

# THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

WINNIPEG, CANADA, JULY, 1905.

PRICE { 5c. per copy.  
50c. per year

Vol. VI. No. 7.

## A Short Love Story

Written specially  
for The Western  
Home Monthly



ALPH, am I going to die?" asked Norman Bradford, in a weak voice.

Dr. Adair's keen black eyes suddenly dimmed as he looked into the face of his friend. His voice was husky as he tried to answer cheerfully:

"My dear fellow, while there is life there is hope."

"Ralph, your reply is evasive. I must know the truth. Can I live?"

For a moment the physician's lips quivered. His heart was touched. He took his patient's hand as he said, tremulously:

"No, my poor fellow, your hours are numbered."

"I thought so," calmly returned the sick man. "Call Bessie, then kindly leave us for a while."

The doctor left the room, and soon a pretty girl, with large blue eyes, entered.

"Do you want me, Guardy?" she asked in low, sweet tones.

"Yes, Bessie. Close the door please, and come to me."

She obeyed. When she had reached his bedside Norman took her hands in his feeble clasp.

"Bessie, the doctor says I am dying. You are poor, and when I die will be friendless. I want you to inherit my wealth. There is but one way in which you can do that without reproach, dear—you must become my wife."

The girl literally held her breath. How was she to answer him? Once, twice, she essayed to speak, but though her lips moved, no words came.

"It will be only for a few hours at most, Bessie," the weak voice went on, "and it will comfort me inexpressibly to know that I leave you provided for."

There was not a word about love. Bessie looked searchingly into the pale face, and her own color faded.

"I cannot," she said. "But—Oh, dear friend, it is hard to know that I must lose you."

So Bessie Graham knelt by the supposed deathbed of her guardian, while the minister, who had been quickly summoned, spoke the words that made them husband and wife.

Bessie was an orphan. When her father died he left her—then a child—to the care of Norman Bradford, his esteemed and trusted friend, and most faithfully had that friend discharged the obligation.

Bessie's scanty fortune had been sufficient to educate her; but now the last dollar was spent and she was dependent on her guardian for support.

As child and maiden she had looked up to him as her dearest friend. Now that he was dying and wished her to be his wife, she never dreamed of opposing him; his wish was her care. Her tears fell fast as she knelt there.

the close clasp of his hand relaxed, and she thought he was gone. But he was not dead; only sleeping.

Dr. Adair shook his head as he examined his patient's pulse, and said he could not possibly survive the night; but he was mistaken; the morning brought a decided change for the better. It was even possible that he might live.

Bessie watched over her husband faithfully. She could not have been more watchful for his comfort—more solicitous for his recovery.

But as the weeks passed and Norman slowly struggled back to life she began to avoid being left alone with him. He noticed the change and it troubled him greatly.

"She does not love me and regrets our unfortunate marriage," he thought, sorrowfully. "It is more than I can bear! Why did I not die? Death would have been preferable to this torture."

"I cannot endure it—I cannot. I must go away."

So, the next morning, before Bessie made her appearance, Norman left the old home and went to the city, some twenty miles distant, for the purpose of making arrangements with his lawyer, who resided there, for his wife's support. As yet he was undecided what his next step would be.

When Bessie went to breakfast she was surprised to find a note beside her plate. She hastily tore it open and read:

"Dear Bessie—I am going away, forgive me that I did not say farewell. I dare not meet you again. Forgive me, too, for the wrong I did you in asking you to marry me; had I dreamed that my life would be spared I never would have fettered you so. But Ralph said I had but a few hours to live, and, before Heaven, I believed him."

"You have borne it patiently; but trust me, Bessie, you shall be free again. I claim nothing of the past, and I can restore you to the future. Two years must elapse, however, before we can obtain a legal separation."

"I wish you would stay in the old home with your faithful servants until other arrangements can be made. Just now I am too mentally shattered to

think of our future. It will be best for you not to write to me; what comfort would your letters be to either? You cannot love, and I must have your love or nothing. Yours ever,

"Norman Bradford."

For several minutes Bessie sat staring at the words before her, her breath coming in short, quick gasps. Then she rushed down the stairs and almost into the arms of kind Mrs. Powell, the housekeeper, who had been a mother to the orphan since her guardian's home had been her abiding place.

"Auntie, please tell me where Norman is?" she pleaded. "I must go to him."

"But, dearie, why the need? He has only gone to see his lawyer, Mr. Latimer."

"Oh, you don't understand. He has left me forever!" said Bessie, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"I love my husband with all my heart and strength, and he must know it! I must go—it would kill me to stay here!"

In an incredibly short time the excited girl was ready for her journey, and the day was not far advanced when she found herself at the law office, where she learned that Norman had been too ill on his arrival to transact any business, and Mr. Latimer had taken him home with him.

Bessie entered a cab and was rapidly driven to the lawyer's residence. She was shown to the room which had been prepared for Norman's exclusive use. Here, on a sofa, she found him stretched, motionless, with closed eyes, as though asleep.

She quietly advanced until she stood beside him.

Suddenly the gray eyes opened, and Bessie, with a broken sob, flung herself by her husband's side, and was gathered to his breast in an ecstasy of passionate joy.

"Am I dreaming?" he said huskily, "or this indeed Bessie Graham?"

"Not Bessie Graham, dearest Norman, but Bessie Bradford, who has come to tell you that she loves you with all her heart! Oh, Norman, we have both suffered unnecessarily. I thought you married me for pity, not for love, while I—well, I must have loved you always, I think."

"My precious wife! You have given me back my life!" cried her husband.

And Bessie, meeting the gaze of his love-lit eyes, no longer doubted his love.



YES OR NO.

### Microbe Eat Microbe.

An obliging microbe who devours unobliging microbes is the newest acquisition to the microbe population as discovered by science. A Scotchman named Neilson, who has been resident for some time in Italy, is said to have found this accommodating creature, which lives on all zymotic germs in sewage, and when it has completed its task no longer encumbers the earth but dies and dissolves. Mr. Neilson is said to have invented an automatic biological tank, applicable to dwelling houses of any description, wherein his microbe disports itself by transforming the sewage into odorless, colorless liquid which is perfectly innocuous to human life, and may therefore be safely permitted to flow off into street drains, and thence into rivers. This transformed liquid has been subjected to the public analyst by order of the commune of Florence, and it is pronounced to be clear water but undrinkable.

With the last words of the ceremony