

THE NECESSARY INSPIRATION

Is Required Both in Literature and Love.

Story of an Author to Whom Inspiration Came Slowly, and Who Owed Mr. Shylock.

You and I know very little about great successes. We have deserved them, of course, but we have not had them yet. Therefore it will be extremely difficult for me to describe and for you to understand the feelings of Mr. Roland Blake in the early part of the current month.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth," was the way he expressed his sentiments to me when I offered my congratulations.

The new heaven must have referred to the winning of Emily Woodruff and the new earth to the fact that she had great possessions. It struck me that this allusion to his fiancée's money was very delicate. The young lady is the granddaughter of the late Horace Woodruff, in whose shop on Broadway the silks of the Orient were transmuted into crude, unhandsome, occidental greenbacks. Nearly all his wealth was bequeathed to Emily, whose father holds it in trust until she shall be 25 years old, when she will own it as she owns the glove upon her hand.

This father of hers is a man whom one would expect to seek a mate for his daughter among the much maligned aristocrats of Europe or the almost equally unpopular millionaires of our own country. He is a hard headed man of business and one who would have his own way despite obstacles. While Emily is precisely the girl who would view with favor a handsome, romantic, impractical writer of stories, her father is the last man to consent to such a folly. All who knew of Roland Blake's infatuation regarded his matrimonial chances to be as bad as possible. It was generally understood that he had been forbidden to call. Then suddenly the engagement was announced.

"It was as much a surprise to me as to any one," said Roland when I ventured to approach that subject. "I can hardly realize it yet. The fact is that Emily is a great girl, a wonder. It seems that she has cared for me all along."

This idea put Roland into a trance, from which I had to wake him somewhat rudely. "Is Mr. Woodruff cordial?" I inquired.

"Tolerant," said Roland. "I could hardly say cordial. We had a long talk about my business affairs."

"Inexhaustible subject," said I. "How much do you owe, my son?"

"Oh, a thousand dollars or such a matter," he replied. "But there were a few personal debts that I forgot to mention to Mr. Woodruff. He said that I had done mighty well considering the miserable business I was in. Mr. Woodruff has not, I fear, a high opinion of literature."

"But what does all that matter now?" he continued, his eyes lighting up with the glow of energy and hope. "Look at this, old man! I've made a decent success in literature. My stories go into the good magazines, and there are a couple of books of mine which by their sales remunerate the publisher even if I don't get anything out of them, and I've done this against the worst possible odds."

"Worry? Heavens and earth! Why, any time in the last five years when an idea has got into my brain I've had to put my hat on to keep the voice of the creditor from chasing it up through the top of my head. The luck has been against me—bad luck in small matters which is more dire than calamity."

"But now fortune has relented. I've got what I deserve, as Heine remarked when he dreamed that he was the ruler of the universe. Happiness is inspiration, and I am full of it. I'll bet you a hundred dollars to a cent that within this very week I write incomparably the best story of my life—something that will really make a hit."

His eager hands reached out to clutch paper and pen, and I rose hastily. Far be it from me to stand idly in the way of an inspiration.

"Speaking of Emily," he said, "of course you understand that we're not to be married for a year or two. She's only 20, and—honestly, old man, is there another living creature like her?"

"No, there isn't," said I, and the answer was perfectly frank.

Whatever may be thought of the degree of Miss Woodruff's beauty, she is

certainly a perfectly original creation. Nobody looks or speaks or moves in the least like her. When she walks along the street, all the people's heads go round as if they were cogwheels in a piece of machinery.

"Of course, as to her money," said he, "it's very unfortunate." I laughed.

"You know what I mean," he protested. "People will say that I am seeking money, whereas heaven knows that if she were as poor as—I am, by jingo, it wouldn't make the slightest difference!"

"People will lie, whatever you do," I replied, "so don't let that worry you. Money is a good thing, and I'm glad you're to have some."

"I wonder how it will seem?" he said, and then cautiously, "Hush!"

A shadow appeared upon the ground glass panel of the door. A hand was laid upon the knob vainly and then came a loud, aggressive rap.

"It's Crowley!" whispered Blake. "He's the collector for a confounded tailor! See the villain stand there and wait!" The shadow fell darkly on the door. Obviously Crowley was a person of magnificent proportions.

"I used to be a good deal afraid of him," whispered Blake. "He's an offensive beggar, with a voice so carefully cultivated that he can dun a man on the ninth floor and make every word audible to the engineer in the subcellar. But those beasts won't bother me much longer. Why, my dear fellow, with this new happiness, this tremendous inspiration, to help me, I'll write enough stuff in the next three months to pay every debt and live like a prince besides!"

