

# By the... Skate's Click

By WILFRED CLARKE

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Between the strike and the train robbers Bascom, superintendent of the L. and W. road, was having his hands full. Secretly he believed the latter to be the result of the former. He had made a clean sweep of the malcontents at Solent, and the strikers had been stranded high and dry financially. There had been ugly rumors and threats, too, but Bascom had gone quietly on his way. Sympathy in the small interior city ran with the strikers, and what he thought the superintendent wisely kept to himself.

When he had ordered the posters offering a reward of \$500 for information leading to the apprehension of the train robbers, he had felt that it was more wasted. The average inhabitant of Solent was not looking for trouble.

And now on a crisp morning in December two young people stood before one of those same posters, gazing as if fascinated at the "500" in startling crimson capitals.

"If we had that, we'd get married tomorrow," murmured Harry Bronson.

Pretty Bessie Millar sighed profoundly and looked no longer at the printed characters, but into her lover's eyes. They were honest gray eyes, and she wondered how her father could be so heartless. He had said she should not marry Bronson until the latter had at least \$500 to his credit in the Solent Savings bank, and how was a shipping clerk at the freight depot to save up \$500 on a salary of \$40 a month?

"Time's up, Bess," he exclaimed as a distant whistle proclaimed the approach of the northbound freight. "I've just a minute to help you into the sleigh. How's the ice up your way?"

"Splendid," she answered as he tucked the robes snugly about her. "I tried it this morning, and it's as smooth as glass."

"Well, be at the willows tonight at 8, and we'll have a skate. The two mile spin will just limber me up."

She nodded, and then Pete, the Swedish man of all work at the Millar farm, snapped the whip, and away they flew.

The Millar home was two miles below Solent, on the river, and midway

at either end of the bridge might precipitate a fight. Harry and Stevens were desperate. Down the river he sped to meet the train, lifting his feet to the blade would not click as it left the ice. He had won the racing championship the year before, but never had he attained the present speed. As he shot by the willows jutting out from the Millar farm he saw a slender figure marching resolutely back and forth on the bank. A faint "Hello!" reached his ears, but he could only wave his hand in response. Three miles beyond he heard the faint whistle of the special, sounded for a grade crossing. It must be at Holt's, two miles below.

He swung in shore and clambered up the steep bank, not stopping even to remove his skates. Reaching the track, he hastily jerked off his coat, saturated it with oil from his skating lamp, then with matchbox in hand awaited the appearance of the special around the bend. A sharp whistle and a flash of light, then Bronson's coat literally went up in smoke. The warning was so sudden that the train rolled past him before the engineer could bring it to a stop.

With Bascom came the president of the road, Mr. Harding, and the two officials listened in amazement to Bronson's tale. The president spoke decisively:

"There must be no mistake this time. We must get those two men. We'll run up as far as the bridge and then send on to town."

Harry glanced up quickly. "Excuse my making the suggestion, but if you'll give me a note to the sheriff I think we can land them all right. You hold the train here, so their suspicions will not be roused, and they'll probably wait in town till the wrecking train starts out."

President Harding gave the young clerk a shrewd glance.

"You're right. Here, Bascom, give the boy your coat. There's an extra one in the car. If not, he needs it more than you do. He has a goodish spin before him yet. And I'll write the note."

The next morning Bessie Millar, waiting for the mail at the postoffice, again stood reading the L. and W. poster. Some one walked to her side, and she turned her head haughtily.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Bronson!"

Harry led her to the deserted corner near the money order department and opened his batteries.

"Now, see here, Bessie," he said; "there's no use getting huffy. I admit I owe you an apology for not stopping last night, but—"

"You prefer Jennie Holt for a skating partner. I saw you shoot round the bend toward their place."

"Yes, but I didn't stop. I guess you haven't heard the news. I was on the trail of train robbers and wreckers and 'sich.'" There was a sparkle of mischief in his eyes as Bessie turned round slowly and looked at him. "You know I said only yesterday morning that if we had the \$500 we'd get married at once, and as you didn't say nay I hold you to the agreement."

