone she rolled to the floor. She was able to right herself to her knees, and after a tortuous five minutes reached the fireplace. She burnt her hands and wrists, but the blaze was the only knife obtainable. She was free.

. . . . . .

Jones arrived with half a dozen policemen. Vroon alone escaped.

The butler caught Florence in his arms and nearly crushed the breath out of her. And she was so glad to see him that she kissed him half a dozen times. What if he was her father's butler? He was brave and loyal and kind.

"They tied him to the track," she cried. "Look at my wrists!" The butler did so, and kissed them tenderly. "And I saved him."

Jones stretched out a hand over Florence's shoulder. "When the time comes," he said, "when the right time comes and my master's enemies are confounded. But always the rocks, never the hawks, do we catch. God bless you, Norton! I don't know what I should have done without you."

"When a chap's in love," began Norton, embarrassedly.

"I know, I know," interrupted Jones. "The second relief train is waiting. Let us hurry back. I shan't feel secure till we are once more in the house."

So, arm in arm, the three of them went down the tracks to the hand car which had brought the police.

And now for the iron bound chest at the bottom of the sea.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"BE SILENT YOU SCUM"

AND HE FELL INTO AN AMBUSH WITHIN A HUNDRED YARDS OF HIS GOAL