"Go right ahead and do it, then," said I. "Don't waste precious time talking to me. I'll read a magazine till Crowley's feet get tired, and then I'll slip out."

Presently I heard his pen scratching on the paper, and it was pleasant to think that the words he was writing in the first flush of his happiness might live for centuries in the hearts of men. I felt proud to be present on such an occasion.

It may have been two hours later when I rose to go. Crowley's shadow had vanished. Blake, with the tip of his penholder pressed against his lips, was looking upward to the ceiling and through it to the clouds. There was a fine light in his eyes.

"Written much, old man?" I said. "No," he replied. "I haven't put anything on paper yet."

"But I thought I heard your pen," said I. "That was while I was writing a little note to Emily," said he. "I can't go to see her this evening, and there were a few things that I wanted to say."

He folded half a dozen sheets of paper and put them into an envelope, upon which he wrote an address.

"Would you mind handing that to the fellow in the messenger office down stairs?" said he, giving me the envelope and half a dollar to pay for the message. "Thank you. Goodby. I'm going to work now."

The last glimpse I had of him he was still looking aloft, with the expression of a cherub about to sing a new song.

On Thursday I looked in upon Blake again. He was drawing little profiles of Miss Woodruff on a sheet of paper, for Blake is clever with the pencil as well as with the pen.

"How does the story come along?" I asked. "What story?" he demanded. "The masterpiece you began when I was here last," I replied.

"Oh, that be hanged!" he exclaimed. "It was rot. I threw it away."

"Haven't you started another?" "Well, I've been getting my ideas together," said he. "There are one or two big things that I may start upon when I can get hold of them by the right end."

Then we had a nice long talk about Miss Woodruff, and, having decided in the course of about two hours that she was an incomparable angel, we adjourned the meeting and went out to play a game of billiards.

Sunday forenoon Blake and I took a bicycle ride together. I had never seen him so happy or so full of fine fancies. He told me that he had begun a story and asked me to come to his den the next day and see what I thought of the introductory chapter.

I couldn't call on Monday, but I found the time Tuesday afternoon. Blake had written about 1000 words substantially as they were to stand in the finished story, and I want to say here in strict confidence that they were far from good.

The style was quite different from Blake's ordinary. As a rule, when he attacks literature he cuts off a piece with a battleax and presents it to the public on the end of a spear. That's what I have always liked about his work.

I told him frankly that if the be-

ginning of the new story gave any idea of what it was to be like throughout he had made a mistake.

"Sentimentalism isn't your forte," said I.

"This isn't sentimentality. It's genuine feeling," said he. "And it is properly expressed, because I've taken time with it. I've cut it down and worked it over, and I've viewed it always in the new light that has come to me. Bless the dear girl! Let's talk of her for awhile and let criticism rest. As for your opinion, I pity and forgive you. Let that suffice."

So we talked about the dear girl and, as before, wound up with a game of billiards. And, by the way, Blake made a Roman holiday of me. His billiards had improved a hundred per cent within the week.

It was agreed that I should drop in upon him at his lodgings after dinner. Miss Woodruff was not to be at home, and an evening in his bachelor quarters was the best that Blake could hope for.

It may have been 8 o'clock when I arrived. Blake came to the door of his little parlor in response to my rap. He had on an old red "sweater" with a faded H on the front of it. An old pair of trousers and a straw hat with no crown in it completed his visible attire.

I had seen Blake wear this hat before, when he had to work late at night. The brim shaded his eyes, and the absence of the crown, in his opinion, prevented an injurious effect upon the hair such as is said to come from wearing one's hat in the house.

Blake has plenty of hair, and in moments of excitement it stands out from his head at all sorts of angles. On the occasion in question it streamed up through that broken hat as if the circlet of straw had been a funnel supplied with a mighty draft of air.

"Everything has gone to the devil!" was his greeting to me.

"What do you mean?" I cried. "Has Miss Woodruff?"

"Oh, no; she's all right, but that infernal villain Hatfield, to whom I've owed a couple of hundred dollars for a year or two, is going to make trouble."

"What trouble can he make?" I demanded.

"Why, he'll tell Mr. Woodruff, and then my cake is dough," said Blake. "You see, I neglected to mention the Hatfield matter in my talk with Woodruff, and he'll remember that. I tell you it would ruin my life."

"But there's nothing disgraceful about this debt."