"I don't understand," murmured Bessie, but her eyes were fairly shining. "Where were you going? What were you doing then—when I saw you?"

And when Bronson had explained his mission he added, with a sigh of absolute satisfaction:

"I not only got the \$500, but when we're married I'm to have a position in the Denver offices with the president—his private secretary. He liked my suggestions last night. The salary is to be \$2,500 a year, Bess. Now will you be good?"

Bessie smiled up at him. "I think we could both be good, very good, on \$2,500 a year," she said demurely.

### Still Obedient.

Gustave Dore was always a child, so far as his mother was concerned. He not only loved, but obeyed, her, and when she died he said, with sad sincerity, that he no longer knew how to live. An incident which shows her influence over him as a grown man is connected with a little party given by him to show some of his friends an album of his own drawings.

At a dinner over which Mme. Dore presided a quarrel arose between Gustave and his brother Ernest. Suddenly Mme. Dore turned to the former and said, as though he were a boy of ten:

"Hush, Gustave! I am ashamed of you."

Dore, who had worked himself, regardless of the presence of his guests, into a fierce passion, became at once calm and silent and, bowing to his mother, resumed his dinner.

But the incident did not end here. When the guests had retired to the great salon, the brothers disappeared, to return in a few minutes each holding an end of the colossal album that was to be submitted to the company. Mme. Dore followed, smiling at her "little boys," who were none the less children because they had passed their fortieth year.

### Notions About Sleep.

One of the rudest acts in the eyes of a native of the Philippine Islands is to step over a person asleep on the floor. Sleeping is with them a very solemn matter. They are strongly averse to waking any one, the idea being that during sleep the soul is absent from the body and may not have time to return if slumber is suddenly broken.

If you call upon a native and are told he is asleep, you may as well depart. To get a servant to rouse you, you must give him the strictest of orders. Then at the time appointed he will stand by your side and call: "Senor! Senor!" repeatedly, each time more loudly than before, until you are half awake. Then he will return to the low note and again raise his voice gradually until you are fully conscious.

### SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE.

You May Learn Something From Everybody You Meet.

One of the most useful success habits one can form is that of learning something from everybody with whom he comes in contact. No information which can be acquired is too trivial to be ignored.

Constantly measure yourself with the men you meet. You will find that every one can teach you something which you did not know before and which, perhaps, you would never have a chance to learn again if you did not acquire it from him.

Daniel Webster once made a great hit in arguing a case before a jury by repeating a story which he afterward said he had not thought of since he heard it fourteen years before. But Webster was always picking up something for future use. His famous reply to Hayne, the greatest speech ever delivered on the American continent, was largely made up of little reserves which he had picked up here and there in his reading, from studying men and from observation.

Many a prominent novelist has collected material for his stories by making notes of his conversations with those he has met and by observation. Charles Dickens got a great deal of the matter for some of his novels in this way.

One young man will go to a lecture and after spending an hour listening to the helpful, inspiring words of some prominent man will leave the hall or lecture room without having derived any benefit from the address. Another young man will attend the same lecture with an ambition to learn something. He will drink in the speaker's sentences as if he were never to hear such words of encouragement and inspiration again. At the conclusion of the address he will determine that he will make more of his opportunities in the future; that he will read more, think more, study more, be more than he ever was before. Such a young man has a purpose and is determined to learn something from everything he comes in contact with and from everybody he talks to. The other has no ambition, does not throw himself into what he does, lets his mind wander hither and thither, so that he never wholly understands what people are saying and therefore never derives any benefit or information from those with whom he converses.—Orison Swett Marden in Success.

### SOME WRITERS.

Buffon wrote in lace ruffles and Alexandre Dumas in shirt sleeves.

Milton composed his "Paradise Lost" on a large armchair, with his head thrown back.

Bret Harte's first literary success was a little book called "Condensed Novels," in which he parodied some prominent novelists of the day.

Austin Dobson, the poet, wanted in early life to be an engineer and was preparing for that profession when his parents persuaded him to enter the civil service.

