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.

"Think Perkin's speaking the truth?"

"I think he's too frightened to invent anything."

"So do I. Just give him a really strong dose now, so that he doesn't get over it too quickly, and then pack up the circuit as fast as you can. I'm not leaving that behind."

Obediently Adam provided his chief with a full exposure. The wretched man sprang wildly towards the outer door, but this brought him nearer to the source of the rays, and he had not the will to continue. Instead, he recoiled and, dashing back to the farthest corner of the room, he began to scramble, and claw at the solid walls like a man in the extremist dementia.

"That'll do," said the Professor. "It will take him a good few minutes to get over that. Come along quickly, and be careful how you handle that valve."

Within a couple of minutes, the two were hurrying down the stairs. "Whereabouts is that place he mentioned?" enquired the breathless Professor.

"On the other side of the Moors from Pennymoor. It's an old farmhouse that's been empty for years."

"Far from here?"

"A matter of twelve miles, I should think."

"Would you rather we told the police or went there ourselves?"

"Let's go ourselves if there's any way of getting there quickly."

"Taxi'll be too slow. As soon as he's over his fright he'll probably dash off there himself. There's a garage at the corner's. Let's see if we can get hold of a fast car."

He led the way to the largest garage in Menston, Adam staggering after him with the suit case. Fortunately the Professor was known to the proprietor, and it was not long before he had procured a car, and a driver. It was a good car, though somewhat past its best, and the driver handled it capably.

They slipped rapidly out of Menston and were soon speeding between green hedges. The Professor plied his companion with cigarettes and talked to him soothingly. And indeed Adam was in need of some such ministration, for after all the tension of the past few days their progress seemed to him unendurably slow, and his nerves cried out with his eagerness to reach Cardus Holt faster than any car could have been expected to make the journey.

They were about eight miles out when there came a sound of furious hooting from a car behind them. "Perkin's car?" asked the Professor. Adam nodded.

"He's made a good recovery. He's not without guts, your Mr. Corville Perkin." To the driver he said: "I'll give you a pound if you manage to keep in front of that car."

Their driver grinned nervously. "I don't want to get into trouble, sir," he extenuated.

"I'll take the responsibility for any trouble."

"Very good, sir." They swerved well into the centre of the narrow road and held their place there.

Glancing back Adam could see the set grey face of Mr. Perkin at the wheel. He looked both formidable and desperate, and for a moment the younger man's heart sank with the realization that he was obviously far from being beaten. He did not look the sort of man who would ever be content to accept defeat. The struggle was by no means over yet. Still, they had the advantage while they were able to keep in front of him. Presently, however, he saw the pursuing car fall back suddenly amid the dust and harsh grating of a prodigious dry skid. Then he saw it swing violently into a side road. "He's trying to cut us off," he cried.

Their driver forced a slight increase of their own speed. "We're all out, sir," he complained. "We can't do much against a car like that, I'm afraid. Depends how much further he has got to go."

They tore along, swerving recklessly round the narrow bends for another mile. Ahead of them was a junction and as they approached this they glimpsed the other car tearing obliquely towards them. Their driver made a last effort and then braked. "Can't risk it," he snapped. "Anyway he won't get round at that speed."

But Mr. Perkin did get round. For a moment his car rose up on one side until it seemed as if it must inevitably topple over. Then a skid saved him. His rear wheels swung into the banking and, as if by a miracle, the car righted and straightened out into a grey blur shooting up the lane away from them."

"He's got nerve!" gasped their driver enviously, though no doubt in his mind saying good-bye to the pound note he had tried so hard to earn.

"Keep on his track," replied the Professor coolly. "If there's anything in front he'll hit it first." He turned to Adam.

"I hardly think either of us realized how conclusive an experiment it was that we completed this afternoon. A man who can take a corner like that within half an hour of being literally frightened out of his wits has no nerves at all as the ordinary person understands them."