"No, except that I didn't tell Woodruff about it. There's the pinch. I've got to raise the money for Hatfield tomorrow."

"How in blue blazes are you going to do it?" I demanded. "I haven't it, and"

"I've seen Harper," said Blake. "If I'll finish that Porto Rican romance for him, he'll pay spot cash. There's about 8000 words to write, and I can't do it—except that I've got to. Why, old man, fancy my trying to write tonight. I'm so worried, so totally upset, that my brains are mush. I can't think of my own name. Yet I must do it. But, oh," he groaned, "it will be awful rot!"

He rather staggered than walked to his chair beside the big table in the center of the room.

"Sit down and keep still," he said, "but don't leave me. Just stay by me through this night, and maybe I can turn the trick. If I'm left alone, I shall either go crazy or go to sleep, and one's as bad as the other tonight."

Three seconds later his pen was digging holes in the paper. At first it went heavily onward, and frequently he stopped and paced the floor, assuring me that no man so miserable as he was could possibly write.

Presently however, he began to go more steadily. His eyes took on a glare. He no longer addressed any remarks to me, but he said things about Porto Rico and the character of his story to the air.

Meanwhile he smoked long black cigars, the ends of which he chewed savagely.

This continued for hours. About o'clock he slowed up, and several times I saw him sway in his chair. I knew what that meant, and I hastened out to an all night restaurant, whence I returned with some sandwiches and a quart of black coffee. This simple refreshment supplied the strength which toil had exhausted. For a long time thereafter the pen made a noise like a loose shingle on a barn in a gale of wind.

About 4 o'clock I began to doze. A little later I awoke with a start. The gas had been turned low, but there was light enough to see Blake stretched across the threshold of the bedroom door, his head upon a pillow that he had dragged off the bed.

"Don't disturb me, old man," he

murmured as I bent over him. "The cursed thing is done."

I waited till he had sunk into a stupor and then lifted him upon the bed. At the next morning I waked him, and we went to see Harper. The story passed through the mill, and Hatfield's claim was met in time to avert a calamity.

The Porto Rican story is out, and it has caught on hard. On that Tuesday night Blake kept his word, given to me a week ago Monday, that within ten days, having found the necessary inspiration, he would write something that would really make a hit.

Chocolate Fiends.

"The manufacture of chocolate," said J. R. Anso, of Brazil, "is a great industry. Of all the chocolate beans imported into the United States two-thirds go to one firm in Boston, and the other third is distributed among the other manufacturers. The chocolates sold are of various grades. The Caracas chocolate is supposed to be the best."

"If you take the various grades, technically known as the Caracas, the French, the German and so on, and take a piece of each and place them in a pan of water and allow them to dissolve, any expert will tell you which is the best chocolate. The better grades will leave no sediment. The others will. This is explained by the fact that in the cheaper grades the shell is ground up and used as a 'filler.' The lighter the chocolate the better the grade. The cheaper grades are dark owing to the ground up shell."

"It is a queer thing about chocolate consumption. There are chocolate fiends, just as there are opium fiends, tobacco slaves and liquor slaves. I cannot tell you why it is, but if people begin to eat chocolate the habit grows upon them. I don't think any amount of chocolate hurts any person. Of course the cheaper grades of chocolate have a large percentage of sugar in them, and sugar is to a certain extent injurious, but for the chocolate itself I don't think anyone eats enough to hurt him materially. In contradistinction to the exhilaration of alcoholic drinks chocolate seems to be a soothing. Persons who are nervous and irritable find it a food that in a way calms and soothes and satisfies them. It is queer, but it is the truth. The consumption of chocolate is increasing enormously in the United States."—New York Tribune.

Makeshift Wedding Rings.

Curious instances have been cited where makeshift substitutes for the conventional wedding ring have been utilized during the marriage ceremony. One such instance occurred some time ago in a nearby town, where the ring was missing. Nothing better being available as a substitute, a curtain ring was used, and still another occasion the ring handle of the church key was utilized. A couple in this state used in such an emergency a ring formed from the outer edge of a coin and which had been carried by some one present as a curiosity.

A gallant best man came to the rescue at a recent wedding, when the ring was not forthcoming at the right time. He drew from his life the slender stickpin that had been adorning it, and, bending the wire into ring shape, handed the improvised wedding ring to the distracted groom.

A horseshoe nail bent to the shape of a ring is said to bring a great deal of luck to the owner, and the lead cramp ring worn six centuries ago has given place to various rings now worn to prevent and cure rheumatism.—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

More Gold Creek Stampede.