When Fox had eaten heartily, he would retire to his study, envelop his head in a napkin soaked in vinegar and water and work sometimes ten hours in succession.

Allison is said to have consumed twenty-four years in the preparation of his "History of Europe," but many important literary enterprises were also carried on by him during this time.

It is related of Hall Calne, the novelist, that he once worked in the Laxey lead mines, in the Manx mountains, in place of a young man who was ill to keep the young fellow's position for him.

Mrs. Bolton, the Indiana composer of the once popular song "Paddle Your Own Canoe," received the inspiration to write while sewing and fitting the first carpets for the old statehouse of Indiana.

### A College Man and a Quotation.

Some one once said, "A Harvard man knows all literature but the Bible," a startlingly sweeping generality, but not without truth so far as the Bible is concerned. A case in point came to light the other day. Two Harvard men were reading together some famous modern orations, one of them a eulogy. The eulogy closed with the words: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"What a beautiful close!" exclaimed one of the students enthusiastically. "The man who wrote such a sentence as that proves that the grand style in prose did not die with the eighteenth century."

It should be added in fairness that the other student was a churchman and said nothing.—New York Tribune.

### The Butler Bible.

One of the interesting articles that each governor of Massachusetts transmits to his successor is the Butler Bible, the history of which General Butler wrote on the fly leaf as follows:

Jan. 1, 1864. When I came into the executive chamber a year ago, I could not find a copy of the Holy Scriptures. I suppose each governor took his away with him. A friend gave me this. I leave it as a needed transmission to my successor in office, to be read by him and his successor, each in turn. BENJAMIN F. BUTLER, Governor.

### Pessimism Checked.

"No," he complained, "I have never succeeded in getting anything for nothing. I have always had to strive hard for everything that has come to me."

"What about the mumps you had last winter?" his wife interrupted.—Chicago Times-Herald.

Soap has been in use for 3,000 years and is twice mentioned in the Bible. A few years ago a soap boiler's shop was discovered in Pompeii. The soap found in the shop had not lost all its efficacy, although it had been buried 1,800 years.

### Courtship in Spain.

In Spain the courtship begins with gifts of flowers, and the wedding ends with a shower of blossoms on the couple, who pass into a floral bower on the roof of the new home. The suitor begins his courtship by asking for a gourd of water at the home where the object of his affections lives. If this request is granted, he may persist in his attentions, but if it is denied the matter ends there. Later the man calls again, accompanied by musicians and torchbearers, and while the mandolin players strum their instruments the lover's companion makes his advances. Any time during the courtship the suitor may be rejected by the gift of a pumpkin. Three times he must make formal suit for a wife, as his request cannot be granted at first. But if her father refuses the third time he may consult a magistrate, who demands that the daughter be produced or that her father give his consent to the marriage, provided he is an honorable man. He can then carry off his bride. But this emergency does not often arise.—Woman's Home Companion.

### Poetic Salutations.

In our salutations we are poetical and pious without realizing it. "Good-by," which falls so flippantly from our lips, is really "God be with you," and "Good day" means "I wish you a good day—a happy, prosperous day." The Phoenicians on meeting used to ask, "What occupies you?" Another of their everyday phrases meant to express joy and pleasure was, "Flesh, rejoice!"

Every day on our streets we hear the pet phrase of the Germans, "Wie gehts?" (How goes it?) or "Auf wiedersehen" (Till we meet again). And the Italian fruit dealer at the corner calls to his comrade in his native tongue, "God give you a good morning."

The ancient Irish mother upon entering a house says in her own language, "The blessings of God be on this house."

"Peace be with you" is the Hebrew benediction, and the answer is equally beautiful, "With you be peace."

### Interesting For the Husband.

A titled lady warned her new gardener that her husband had an irritating habit of disparaging everything he saw in the greenhouse and of ordering in a reckless manner new plants to be bought.

"But on no account humor him," she said. "Whatever he says, throw cold water on him, or he will ruin us with his extravagance."

At this point the new gardener turned on her a white and startled face.

