

# FIVE CROOKED CHAIRS

By FAREMAN WELLS

## SYNOPSIS

Adam Meriston, a farmer's son, arrives to a solicitor, makes a brave but unsuccessful attempt to thwart three thieves in a bag-snatching. 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.

And so it proved. They reached the high wall that closed the far end of Grail Street without observing a sign of their quarry. Here there was another lamp, a single weak light that shone from against the dirty surface of the wall where a little electric bulb was cupped in a sort of shell at the top of a length of rusty conduit. It was under this inadequate illuminant that the strange girl looked dependently up at Adam so that he found himself taking for the first time a long look into her eyes, trying with his own to infuse a measure of hope.

He was by no means prepared to admit defeat as yet, but all the same things did seem to be taking on an air of hopelessness, and the amateur nature of their efforts to be growing depressingly evident. They had very little real evidence that the thief had come this way. Moreover he might easily have slipped back while they were all standing dumb-founded at the corner. He might know of some way of getting from here into another street.

But although he was beginning to feel as if there were something futile and ridiculous about their search, Adam strove to prevent this from showing in his eyes. He even ventured to put out a hand and pat her gently on the shoulder, an action that gave him a very delightful sensation of protectiveness.

"There, back up," he said. "We're not beaten yet."  
"You're ever so good!"  
Her tone conveyed so much of ingenuous admiration that he was completely bowled over. He wanted to say something offhand, to adopt a nonchalant "Oh, that's less than nothing" attitude, but instead he found himself saying, "I've been wanting for months to do something for you."

The heavy white eyelids fluttered. For a moment she looked up at him as if with a kind of grateful surprise. Then her eyes veiled themselves again and she stood silent in the drizzle as if dwelling on his words.  
There wasn't any doubt about it now. Though they had barely exchanged a dozen words, though even her name was unknown, he was definitely and inevitably in love.

It came upon him in the form of a great urge to protective tenderness. He did not want to touch her again so soon, that he would hope to do later, but he wanted instantly to remain with her at the bottom of that obscure alley in the rain, without speech but with the subtle consciousness that they understood one another, that there was a sympathy, unexpressed but perfect, between them from now onward.  
She was the first to speak. "We haven't got the money back yet, have we?" she asked with an air of regretful, half-whimsical reproach, as if now she no longer cared quite so much what might have happened to the little leather bag.  
He sighed reluctantly. "I'd forgotten," he said, and then, more resolutely: "This won't do, will it?"  
"I'm afraid it won't," she agreed.  
At that they turned back and began to study the big gates for possibilities of climbing. He was exam-

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## Natural Kindness and Generosity in Little Children

The Selfish of Babyhood is Not Real Selfishness as Adults Know It

Are children born with a sense of right and wrong? There is little to prove it if they are.

Gradually, however, when they get over babyhood certain mental policemen do develop (inhibitions we call them) that would be there, it is thought, even if no one said a word to them about doing "wrong."

Two savage children of primitive instincts, without anyone to give them an inkling of theft, murder, or harm to another would in time develop a recognition of each other's rights.

That natural inhibitions are not present to an extent in babyhood, however, is pretty well acknowledged. Indeed some authorities go so far as to say that babies are born with criminal instincts.

### BABIES AREN'T CRIMINALS

This is decidedly not so. What they are born with is the "self" going, both mentally and physically.

The selfishness of early childhood is not real selfishness as we know it, but an order from Mother Nature to appropriate every right and privilege that helps the self instinct to expand.

Once this is done and the little boy or girl is established as real person in a tough world, nature then begins to let up a little. Very, very slowly comes reason, and with it the preventive instincts that shape the conduct of the child to less primitive urges and to advance generosity and natural kindness.

### GENEROSITY SLOW TO BUD

Yet there is a natural generosity in the child of three or four. It may bud even younger.

But parents get impatient.

Nature, of course, won't do it all. Nature did not form "social" law, so we have to continue where nature leaves off.

All training toward good should be gradual and tactful. A gardener may kill a young plant or stop the budding by rough handling and by stifling. It needs care. Children are like plants.

