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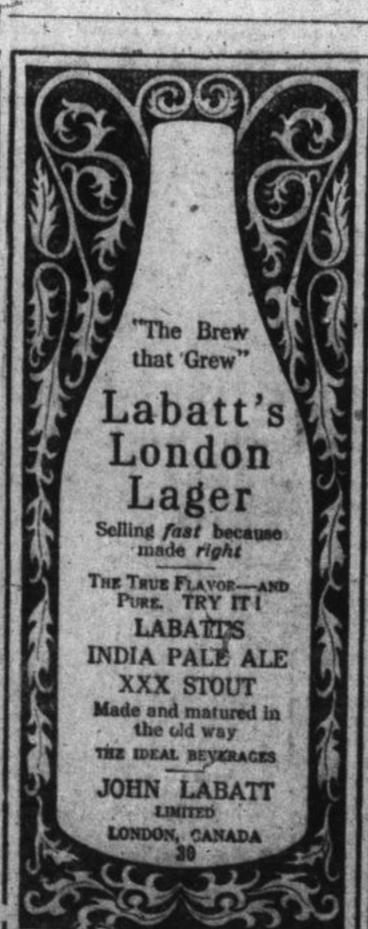
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Averted a Tragedy and Brought About Happiness.

By MARTHA M'C .- WILLIAMS.

If Millie had not worn her blue gown the story might have been different. Whether it was the color or the fluff of it or the way it clung to and molded her slim suppleness nobody could say but the fact was patent-somehow it transformed her from a very preity girl into an elfland queen. Millie was you see, a Spanish blond, with velvet dark eyes and hair of the palest gold. Small wonder in the blue gown she swept John Eustace off his feet and made him forget some things be ought to have remembered-his betrothed. Alice Ellison, for example,

Alice was as good as her plentiful gold, but stubby, dull colored and on the surface dull witted. She was, above all things, dutiful, Duty was, indeed, the early root of her love for John. If she had not happened to be born the Ellison fortune would have gone to John's father, Ellison Eustace. Her father had married in a fit of pique when he was on the edge of sev enty. He lived to see his daughter nine years old and to impress upon her that she must marry her second cousing and so keep the money in the Ellison

John, five years older than Alice, had accepted his fate philosophically. Until chance flung Millie across his path he had never repined. An only child and motherless, he had grown up his father's intimate comrade. Thus women, especially young women, had never worn for him the reseate glamour of unschooled youth. Still his father had by no means tried to put an old head upon young shoulders nor to breed in his son contempt for womankind. It was only that love and women were pushed to the background. reckoned mere episodes beside the rush and scurry of truly manly pursuits. Marriage was honorable in all men: marriage with Alice would be thrice honorable, safe and profitable. Thus when she came to eighteen John had a certain satisfaction in putting the ring upon her finger and even chafed a little over the fact that by her father's express desire she was to stay single

until she was one and twenty. He honestly believed himself in love and truly felt for her a tender fondness that had begun when, a sturdy little lad, he had guided her tottering baby steps. He meant always to guide. guard and cherish her as became a gentleman, even though in his swelling visions of the future she was no more than a dumb, submissive shade. If she would never be a brilliant figure. still less would she be one of whom a husband must needs be ashamed. Indeed, he was altogether a little more than content with the ordering of things until six months before his wedding day he came under Millie's spell. He saw her first upon a spring morning full of bot, shining and languid ruffling airs. Dew still sparkled on the grass, and overhead in the green gold of new leafage robins fluted delicately the joy of life and love. To his enchanted eyes Millie embodied the shining, the bird song, the softness of the

two hours they walked together over the ragged lawn turf or stood in rapt contemplation of newly open roses And then in a safe seclusion of greenest shade he drew her within his arms and kissed ber, not lightly, but as one who takes what is supremely his own. Then followed a heavenly fortnight. Eustace masterfully pushed out of his mind all thought that might mar this new bliss. He rarely spoke of his love and after that first kiss was sparing of demonstration. There was no need of it when each understood so perfectly what was in the other's heart. Yet at the end of every day's comradery Eustace had a sense of something im-

pending ever drawing nearpr. He re-

fused to let himself look further than

the next day's end, but somehow,

south wind, the warmth of the sun.