"Ma'am," he said, "if he orders me to pitch every plant in the place on the rubbish heap, I sha'n't ever have the pluck to douse him in cold water. Won't it do as well if I get a drain of warm water out of the boiler and let it trickle gently down his neck?"—London Tit-Bits.

### Presenting Arms to a Cat.

Some fifty years ago a very high English official died in a fortress at a place that is one of the centers of Brahmanic orthodoxy, and at the moment when the news of his death reached the sepoy guard at the main gate a black cat rushed out of it. The guard presented arms to the cat as a salute to the flying spirit of the powerful Englishman, and the coincidence took so firm a hold of the locality that up to a few years ago neither exhortation or orders could prevent a Hindoo sentry at that gate from presenting arms to any cat that passed out at night.—Bombay Times.

### Progressive Tippling.

A correspondent of the Lancet tells a story in reference to the rapid growth of the habit of tippling which may be developed in unsuspecting subjects. Two elderly ladies, he says, were surprised by a visitor in the act of drinking neat brandy. Upon his expressing some surprise they said that brandy had been recommended to them as a capital preventive against cholera and that they first took it with water, and then they took it without water, and now they took it like water.

### Careless Conductor.

"Isn't this awful?" asked the common looking man on the crowded street car. "Isn't this awful? Why, there are already 105 people on this car." "It is awful," agreed the person addressed, who was a street railway magnate. "It is awful. There ought to be at least twenty more in here. I'll take that conductor's number and have him on the carpet tomorrow."—Baltimore American.

### Hit It.

An Iowa man being examined in Washington to determine his fitness for a consularship was asked, "How many Hessians did George III. hire to come to this country to fight the Americans during the Revolution?" He thought for a long time. Then he said, "I don't know, but it was a darn sight more than went back."

### Scientific Fact.

Doctor—Speaking of your trouble with your husband, do you know that it is a scientific fact that meat causes bad temper?

Mrs. De Jarr—Oh, yes; I have noticed it always does, and especially when it's burned.—New York Weekly.

### Made and Making Up.

Mr. Spinks—Well, Willie, has your sister made up her mind to go to the concert with me?

Willie—Yes. She's made up her mind, and she's making up her face now. She'll be down in a minute.

The Walk-in-the-Water, the first steamboat on Lake Erie, made her first trip from Flat Rock to Detroit in August, 1818, leaving on Sunday and arriving on Thursday.



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THEN BRONSON'S COAT LITERALLY WENT UP IN SMOKE.

a huge bridge spanned the stream where the L. and W. crossed to the town. Below this the road ran several miles toward Digby. At 7 o'clock Bronson strapped on the long bladed racing skates and with the wind at his back shot past the railroad track toward the bridge. Just as he reached this point a snap sounded and he fell. The strap holding the heel of the right skate had rotted during the summer's inactivity.

He sat down on the stone pier of a span and adjusted an extra strap. A ring on the ice caught his attention. Two men approached, and, drawing the slide over his skating lamp, he crouched, listening. Quickly he recognized the voices as those of Harry and Stevens, two yardmen who had been dismissed by Bascom. They were grumbling because switchmen had been stationed at either end of the bridge and they were obliged to climb one of the piers.

"We'll fix him good this time!" growled Harry. "He's due at Solent in his special at 8:20."

"I don't see why you have to pick out a climb like this," snarled Stevens. "We could drop down the road and pull out a rail easier than this job."

"Bah! What's a climb to dumping the supe in the river? The plunge will send the train through the ice, with water twenty feet deep. Put out the old men, will he? Well, the last one's gone by his orders."

As soon as the ruffians were safe on the bridge Harry skated noiselessly to the Solent side of the river, where the shadows were deepest. As he reached the shore something heavy shot through the air and struck the ice with a crash. It was the rail. Later came the sound of saws. They were cutting the timber guard rails.

Rapidly the horrified young fellow reviewed the chances. To return to Solent would be too slow a process. No telegram could now reach the special. He must warn the superintendent, for to inform the switchmen