The latest scene of action mapped out for the stampede is More Gold creek, a tributary to Dominion, opposite the mouth of Gold Run. A man recorded a claim there the other day and made a discoverer's affidavit to the effect that he had found a 25 cent nugget and colors running all through the gravel. The fact got abroad and created the usual effect. Men and women, with horse and dog teams, some on bicycles and many on foot making a grand rush for the new discovery. It is said that 30 claims have already been staked and that there is two miles more of ground upon which stakes will probably be driven.

Forty-three pup on Gold Run was also the scene of a stampede last evening. Cleveland's roadhouses at the Dome and on Gold Run, and Williams' roadhouse were all crowded to their utmost capacity. One party of five left their bicycles at Cleveland's at the Dome intending to make the balance of the trip on foot. After they had walked five miles they found the trail in such good condition that they went back after their bikes, kicking themselves all the way for being so foolish. Another party telephoned ahead for a relay at the Dome so they could go right on without stopping. Great excitement is prevailing throughout all the creeks.

WORK OF CUTTING AWAY ICE

From Around A. C. Co.'s Steamers Susie and Louise

Will Begin Next Monday Under Direction of Captain Nixon—But Little Danger From Ice Jams.

From Thursday and Friday's Daily. The A. C. Co. on next Monday morning will start a force of men at work cutting out the steamers Susie and Louise as well as the two barges which are now in winter quarters in steamboat slough. Capt. Dixon, of the Louise, who has had charge of the company's steamers this winter, will engineer the enterprise. Capt. Dawson of the Susie is on the way in now and will assist Capt. Dixon. Twenty firemen will be put to work cutting out the boats, the method employed being the cutting clear of a strip all around the outside of each boat, clearing the rudder and wheel of ice.

After this has been accomplished water will be pumped into the hold of the steamer and steam pipes will be introduced which will heat the enclosed water to a sufficient temperature to melt the surrounding ice on the lower hull. Each boat will be kept under a head of steam with outside coal, there being some 75 tons on each boat. Deadmen will be sunk in the neighboring bank with strong hawsers attached to the steamers and such other precautions will be taken as the conditions will suggest.

The Louise is at the head of the slough high and dry with water four feet away. There are no indications that the ice ever broke through this channel as the sides of the slough are not ice marked as usual wherever the flowing ice travels, but there is a possibility that the river may jam at Klondike City at the curve, which if such became a fact might send the ice through the slough in which many boats are wintering. Manager Mizner said this morning that the boats at the lower end of the slough were in a dangerous position, for should the river dam up at the same point as last year's jam opposite the Fairview the back water would destroy those boats which were not cut free. Such would also be the case should the ice go tearing through the slough, but that seemed unlikely as a bar protects the harbor at its upper end.

Yukon Prices Restored.

It will probably be of interest to many people in this city, especially to those who have been following the trend of affairs in connection with the war which the larger trading companies in the Yukon are waging against the small shopkeepers, that the former who make large shipments of merchandise to the Klondike via St. Michael and the Yukon river have issued orders to their Dawson agents that prices are to be at once restored. This action (which was expected) on the part of the large traders, does away with all existing difficulties and places shippers upon the White Pass & Yukon Route upon an equal footing with shippers consigning goods in large quantities to Dawson via St. Michael and the lower Yukon river.

It had been feared for some time by the transportation companies doing business with the Klondike by way of Lynn canal that the action of the big traders shipping by the all river route in cutting prices of staples in the north might have a baneful effect upon the business of the smaller merchants and finally result in great falling off of the northern transportation trade. To guard against this, pressure was brought to bear on the big dealers and while for some time past they have shown signs of yielding it was not till today that notices were sent out stating that orders had been issued to the agents of the large companies trading at Dawson that prices were to be instantly restored to their normal level.—Vancouver Province, March 5.

COMING AND GOING.

L. F. Cooke, of Baker City, Oregon, registered at Hotel McDonald.

A. L. Smith, of 24 below Bonanza, is spending a few days in town.

Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Spalding from Hunker are registered at the McDonald hotel.

Dan McGilivray arrived from the outside Wednesday and is registered at the McDonald.

E. M. Culbertson leaves today to take charge of Cleveland's roadhouse at the mouth of Eureka.

Mr. Wm. Butler of 34 above Bonanza, is in town for a few days and is stopping at the McDonald hotel.

The largest mail of the winter was brought in last night consisting of 34 sacks—28 sacks for Dawson and six for lower river points.