

KEEPING UP WITH WATTIVILLE

FROM THE LOG OF THE BAR AND BOTTLE CLUB

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SYNOPSIS OF PART I—Mr. Ferdinand P. Stukey, of New York, and Mr. Jack Wattiville, of Philadelphia and New York, meet, by appointment, the morning after. They are a bit foggy as to who introduced them and what happened on the preceding evening. But, on better acquaintance, they find each other congenial and embark on a new series of convivial adventures. At the Bar and Bottle Club, they are initiated in the game of Nigger Up and Nigger Down. The players sit in the Club windows, and bet on the black passersby in the Avenue—Nigger up the street, I win; Nigger down the street, I lose. After a disastrous session, Mr. Stukey and Mr. Wattiville quit, promising to return as soon as the banks reopen and they can obtain fresh funds.

PART II

STUKEY followed him to the sidewalk in a state of absolute bliss, utterly unaware of a sudden change to portentous seriousness on the face of Wattiville. At this moment, a taxicab that had been lurking in the offing came bouncing up to the curb.

"Step in, Stukey," said Wattiville, absent-mindedly. He followed suit, saying: "Drive anywhere."

The taxicab shot around the corner and proceeded up town with as much speed as though the order had been a definite one.

"Where are we going, old boy?" said Stukey, with blissful abandon.

"Stukey," asked Wattiville, rousing himself from his reverie, "can you see the chauffeur?"

"I can."
"Has he red chop whiskers?"
"I think so."
"Is that you Brannigan?" said Wattiville, lunging forward.
"The same, sir."
"Good," said Wattiville, relaxing. "I buy you for the next twenty-four hours, you understand. You belong to me."

The response was immediate and enthusiastic: "Body and soul, sir, and go as far as you like!" "Brannigan follows me everywhere," said Wattiville, in explanation; "wherever I go, he is sure to find me. He would sacrifice his life for me! He is what I call a sympathetic chauffeur."

"Wonderful," said Stukey.
"Since he has known me, he has sent his son to college and brought his aged mother over from Ireland. However, that is trivial. Stukey, do you know what I am thinking?"

"No."
"Stukey, they trimmed us well."

"You don't mean—"
"No, no! It was all square and sportsman-like; but the fact remains we did not have to call for a valise to take away our money, did we?"

"Oh, well—"
"No, Stukey, you are wrong. It was not what I call a howling success. We were trimmed—I particularly enjoyed the way that fellow Harrigan did it. I like him. In fact, I love him like a brother; but I will not go back to Philadelphia—neither will I sleep—until I apply the lather and skin him with the razor."

"The luck was with them. What do you care?"

"It is my fault, Stukey; I confess my vanity has received a wrench—a painful wrench."

"Oh, come now!"

"It has. I used to fancy myself—but I am thinking, Stukey, thinking hard and something will evolve. Brannigan!"

The red chauffeur brought the machine to a stop with a crash, his ear craned for the slightest whisper.

"Take Mr. Stukey where he wants to go."

"I say, you're not quitting," said Stukey in a grieved tone.

"A little family dinner, rather conservative," said Wattiville, plainly out of sorts. "I give no appointments. I'm like a woman—nothing definite, nothing promised—when the spirit moves—then act. At present, I'm engaged in a series of mental operations. I must be alone. I can promise nothing; but if what I am thinking of works out, we will call each other by our first names. Ta-ta, and better cut out the coffee!"

Stukey, having re-

turned to his own apartments, stood languidly contemplating his inviting bed. "Shall I dress and take in a show, or go down to the Club for supper?" He sat down carefully and considered. "I might gather a few of the boys and take in a scrap." He elevated his legs to the bed and propped his back with the pillows. "What the deuce did Wattiville break away for? I feel just like starting something—wonderful chop—a little inclined to draw the long bow. Strange—very strange person. I wish I could remember how I—where I—wish I could remember where I met him."

Five minutes later, Rawdon coming in on tiptoe delicately drew the pink and white comforter over his master's sleeping form.



"Keep the change and send your son to college"

FERDINAND P. STUKEY:

Eureka! I have it. Revenge is sweet. Thursday without fail. The Alonzo Grill—Noon today. Bring the fatted pocket-book. Millions in the scheme!

"WATTIVILLE."

Stukey had almost settled into the belief of the non-existence of his chance-acquaintance, explaining the phenomena on the same highly scientific grounds with which he was accustomed to account for other confusing memories, when the above telegram was brought to him. Confronted with another séance with Wattiville, he carefully reviewed their past relations, with a little growing suspicion that the affair at the Club had been an elaborately prepared hoax. Fortunately, due to a week's session with his dentist, he was in superb physical condition, his mind clear and his logical powers alert.

"If there's any hoax going on," he said militantly as he prepared for the start, "I'll find it out this time."

Hardly had he deployed on the avenue, when a rush of wheels came to a cranky stop and he felt his arm seized as he heard a familiar voice cry:

"Wattiville and his tame taxi—at your service."

From the chauffeur's seat, the red chop whiskers of Brannigan bobbed to him in happy recognition.

"You got my telegram, I see," said Wattiville, rushing on. "You are eager; you are curious; you thirst for revenge. Brannigan, follow at a respectful distance."

The taxicab fell behind and ostentatiously escorted them.

"Let me say at once, Stukey, old boy," said Wattiville, drawing him gently through the swinging door of a café, "that the plan I have evolved is so Napoleonic that it demands quick wits and cool nerves. We must be strictly abstemious—though, of course, an allowance must be made for the joy of meeting. Two rounds of Bronx and then a gentle Martini."

"I say, Wattiville," began Stukey firmly.

"Three and that is all," said Wattiville glibly. "You see, it's this way, scientifically; if we limit ourselves to three, we must concentrate—limit but concentrate, that's my motto. But don't let's discuss such trivial matters."

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Stukey saw the avenue choked with the ranks of the Dixie Grenadiers Club, marching gloriously