It is wrong to call the tiny child "bad." He might be "cross" when routine is irregular or he gets too tired or too nervous or too hungry, or when the "self" instinct is too greatly interfered with, but he isn't born "wicked."

Whatever children are they are normal human beings. We coined the word "wicked" for our own convenience.

### One-Arm Drivers

The one-armed wonder is another species of chiseler. You meet him often. He's an expert in lighting cigarettes while driving fifty miles an hour.

Also he's mighty clever in using both hands to light up the old pipe in a breeze. Good at cuddling his sweetie, too, as he sails along under a romantic moon.

This gent feels that one hand is plenty on the steering wheel. So he speeds along apparently unmindful of the fact that a sudden jolt may throw his car clean out of control. A blow-out, for instance; an unseen hole in the pavement; or an un-noticed obstacle in the street.

These are the things that make one-armed driving so hazardous—the unforeseen emergencies which require the full strength of both arms. Common sense pleads with the motorist to keep both hands on the steering wheel. Two handiwork of safety are infinitely better than one.—Exchange

one of its several doors might have been opened from the inside still. They came disconsolately back to the archway again, and as they entered it Adam felt a sharp thrill of excitement. Approaching from that direction he was able to observe a low narrow door hidden behind the entrance gate and the piled-up packing-cases. A gentle push caused it to creak slowly inward.

"This is where he got in," he whispered, and shone his torch into the entrance. The dirty floor showed a track of wet footmarks leading to the foot of a worn flight of stairs. The footmarks were plain, too, on the stairs. Someone had certainly gone up there not many minutes earlier.

(To Be Continued)

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## DON'T BULLY YOUR CHILD INTO SHOW OF COURAGE

You'll Regret It Later On If Terror Becomes Shock and Leaves Mental or Emotional Scar

When a child is afraid of something what are you going to do? Make fun of him, shove him at it, or bully him into a show of courage?

Don't do any of these things because it won't be any use.

Oh, yes, he may pretend to be braver, to laugh at a lot of water, or a dog, or a big bully of a boy. He may put up a grand front as he climbs up the dark stairs alone to bed. But these things do not mean the terror is not there just because he is trying to whistle up his courage. It is well known that the violent effort to down a real fear by sheer force of will may make the trouble worse.

Before going into the matter of the constructive course to pursue, please let us digress for an instant.

### ADULTS TOO KNOW FEAR

Why do we make such a fuss over the terrors of children when every adult on earth is full of them. Perhaps you think you have none, that you are one of those magyars of grit who is not "afraid of God or man."

All right. Remember you had an abscessed tooth once. Last night you felt a similar twinge on the other side. Did you laugh it off, or call the dentist?

Or you were up in an airplane, we'll say, and the engine stopped. Below was fog and storm and a mountain. The pilot shouted, "Don't worry. We can only die once."

You lit a cigarette nonchalantly and belted back, "Have you heard this one?"

We're all cowards under the skin, so shame on us for our bigger, better, bolder-than-thou attitude toward children. Fear is natural. Fear of death, and fear of hurt. We're born

with it, far-fetched unnamable horrors, called obsessive fears (more intricate of nature), are still based on the same cause.

### HOW TO HANDLE CHILD.

Now as to handling the timid child, here are some rules:

Don't talk to him (or her) about his fear. Don't mention it at all. You may over-talk. And anyway, words mean nothing.

Never ridicule him or scold him.

Don't undermine his self-respect and fertilize his inferiority by over-rating his fear. Why harp on one or two things when otherwise he is a splendid little fellow? Why not tell him he's all right?

Never, never "force" him into the water, into the dark, at a dog, or up against a boy he is afraid of. You may regret it later if terror becomes shock and leaves a mental or emotional "scar" to haunt him forever.

### TACT NECESSARY.

Use wit, kindness and tact. Homeopathic methods are best. The shallow puddle and the next day another inch or two may help him see reason about water. By degrees he may lose his fright over "big" water.

The same with the dark — light very, very gradually reduced. It may take weeks or even months. No dogs are necessary. His own experience will teach him in time that most animals may be trusted.

