

KEEPING UP WITH WATTVILLE

From the Log of the Bar and Bottle Club

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MR. FERDINAND P. STUKEY'S MAN, Rawdon, appeared in the disordered bedroom, ten minutes after the cuckoo clock had noisily announced the noon hour without producing any visible effect upon the potted body in the bed, one hand of which was still encased in the white glove of the evening before, while one foot still clung to the acquaintance of a shoe, which wandered from the covers.

Rawdon, as a perfectly trained English servant should do, noted with invincible solemnity that the statue of Venus was clothed in certain thoroughly masculine articles of apparel, that to the chandelier was attached a white tie to which was affixed the master's watch, while the master's cane and top-hat were balanced on opposite bedposts. Having perceived which, not without a certain anxiety, he advanced and having coughed correctly, said:

"Mr. Stukee, sir."

Instantly there was a convulsion under the bed covers and a roly-poly body shot to a sitting position. Mr. Stukee was not handsome. He had a puffy nose, a hungry mouth, the lazy eyes of a hippopotamus and a rowdy shock of russet hair.

"Rawdon," he said severely, glancing at the clock, "have I not told you that I wish to rise promptly at noon?"

"Please, sir, I had some difficulty in entering the apartment. The keyhole was stuffed up, sir."

"The keyhole?"

"There were several bills of large and small denomination, which had been inserted, sir. It gave me quite a bit of trouble, sir."

"I see."

STUKEY nodded gravely to signify that the explanation was accepted, cast from him the sheets and regarding the white glove and the one shoe without surprise, said to himself:

"What was the name of the fellow I met last night — wonderful chap?"

Then, coming slowly to his feet, he suffered Rawdon to envelop him in the heated bathgown of Robin's-Egg-Blue, and disentangled his foot from the superfluous boot.

"I don't feel so badly, Rawdon," he said with some surprise.

"No, sir."

"What the deuce was the name of that glorious chap, Watson — Waters, that's not it." All at once, he remembered: "Rawdon, my pocketbook."

Rawdon, at attention, searched the floor, the ceiling and the middle spaces.

"I usually leave my trousers in the piano," said Stukee, comprehending. "What else have you found?"

"Please, sir, I have n't been in the remainder of the apartment," said Rawdon; "your waistcoat and one shoe was in the icebox, sir."

"Shall I take a hot shower, a bit of breakfast, or shall I investigate," said Stukee slowly to himself. Curiosity overcame his merely physical aches and he led the way into the studio diningroom, with as much dignity as the rebellious state of his nerves would permit.

The first thing that his eye perceived was the entire breakfast set, neatly arranged on the floor, diametrically across the room from the bared mahogany table. On the latter, he observed a card, surrounded by four studs placed in constellation, in mathematical order.

"I have your trousers, sir," said Rawdon in a matter of fact tone.

Stukee approached the table, admiring the precision of the decoration and seizing the card, he read: "Mr. Jack Wattville

reminds Mr. F. P. Stukee that he is to meet him at one o'clock sharp at the Alonzo Grill to settle the wagers of the evening and to arrange a new programme of festivities."

"I have your pocketbook and cigarette case, sir," said Rawdon respectfully, in the distance.

"Wagers of the evening," muttered Stukee to himself in vague unease. "I don't remember any wagers. Who the deuce is this fellow Wattville, and how did I meet him? I remember, I remember . . . what do I remember? All I remember is his getting into a taxicab and telling the chauffeur to drive to Philadelphia. That was very late. Rawdon!"

"Yes, sir," said Rawdon, arriving joyfully with the missing coat from the linen chest. "Here it is, sir."

"Never mind that," said Stukee; "get the Social Register. Look up the name Wattville. Let me know at once, in my bath. I've got an appointment at one o'clock."

Three minutes later, as with closed eyes and grateful head he stood under the soothing heated shower, Rawdon appeared:



"Brother of the desert, salaam! Prompt as a bill chaser; pink as a maiden; fit as a fiddle!"

"Mr. Stukee."

"Well?"

"No such name, sir."

"Look in the telephone book."

"Yes, sir."

"Who the deuce is the fellow, any how," he said, as he emerged, "and what did we do? I don't like that reference to wagers."

"Mr. Stukee, sir."

"Well, Rawdon?"

"With an i or an e, sir?"

"With an i."

"No such name, sir."

"He said he always went home to sleep in Philadelphia. I do remember that," said Stukee slowly. "Rawdon, my checked suit and I'll dress in lavender."

"Yes, sir."

"Rawdon, count my money, will you? Let me know what I brought back."

"Very well, sir."

"The fellow may be a floater or a card sharp," he said, musing, contemplating his discouraged left eye. "I started out with two hundred, if I remember. On second thought, I guess it's just as well to keep out of it."

"Two hundred in your pocketbook, sir," said Rawdon reappearing, "a fifty dollar bill that was in the telephone, sir, and thirty-two that was stuffed in the keyhole, sir."

"You are sure?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Rawdon, what did I take with me last night?"

"Two hundred, sir."

"You're sure?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"My trousers, quick!"

AT TWO MINUTES of one Ferdinand P. Stukee, in lavender and checks, descended from his taxi, saying to himself for the tenth weary time:

"Why, I don't feel at all bad."

At the same moment, from the next arriving taxicab bounded out a tall, robust figure, radiant with good cheer and the zest of the morning, and turning to the driver, cried jovially:

"Keep a hundred dollars for yourself, Lorenzo; pay the mortgage off the farm!" Saying which, he turned and perceived Stukee, who was considering him in great perplexity. "Brother of the desert, salaam!" he cried with a cordial wave of the hand; "prompt as a bill chaser; pink as a maiden; fit as a fiddle."

"Wattville," said Stukee, who sought to give to his accent something between an exclamation and an interrogation.

"My boy, you are marvelous — such color, such eyes," continued Wattville, linking arms and mov-



"I seem to remember a great audience cheering me madly."