FIVE CROOKED CHAIRS

By FAREMAN WELLS

SYNOPSIS

Adam Meriston, a farmer's son, articled to a solicitor, makes a brave but unsuccessful attempt to thwart three thieves in a bag-snatching raid. The bag was torn from the hands of a girl who afterwards explains to Adam that it contains the day's takings of her father's shop.

He attempts to track the thieves and reaches an old warehouse. Adams enters the building while the girl watches the door. Suddenly he hears footsteps.

The man turns out to be Adam's employer—Corville Perkin.

Adam, in his private hours experiments with short-wave wireless.

Walking homeward, Adam is nearly run down by a large swift car.

He calls on Priscilla Norval.

Her father recounts the history of five antique chairs he possesses.

All the way home Adam was trying to put two and two together. It was a complicated calculation—Mr. Montada, the important client for whom Mr. Perkin was making a match-light inspection of a disused warehouse. Mr. Montada, the owner of property in Grail Street—Adam had had a chance to verify that Mr. Montada, the client whose car had so nearly dashed into Adam later on the same evening. Mr. Montada, who was concerned in the alleged frame-up that was likely to turn out so badly for the ex-burglar, Hagar. And now Mr. Montada, the employer of the hunchback who had taken part in the robbery at Grail Street corner.

He pondered this sequence of events, but he could get no connected theory out of it; finally he put it from his mind.

But it came back a few days later, and with greater force.

"NOT A WORD TO ANYONE! ! "

Adam had been sent with a brief to one of the few barristers who had chambers in the town. The particular barrister for whom this brief was marked did a good deal of work for the Perkin firm. Adam was frequently at his chambers, and although Adam was not a "good mixer," he had struck up a friendship with this barrister's clerk, a man named Meopham. Though always carrying a worried expression, suggesting that the entire burden of his master's practice fell on his shoulders, Meopham was a kindly fellow, easy to get on with when once you accepted his belief that he was the indispensable pillar of his "bloke's" practice.

To Meopham, Adam mentioned the Hagar case. Meopham, who knew the details of the evidence, announced with an air of assurance, "Hagar has a good chance of going down for three years, I should think."

"His wife's a queer one," continued Adam. "She's been trying to get our old man to have him asked a certain question in the box. When he refused she fastened on me."

"They're often like that," said Meopham, judicially. "Fancy they know a lone of defence that'll lick anything. What sort of question was it?" He coughed drily, burying his face in a colored handkerchief.

"Well, apparently all she wanted was to get the defence to ask him when he last saw Mr. Montada."

"What?" The enquiry was sharp and explosive. He stared a moment and resumed: "Of course your bloke wasn't going to have him asked that?"

"I don't suppose he thought it would do any good."

"I'll bet he didn't either. Look here, my lad, you're coming out to have a drink with me. No. I'm not going to pump you. I've heard enough, and you haven't so much as said a word to anyone, see. But you can watch out for my bloke asking that question." He coughed wretchedly for a few minutes while he found his hat, and as soon as he had ceased coughing he chuckled as if it had been the most amusing exercise.

Adam normally would have been the last man to take a drink during business hours, but somehow now he was feeling conscious that there was something unusually important behind the other's knowing look. They drank together in a little bar and ten minutes slipped very pleasantly away until Adam felt he really must get back to the office. He was almost beginning to feel as if there might be something attractive in the legal profession, something that hitherto he had missed.

"Now not a word to anyone, mind you," the other told him as they parted. "If we don't see some pretty fireworks before this Hagar case is finished I shall be disappointed, that is all." Adam went back to the office in a puzzled dream that had nothing to do with the glass of mild ale he had imbibed.

An evening or two later, when he was hurrying off late to the Technical College he came face to face with Mr. Montada for the first time. A very small, wizened man with a great hooked nose that projected like a talon from his yellow face, and little hot brown eyes that pierced like a stiletto, he seemed so obviously to be Mr. Montada that it hardly required the sight subsequently of the big car below to confirm Adam's instinctive guess as to his identity.