What they said is immaterial. For

somewhere, he knew he would be called to pay a bitter scot. His chiefest care was for Millie. No harm must touch her, however it fared with him. She was so young, so innocently gay, so innocently foolish, he was doubly bound to protect her, even against himself. It was heaven to see her bloom and sparkle at his approach. She left herself so artlessly undefended now and again there came a lump in his throat. A man who could speak, who could even think lightly of her, would deserve death twice over.

So the idyl drifted through hours sunlit and starlit. Perhaps it was some ill star in its course that brought home Joe Cantrell, Millie's brother, who lived out in the big world and knew its ways. He came unannounced just as dusk fell down, making his way through the devious side path all tangled with sweet shrubs. When Millie met him a little later her eyes were starlike, her cheeks of damask bloom. But sight of her could not win him from ley anger. He never explained anything. "You will be ready to go back with me two days bence," he said, frowning heavily. Millie got very white, but went silently toward the stair foot. As she was mounting it her brother said, with a taunting laugh, "Next time you choose to kiss and fondle a man take care that I am not in sight or that he is not engaged to marry another woman."

She knelt, shivering, by her bedside intil she heard him go out after a lei surely supper. And she was still kneelly, well toward midnight. He stopped beside her father's high black secrethen after a minute came upstairs, still mq/ing ponderously But his footbs did not mask another sound-t

clicking of pistol locks. Intuitively she understood-he had strolled over to the Country club, picked a quarrel with Eustace and would have him our at daybreak next morning.

No thought of appeal to him stirred on her, Instead there came a firm de termination matching ...is own. , She knew her name had not been mention ed in the quarrel quite as well as she knew herself its real root. The men must not fight. She could not have her brother's blood upon her conscience, still less her lover's: There was but one way to stop them, a way bitterer than death. Still, she set her feet toward it unfaltering.

She got up and sat by the window, watching with noteless eyes the wheel ing stars, the waning moonlight. But at the first pale dawn light she was tensely alive. Below she heard a stealthy stir, the cautious opening of a door, with muilled voices and cautious steps outside. She got up and crept to her brother's room, Lighted candles still gilttered there. Upon the table there was a brief will, the ink not dry in the heavily scrawled signature. Beside it was a briefer statement: "Let it be understood of all men if I die I shall have died in a man's quarrel, founded on no personal grudge. but resenting unjust aspersions upon my native state." She almost smiled over it. The native state counted to Joe for so very little in the ordinary

little way off had scared, white faces, out neither combatant had lost wholesome color. Millie sprang between them, white as a dawn wraith, but with eyes like glowing coals. She flung up her arms and said clearly: "Fire, gentlemen! If anybody deerves death I do!"

"Millie, go back!" Joe Cantrell thunhim kill me. It is the best way out of logists.-Exchange.

Millie shrank from him a little. "There is no need for bloodshed," she said. Then, raising her voice so the seconds could hear: "I call all here to witness that I have not been deceived. I knew at the very first of John Eustace's betrothal. We have done no wrong to anybody. We-we love each other because we cannot help it. Oh. it is hard that my own brother brings me to such open shame!"

"Come home," Cantrell said roughly, flinging away his pistol and clutching her arm. Eustace caught the other hand, saying: "Stay with me, Millie! The whole world may go if I have

"Goodby," Millie said, drawing away her hand, "I shall love you always, John, but your wife need not be jeal-

By the strange orderings of fate that was a true word. John Eustace went straight to Alice and told her all the truth. She gave him back his freedom and would have given him half her money only he would not have it. But he could not persuade Millie to marry him until Joe, the masterful, had wooed and won Alice Ellison and her fortune.

Blind Tom. Blind Tom was born near the city of Columbus, Ga., of slave parents about the year 1846. He belonged to General Twenty minutes later, just as the | James N. Bethune, at that time editor sun peeped over rimming trees, she, and proprietor of the Cornerstone, came out in a little clearing upon a Being blind, Tom would stray away wooded hilltop and saw two men from home and was often found in the standing weapon in hand, face to face, woods, roaming around and listening ten yards apart. Three other men a to the birds. It was in his whistling imitations of the bird songs that his wonderful musical ability was first revealed to his master. He could repeat perfectly anything that he heard in the line of music. As to his idlocy, it is generally understood that, his musical ability aside, he was very near being a "natural." Outside of his love for music he seemed to be quite studered. Eustace dropped his pistol and pid, and if not an idiot he was dangerleaped to the girl's side. In her ear ously near being one. Blind Tom is he whispered brokenly: "Darling, let still the standing puzzle of the psycho-

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