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 explains that it contains the day's takings of her father's shop.

He attempts to track the thieves and reaches an old warehouse. Adam 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.

Adam is extremely puzzled over the connection of Corville Perkin and Montada who wants the antique chairs. Then Priscilla is spirited away.

The ex-criminal was smoking shag at his fireside. He listened patiently to the story of the disappearanoe, shook his head knowingly and spat at the fireplace. "Neat bit of work," he commented approvingly a full minute late.

"But is it Montada, and where would they take her?" asked the distraught Adam.

Hagar shook his head and waited for his words. They came to him at last. "'Tisn't Montada this time. Montada's bottled up." He said with an air of extreme certitude.

"Bottled up, where?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Hagar cunningly.

The ensuing long silence was very hard to bear. Hagar sat quiet, slowly rubbing tobacco between his great calloused palms, his yellowish eyes glancing at his visitor and shifting secretively back to the fireplace again. His mouth worked softly as if forming words for which he possessed no sound. At last he cleared his throat and again spat at the grate.

"Montada might give them away," he said abruptly. "Try Grail Street. Cross the river. Can't be Montada's own work this time. Hagar can't help you. Wish I could. Grateful."

After this unusually long speech his lips closed slowly and heavily, like the doors of a safe. Evidently as as he was concerned the interview was at an end. Adam listessly shook his great hand and went out, hardly responding at all to Mrs. Hagar's affectionate adieu.

Although his informant had seemed positive that Montada was to be ruled out, his mind clung to the suggestion that Montada might give the others, whoever they were, away. It was a line on which to go, the only way that had presented itself, so that when he came to Hayne Street again he once more turned towards the narrow Grail Street entrance.

It was a chilly April night. A river mist hung about the ill-lit alley. Barred doors and boxed-up windows seemed to frown resentfully through the shroud of light vapor at him as he passed. At the bottom the great blank wall barred his way as inexorably as ever. The sight of its inadequate light recalled to him his last visit, and recalled it with the poignancy of despair. It was under that light that they had first realized that they were friends.

He pushed hard against the big warehouse gate. This time it was solidly fixed. Then he recalled that Hagar had said he was to cross the river. He understood that to mean that he must find some means of entry from the back. So he carefully counted his steps back to the turning and then pushed on over Hayne Bridge. Taking the first turn on his left he counted steps again until, at the same number he had counted in Grail Street, he found himself opposite a big, well-lighted building. He strolled past it, not caring to enter since people were leaving it in a bustling group after their day's business. Instead he strolled on until he reached the gate of a small yard. This was not yet closed, and he was able to wander in and reach a low wall that bounded the sullenly flowing river. Across the black waters he could just distinguish, above the wreathing mists, the roof of the Grail Street warehouse.

There was no sign of life about it, but he did not expect that. He knew that hidden within its forbidding confines there was a small room whose windows might be shrouded with blankets, a room that might hold a prisoner. As he brooded there he recalled the time he had stood on the opposite bank, not then alone, and he seemed once more in memory to hear the startled clucking of a hen. He glanced round the yard enquiringly. There was no sign of anything like a hencoop in the place. It was not the sort of place to keep hens in. Probably the clucking had been a signal.

Perhaps this was the side from which the furtive users of the Grail Street premises made their approach. But how? There was no sign of any boat, no landing place.

The puzzle was too much for his mind in its distress. Determined somehow to find a way across that 20 feet of swirling foulness he returned to the street, and this time he entered the white-washed hallway of the building. The place was evidently let out as offices and storerooms, and there was a big board on the wall displaying the names of the tenants. He stood before this for a while as if seeking an address, and as he stood there he heard someone pass behind him. Some instinct warned him not to look round until the person had begun to go up the stone stairs and beyond. Then he glanced that way and was rewarded by a glimpse of the unmistakable straight back of Mr. Corville Perkin.

He watched him hurry up the stairs like a man who has urgent business, and then followed him quietly.

(To be Continued.)