"In the distance they could see Perkin's car making up a private road still at the same reckless speed. There was a crashing sound and for a moment the air about him was filled with flying pieces of white timber.

"Looks as if he'd charged a gate," commented the professor. "That must be the entrance drive, I take it." The old boy, Adam reflected, seemed to be enjoying himself.

It was the entrance drive, and very soon they were running up it at a decidedly safer speed. They passed over the shattered remains of the gate and swung into a curved drive that swept past the front of a neglected building in grey stone whose blank upper windows looked forlornly out on a tangle of bushes that had once been a garden. Before they had properly stopped Adam was scrambling out. He dashed up to the solid old front door, but hardly paused there a moment. It was so obviously not the sort of door one could force quickly. Round the house he went, tearing his way through brambles and bushes. At the back there was an open window and, with scarcely a glance at the rest of the straggling old-fashioned premises, he sprang over the sill.

A HOUSE OF SHADOWS

He was in a large ill-lit empty room that had a closed door in the far corner. The door opened easily to let him into a vast shadowy hall.

"Keep straight on, Meriston," said Mr. Perkin's cold voice. "Across the hall and up the stairs if you please."

He checked, feeling alarm for the first time at the cool menace of the man's tone. In the gloom he could distinguish Perkin and three other men, two of them burly fellows, and the third unmistakably Mr. Montada's hunch-backed servitor. In Mr. Perkin's hand was something bright, something that even in this light there was no mistaking.

"Do as you're told at once," came the sneering tones as he hesitated. "Upstairs with you! I'll follow to make sure you do not find the wrong room. Hurry up or this might go off".

(To be Continued.)

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Issue No. 23 — '35

Your Handwriting Reveals Your Character!

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Geoffrey St. Clair
Graphologist

(Editor's Note: Letters continue to come in in increasing volume, as more and more of our readers wish to avail themselves of the help and intimate guidance of this well-known Graphologist. Do YOU need his help? Your letter will be confidential. See article for details).

Is a young wife doing the right thing by encouraging the attentions of a single young man without the knowledge of her husband?

Here is part of a letter I have just received which is self-explanatory: "Dear Mr. St. Clair—I am 23 years old, good-looking and before I was married, four years ago, was popular with both sexes. My husband is older than I am, being 37 years of age, but for all that, I am very much in love with him and he with me. Unfortunately, however, he is called away frequently to work, sometimes several weeks elapsing beofre he returns home, and it is impossible for me to go with him on these occasions. You will appreciate that I am thus left very lonely, and being young, like to have at least a fairly good time. I have been going out, of course, and on one of these occasions, when my husband was away, became acquainted with a very likeable young man, about my own age. He comes from a good family, and took a liking to me, so that he asked me quite often to let him take me out. There is nothing emotional about our friendship; it is entirely platonic, but for some reason or other I didn't tell my husband about him, really, I think, because it didn't occur to me that it was worth telling about. Now that we see each other quite often, it doesn't seem possible for me to tell my husband, and I am beginning to worry a little, because I wouldn't want him to be worried. Is there anything you can tell me or advise that might help me solve this little problem?"

I can quite appreciate the loneliness that this young married lady has to put up with when her husband is away for long stretches, and the temptation to make friends too while away the lonely hours. The difference in the ages of this lady and her husband is considerable, and if there was any question of incompatibility or divergence of opinions between them, an affir of the type that she describes would certainly complicate matters.

However, she says that she is very much in love with her husband and there is, apparently, no bone of contention. It thus simplifies the case to a matter of loneliness and the necessity of having friends.

It is a peculiar fact that in cases of this kind, the friend who appears to constitute a problem is always a member of the opposite sex. I suppose that this is natural because of the humanness of people and the natural attraction of the sexes. But it certainly provides a source of potential trouble and unhappiness, and in the present case, this is increased by the fact that the husband has been kept unaware of the friendship.

This is the point that can provide the spark of real danger, because the husband is quite likely to place a rather suspicious complexion on the affair when it comes to his attention, and it is certain to do so before long.