Mr. Montada was about to pass along the corridor to Mr. Perkin's private door when the two became mixed up in one of those absurd maneovres that occur when two hurrying people endeavor to make way for one another. It seemed doubtful if Mr. Montada was as politly disposed as his maneouvring might have indicated, for when the two had chassed ineffectively for the third time, his thin long upper lip lifted viciously, and he spat out a foreign word, Spanish presumably, that sounded not at all complimentary. Adam stood stillat once, and the little man moved round him and scurried down the passage.

Adam heard Mr. Perkin's door slam a moment later and judged that the client had walked in without so much as a knock. An imperious man this little Mr. Montada who owned derelict property, kept a chauffeur capable of high-way robbery and of trying to run down respectable citizens at night, and who was somehow concerned in what Mr. Hagar alleged to be a frame-up. It was in a very puzzled state of mind that Adam hastened along to the College reflecting on these things as he went.

BACK TO SCIENCE.

Once in the laboratory Adam forgot all about Mr. Montada in listening to the Professor's account of the splendid progress he had made with his investigations on the valve. It was certainly an interesting account. The Professor had, among other things, stampeded the members of a visiting committee from the Town Hall just as they were becoming a nuisance to the teaching staff, induced in his own wife a very elaborate attack of hysterics, and had also induced one of the harmless old ladies who cleaned the building after lecture hours to drop her bucket of soapy water in the middle of his office carpet and dash away to lock herself in one of the cleaner's cupboard's, a refuge from which it required a professional locksmith to extricate her.

(To be continued)

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All people like an excuse for their shortcomings. There are gray-haired men who think their bad tempers are due to the fact that their mothers did not train them properly, and lay the responsibility for the faulty grammar on the shoulders of some teacher who perhaps had forty or fifty children under her charge. Mothers may be lax in discipline, but there is no reason why their children should not finish up the job they left at loose ends. The most important lessons are self-taught.

Do not try to get rid of your responsibility for that which you are by blaming your mother, your teacher, some school-mate, or an older brother who set you a bad example. Whether others help or hinder, you are the captain.

OLD PEOPLE FEEL YOUNG

Just because more years than you care to count have fled by on your life's calendar is no reason for *feeling* old. Age, after all, isn't a matter of years. It is a matter of health. Stay vigorous and you stay young. But how, you ask. Do it the way thousands of people of advancing years do. Take Wincarnis regularly. Wincarnis is a delicious wine, free from drugs, that brings you all the valuable elements of grapes combined with the highest grade beef and guaranteed malt extract. Its invigorating effect is almost magical—yet perfectly natural.

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CANADIAN SCHOOLS

(Bureau of Statistics)

Schools and universities in Canada claim about 3.5 per cent. of the national expenditure, and this may be considered as an indication of their importance in the economic life of the country. Their weight as a social factor can not be as readily represented statistically, but the following considerations are of interest in this connection.

No other occupantional activity in the life of the country claims the daily attention of as many persons. Each years sees one-fourth of the population of Canada appearing in the classroom either as pupil or teacher. There are about twice as many school children as there are farmers, and as many as there are men in all other occupations combined.

For almost ten years of his life, the Canadian child of today goes to school. If his actual attendance in months is considered, counting ten months as a school year, he receives eight and a half years of schooling, or about half as much again as his parents.

As a formative influence the school can hardly be expected to approach the weight of the home. But in relation to other influences its weight is heavy. If from the time that he starts to school he spends an hour and a half weekly in church, at the theatre, at the athletic stadium, reading the daily press, or listening to the radio, the young Canadian of today will have to live to the age of 90 years in order to spend as much time with any one of these as he spends in school.