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CORN BORERS ARE LESS THIS YEAR

The good news has come from the Provincial Entomologist that in almost every county the borers were much scarcer last fall than at any time since the Corn Borer Act came into force; in fact he does not know of a single field or plot of corn in the whole province that was ruined by the insect in 1934. This scarcity of borers saved the corn growers last year many thousands of dollars. The Entomologist, however, says that it will be a great pity if the farmers have come to believe, as many probably have, that the borer has seen its best days and will not trouble the corn any longer, and that therefore, the Act is now unnecessary. Such a belief is based upon lack of knowledge of the insect and of the influence of weather conditions upon it. In Europe, where the borer has been for ages, there are sometimes several years when the weather (chiefly very dry weather) is so unfavourable to the insect that it does almost no damage. Such season, however, are often followed by several successive, moist, warm seasons so favorable that the borers soon become a veritable scourge and the government is obliged to make it compulsory for the farmers to clean up their stubble and other corn remanants to save the crop. This, for instance, had to be done in Italy only two or three years ago. When this is true of Europe, where there are many parasites and some severe diseases attacking the borer, it is much more likely to be true in Ontario where there are very few parasites and almost no diseases. In fact, Professor Caesar says that his experience has shown him that in a favorable year for the borer the very best we can hope to do by a good clean-up is to prevent it from increasing more than two-fold instead of four or five-fold, as it would if the stubble and refuse were left on the ground. He also states that without a fair clean-up it would take only three such successive years to practically destroy the sweet corn, and most of the husking corn industry. This is also the opinion of all those who have carefully studied the insect. Therefore, to drop the Act at a time like this when the corn crop is so essential to the welfare of the Province, would be to disregard the true interests of the farmer.

Every corn grower is urged to use good judgment this spring in dealing with his corn field, so that he may comply with the Act without any appreciable work. He can do this if he is careful to plow the stubble and other corn remnants under completely and then to use a disc instead of a toothed cultivator in tilling the soil and a disc drill instead of the other types when sowing the seed. If the stubble has heaved this spring it should be rolled with a heavy roller before discing. This will firm it so that very little will be dragged up by the disc or the drill.

By doing their share voluntarily, farmers can shorten the time required for inspection and thereby make the cost of enforcement of the Act very light, less than 25c each. This includes cost to the Department as well as the county cost.

The Corn Borer Act is for the farmers, not against them, and is worthy of everyone's hearty cupport. The careful man who cuts his corn short and plows the stubble under thoroughly with a wide furrow plow will have no complaints to make against the Act.

"No one has any business going to the theatre and sitting like a lump of suet."—Dame Sybil Thorndike.

"We can secure all the advantages of solitude if, when beset by people we remember how wonderful solitude can be."—Abbe Ernest Dimnet.

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Issue No. 17—'35

Russia and Rubber

PROGRESS OF SOVIET UNION IN ITS SEARCH FOR SUBSTITUTES

When the Soviet Union promulgated its first five-year plan the world heard much of Russian attempts to solve the problem of rubber. Latex had always been imported. Henceforth, it was decided, the Union must either discover within its own borders plants that yield something like rubber or develop its own processes for the synthetic production of the material.

The Union has done both. It has plantations covering 79,000 acres on which rubber-like plants grow, and it has factories in which rubber is made out of alcohols and acetylene.

The plantations are the visible evidence of a successful search for plants of the right species. Year after year European Russia and Siberia were combed for roots, shrubs, trees and bushes that yielded what might be a tell-tale milk. At last tau-sagiz was discovered in Central Asia. That was in 1929. Moscow lost no time in spreading the glad news throughout the world. Probably the discovery received as much publicity as Edison's effort to produce a rubber substitute from golden rod.

Tau-sagiz is a shrub. Its roots contain a gum coagulated in fibers. From 15 to 30 per cent. of the dried weight of the roots consists of this gum. A survey made in 1933 revealed that 15,000,000 tau-sagiz shrubs grow wild in Soviet territory. Twenty million more were cultivated on plantations a year ago.

Besides tau-sagiz there are two other gum-bearing plants. One, kok-sagiz, was found in Kazakistan in 1931; the second, crim-sagiz, in the Crimea a year later. Both are weeds much like dandelion; both flourish in the damp, salty earth of mountainous country.