My advice to my correspondent is to tell her husband. After all, he is not an ogre, and it is a hundred chances to one that if the wife tells him all about it, without placing too vital a stress on it, he will understand. Then the young man may be invited to the house when the husband is present, and in that way, a family friendship begun.

I have neglected to speak of the possibilities—almost probabilities—that the young man might eventually feel more than platonic to this young wife, and start further complications, because I feel that, at this stage, a frank explanation on the wife's part will clear up any vestige of difficulty arising from the situation.

Have you any problem that Mr. St. Clair can advise you upon? Would you like his help? Have you any friends whose true characters you would like to know? Perhaps you merely wish to know what YOUR handwriting reveals of yourself. Send specimens of the writings you wish to be analysed, stating birthdate in each case. Send 10c coin for each specimen, and include with a 3c stamped addressed envelope, to: Geoffrey St. Clair, Room. 421, 73 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, Ont. Letters will be confidential and replies mailed as quickly as possible.

Export Is Doubled

The value of farm implements and machinery exported during April was more than double that of the same month last year when it amounted to $500,831 against $232,651, the Dominion Bureau of Statisitcs reports. The largest exports went to the United States at $204,948, the United Kingdom next with $111,527, the British South Africa third with $72,807.

Heavy Water Cure

Its Effect on Slowing Heart Action Is Put to Test

Drs. T. Cunliffe Barnes and J. Warren of the Osborn Zoological Laboratory, Yale, cut out frogs' hearts, put some in ordinary water and some in heavy water. Reporting in Science, they relate that in ordinary water the frogs' hearts beat ten times in eleven seconds, but in heavy water only ten times in more than sixteen seconds.

This slowing effect may have its uses in the treatment of fast hearts. But Drs. Barnes and Warren make no such prediction. More experiments must be conducted with higher mammals—rats, rabbits and the like—before heavy water can be prescribed for human beings whose hearts are in a violent flutter. Besides the lowest price thus far quoted for heavy water is $2 a milligram—about sixteen drops.

That heavy water should retard the heart is natural. Chemical systems in which heavy hydrogen is found have less energy than others. Hence a slowing down should have an effect like that brought about by bathing in ice water.

A Farmer's Luck

A despatch from Dundalk, Ont., to a Toronto paper, says: "Hardluck has been dogging R. Osborne, of Wareham. His daughter has been seriously ill in a Toronto hospital. His wife was thrown from a buggy and badly shaken up. In the mix-up the vehicle was damaged and the horse hurt. During this time Mr. Osborne was "batching it' and making maple syrup. One boiling of maple syrup burned and was no good. As if this were not enough, the fire from his camp ignited a cedar stump nearby and burned the cross-cut saw. Upon extinguishing the fire, Mr. Osborne came up to his barnyard only to discover that a large brown hawk had killed a number of hens. He set a trap and caught the hawk. The bird was shipped to Riverdale Park in Toronto."

The two healthiest places in England and Wales, accepting the average age of the inhabitants as a guide; are Thurstanland, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and Aberayron, in Cardigan. In both these villages the average age is forty and a half.

Tea at its Best

"SALADA" TEA

STAR GAZING A FINE PUZZLE GAME

Life may well exist on Mars, says Dr. Helen Sawyer Hogg, of Toronto, one of Canada's three women astronomers.

"There is oxygen there, though it is only 1-1000th of the content of our air. In their summer, which is twice as long as ours, the polar ice caps melt," Dr. Hogg stated.

"The only other planet in our solar system on which physical conditions for life existed was Venus, which had so much cloud around it it was impossible to pierce it with a telescope." She thought it possible there might be other solar systems like our own.

To Dr. Helen Hogg, who has just come from the Empire's second largest observatory at Vivtoria, B.C., to the largest Empire telescope, the Dunlap Memorial, at Richmond Hill, Ont., her work is a "grand puzzle-game" and finding the answers is the big kick she gets out of life, according to an interview in the Toronto Daily Star.