Puzzling Universe

Its Inconsistencies Are Still A Mystery To Scientists

The outer nebulae are rushing away at the rate of 12,000 miles a second. Assuming that we have here optical evidence that the universe is expanding like a soap bubble, in accordance with the latest fashion in relativist circles, it is easy to calculate when the process began and how long ago the great act of creation began. The answer proves to be ten thousand million years.

But the new school of astro-physicists contends that the actual age of the universe must be a hundred times greater. It takes that long for the stars to radiate their mass away by the annihilation of their mass and its conversion into energy. How can the universe be younger than the stars of which it is composed? The discrepancy presents one of the major problems of physical science.

An English student, H. J. Walke, comes forward with an explanation that seems worth considering. He suggests that the stars may be radiating not simply light, heat and electromagnetic energy in a suicidal conversion of their mass, but that they are ridding themselves of actual matter in the form of ions or incomplete atoms, some of which are responsible for the manifestations of cosmic rays.

The explanation is ingenious, but it requires experimental verification. How that is possible at a time when the very nature of the cosmic rays is still the subject of much discussion, it is difficult to see. When we know what the cosmic rays really are the mystery may be solved.

U.S. Train Makes 100 Miles An Hour

Philadelphia. — The "Flying Yankee"—latest in streamline train construction—clicked her wheels at better than 100 miles an hour on her trial run for the Boston and Maine and Maine Central Railroad last week.

Leaving the E. G. Budd manufacturing plant, the stainless steel train, first stream-line one for an eastern railroad was taken over the Reading railroad lines to West Trenton, N.J., and return.

Back in the manufacturing plant again, officials of the Budd Company said minor adjustments to be made immediately will enable the "Yankee" to move faster than 120 miles an hour. Made up of three sections, the train is 199 feet long, powered with a 600-horsepower Winton Diesel engine. She is equipped to carry 146 passengers and a small baggage compartment.

"If we had libraries of books that told us what we don't know, they'd have to be seventy times larger than the ones we have that tell us what we do know."—Charls F. Kettering.

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Issue No. 8—'35

News!

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Much From Little

The days of romance are not yet over, and many a small and struggling establishment founded as a means of livelihood during the depression period may yet become a massive industrial undertaking.

Consider the case of two brothers belonging to Birmingham, England, who in 1910 decided to engage in the smallest possible manufacture of bicycles and who rented a four-roomed house in that city at a cost of six shillings a week where they commenced work.

At that time the brothers thought that they were very busy if they succeeded in producing and selling twenty bicycles a week. After a year's hard work, however, they found that they had saved enough money to extend their humble "factory" by covering an adjoining yard. Although the war interfered with their activities, they persevered, and today their work covers 13 acres and they give employment to 3,000 workpeople. During the past year, the firm has manufactured 600,000 bicycles and next year, they are planning to produce not less than 750,000 machines—more than any other concern anywhere in the world that is engaged in the manufacture of bicycles.

This is the romance of the Hercules Cycle Company, which will spend 250,000 pounds on newspaper advertising next year and which is today acknowledged to be in the forefront of the international cycle trade. Who can tell if some of the small works established during the past few years in this country by out-of-work individuals who were determined to preserve their independence will not eventually reach the same standing?—Brockville Recorder-Times.

Ontario's First Highway

It is just twenty years ago that the first permanent highway was built and it spanned the forty-mile stretch between Hamilton and Toronto. It was built as a relief measure to give much needed employment to hundreds of men in 1914-15. Since that time hundreds of miles of concrete roads have been built, stretching from Windsor to Montreal and from Sarnia to points leading to all urban centres of Ontario. With highways civilization advances. It was so in the old land. The Romans were the first great roadmakers. They built so well and solidly that many of their roads are still in use, and we cannot think of roadmaking without casting the mind back to those far-off days when the legionaries of Caesar laid down the primary conditions of civilization—roads to travel by. Not by the sword but by the spade did those early conquerors make their finest conquest.—Exchange.

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