The production of synthetic rubber follows American lines. Like other chemists through the world, those of the Soviet Union recognized at once the importance of chloroprene, discovered by Father Nieuwland of Notre Dame and developed by Dr. Carrothers of the du Pont laboratories. In America the rubber-like product derived from chloroprene is called duprene; in Russia, soyprene.

Probably more synthetic rubber is utilized in Russia than in any other country. But the Soviet engineers and chemists are not pleased with most of the tires made from their soyprene. The fault lies, not with the raw material, but with the method of manufacture.

Marriage, Studies Said Not to Mix

Boston—Get a college education first, then get married (if you want to), but don't mix the two.

That is the advice of former Justice Robert J. Peaslee of the New Hampshire Supreme Court, now a lecturer at the Boston University School of Law on domestic relations.

"Students who marry while they are in college are handicapping their chances for happiness," Judge Peaslee said in an interview.

"Married life, in order to be successful, should be centred about a home and family, not around classes and study. Home life more than anything is important to a happy marriage."

Judge Peaslee maintained that the good effects of co-operation and mutual interest that come with marriage are lessened by the fact that students are likely to live in a boarding house or a similarly unfavorable environment."

22,000 Requests For Jobs In Civil Service

OTTAWA.—Last year there were 22,000 applications for positions in the civil service, according to the report of the civil commission tabled in the House of Commons recently. A total of 12,400 were examined.

Of the appointments made 42 were permanent and 2,333 temporary. Forty males, of whom 23 were ex-service men, were placed in permanent positions, while the 1,879 given temporary employment, 609 were veterans, the report says.

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IF you suffer periodic pain and discomfort, try Lydia E. Pinkham's Tablets. In most cases they bring welcome relief. As Mrs. Caroline Newman says, "They ease the pain". Mrs. Raymond Chaput, Route 4, Tilbury, Ont. says, "I suffered something terrible. Had such backaches and headaches I was worn out. Your Tablets helped me". Let them help you, too. *Ask your druggist.*

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High Cost of Weddings Cut

The Chinese Government recently delivered a telling blow at the high cost of weddings, when 57 couples marched to the altar together and were married in a simple ceremony, with General Wu Teh-Chen, Mayor of Shanghai, officiating.

Aimed at setting an example of economy to the nation in accordance with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek's "New Life" Movement, the ceremony was devoid of all the frills and extravagance characteristic of the traditional Chinese wedding.

To the labored strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, played by a Chinese brass band, the marriage candidates paraded down the crimson-carpeted aisle, while a crowd of 1,200 persons, largely relatives looked on.

The couples ascended the platform in groups of four, bowed three times before the statue of Sun Yat-Sen, "Father of the Republic," bowed twice before each other and once to the Mayor.

They then received brilliantly decorated certificates which made them man and wife. Each marriage was completed in two minutes. The government charged each couple the equivalent of $7 for the ceremony, the price including the certificate and a gift to the bride.

This was in startling contrast to the customary Chinese wedding which sometimes throws the young couple into debt for life.

British Writers Are Criticized

New York — A Briton recently praised the "gusto" of American novelists and said British readers are turning more and more to American novels for qualities of exciting entertainment.

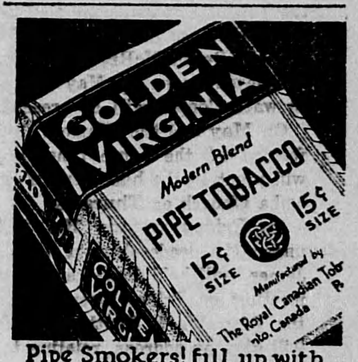
Norman Collins, partner in a London publishing firm, said: "When I read an American novel I think of a good dogfight, with something happening all the time.

"In England they are mostly on leashes and are not likely to start a fight.

"Or you can think of it as a nice canter, with the author mentally pouring tea for himself en route, as against a steeplechase, with a lot of horses falling, but action, excitement and gusto every minute.

"That is why American books are being read in England, rather than the writings of our frightfully clever young men, who are ashamed of their emotions and have successfully divested themselves of intellectual curiosity."

"The secret of being miserable is to have leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not." — George Bernard Shaw.



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