Dr. Hogg has come here with her husband astroomer, a Toronto graduate whom she met at the Harvard observatory. She is discovering "inconstant" stars in certain beautiful circular masses called "globular clusters," which contain as many as 50,000 stars, all in a group brighter than the sun although invisible to the naked eye.

Her work confines her to about 100 of these multifoliate clusters, all of which are above and below the Milky these stars vary in light, it is possible to work out their distance from the earth," explained Dr. Hogg.

Only one or two out of the 50,000 or more stars in the cluster may be variable, so her work is very painstaking. First she takes a photographic record; then, some time later, makes other photographs of the same cluster. One negative is placed over the other to see which stars have varied in size. She takes as many as 20 plates of each cluster.

Dr. Helen Hogg has already taken 400 plates on eight clusters at Victoria; this has taken eight years—for there are complicated mathematics to work out too. She has six to eight more clusters to work on here and each will take about two years

Tree Planting

(Forestry News Digest.)

Planting of 164,000,000 trees on state and national forest lands in 1934 sets a yearly record to date in the United States, reports the American Tree Association. The report shows more than 86,204,000 trees were planted on state forest areas of more than 85,000 acres. On the national forests there were planted more than 78,000,000 trees on more than 77,000 acres.

Planting programs for 1935 are now well advanced and the expectation is that there will be considerable increase in plantings on state forests while it is expected 100,000,000 trees will be planted on national forests. There are Spring plantings in the shelter belt area aggregating 2,000,000 trees. This is a small amount compared with what can be done in the same area in the proposed 10-year planting program, but the 2,000,000 seedlings are all that are available.

Test your weight at a slot machine and get a £40 life policy lasting twenty-four hours for a penny. A plan of automatic insurance is to be sold through automatic weighing machinces has been presented to the Oklahoma State Insurance Commission.

WHEN YOUR DAUGHTER COMES TO WOMANHOOD

Most girls in their teens need a tonic and regulator. Give your daughter Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for the next few months. Teach her how to guard her health at this critical time. When she is a happy, healthy wife and mother she will thank you.

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New Clocks Are Like Modern Life Hard, Brittle, Shining

Clocks have an especial fascination for many people. Their remorseless ticking away of the years, unhurried and unfeeling, is inhuman indeed.

When men first invented an artificial means of recording time they invented the first robot. And now that the robot has been harnessed to electricity the secret of perpetual motion is in sight, and the last frail excuse for unpunctuality has been swept away.

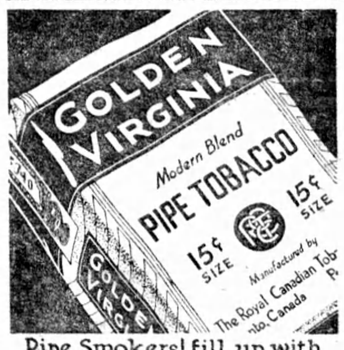
The Exhibition of Clocks now being shown in London is extremely interesting. Clocks of all ages, from models showing the earliest known method of recording time to shining little engines encased in steel and mirror glass personifying the present day, are on display. A striking example of the changes which have been wrought during the past twenty-five years is manifest.

There is a group of clocks dated 1910—the year of the King's accession—flambouyant affairs of marble, gilt, or bronze. A loan collection is in the case adjoining them. There is comparatively small difference between these 1910 models and those made two and three hundred years earlier.

But match them with the wonderful clocks of today and tomorrow and you will see changes so great that the same name seems hardly applicable.

These newest clocks are like modern life itself—hard, brittle, shining, crytic; devoid of everything that could possibly be considered superfluous. Detail in the way of minutes has been obliterated. Figures have given place to a stroke or a dot indicating the hour.

"Fundamentally, the purpose of feminism is that a woman should have an equal opportunity and equal rights with any other citizen of the country." — Mrs. Franklin D Roosevelt.



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