A big, bad brute of a boy? Never. Oh, yes, he should have other children beside nabby-pambles to play with and learn by degrees that he has to take his own part. But please spare the little fellow even the slightest association with the bullying type of boy.

worst something one hesitates to say, not to economize in spending for things not necessary in order to meet a doctor's bill.

As it is, the physician sets an ex-

ample of unselfish service to other professions and even to trade. Without his indispensable skill freely or generously given the depression would be far worse than it has been.

That the death rate is not higher in part due to that service seldom if ever paid in full. It is still much as it was in other times:

"God and the Doctor we alike adore  
But only when in danger, not before.  
The danger o'er, both are alike required—  
God is forgotten and the Doctor slighted."

—New York Times.

## Set a Standard For Children

They Cannot Evade the Responsibility Which is Theirs Through Example

New York — President Roosevelt advises parents to set up standards for themselves as well as for their children, in an editorial in the October issue of the Parents Magazine.

"The parents of our children are the guardians of our future citizens," writes the United States President. "They cannot evade the responsibility which is theirs through example and intelligent understanding to inspire and lay the groundwork for that type of character which does what is right under any given circumstances and is able to withstand temptation.

"Parents as well as citizens must well set up standards for themselves as well as for their children."

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When in Pain Remember These Pictures — ASPIRIN DOES NOT HARM THE HEART —

## Debate Use of Slang in Drama

Old London Split—Modern Jargon Is Used In Biblical Play

London, Eng. — Whether John Drinkwater has not gone too far in "his modern colloquialisms" is the question brought up by a critic of the playwright's new production "A Man's House," now showing in London. The play deals with the reaction of a family in Jerusalem to the coming of Christ to their city. It is noted Mr. Drinkwater has tightened up the play somewhat since its production in Malvern, and "has sought to give a clearly detached view of the situation."

The critic continues: "Gospel me foot," for example, however reasonable an equivalent it may be for the language of a hot-headed young business man would use when he found an apparent agitator upsetting the community will jar upon some people."

Allowing for passages of arid talk, the theme is treated interestingly, the critic declares.

"Mr. Drinkwater lets the miracle of restoring the blind girl's sight produce its own dramatic effect without stressing it by immoderate language," it is stated. "His restraint emphasizes the realism, too, of the last scene, wherein the father of the household—a month ago a rational contented household; but now disrupted by the visitation—looks from his window and sees the Nazarene, crucified and buried three days before, following the deserters from his house up the hill to Bethany.

"This provocative, if not entirely satisfactory play is extremely well acted."

"Joyce Bland plays the bad-tempered blind daughter who acquires a Christian sweetness after her sight is restored by the healing hands of the Saviour; and Patricia Burke makes a notably good first West End appearance as her sister.

"Basil Radford gives conviction to the troubled emotions of the head of the family; Reginald Tate is the impatient, dogmatic son who has no patience with these interlopers of business; and Scott Sunderland and Stanley Lathbury are among the others who give admirable performances."

## China "Purity" Campaign Has Reached Shanghai

Regulations Containing Seven Articles Governing Women's Dress Just Issued.

Shanghai, China. — The "purity" campaign which has been sweeping through the length and breadth of China and which is designed to raise the standard of public morals by rules and regulations, has at last reached Shanghai. The Shanghai magistrate's office has just issued a set of regulations containing several articles governing women's dress. These are:

- 1—Trousers should not be shorter than four inches below the knee.
- 2—Bare legs and bare feet are strictly prohibited.
- 3—The hair must be combed backward, and must not be longer than the collar of the gown.
- 4—Woolen overcoats without buttons must not be worn.
- 5—Walking in the streets in pyjamas and slippers is strictly forbidden.
- 6—The new rules must be carried out within two weeks after promulgated by school teachers, girl students, women government employees and wives of government employees; and one month case of ordinary women and girls.
- 7—The police have the right to arrest any one on sight defying the new regulations.

## Pretty Close

We know office boys well enough not to doubt that this actually happened. The directors of a big company were holding a meeting, and in the midst of a discussion of a weighty question one of them said a fact they wanted had just been printed in the latest Saturday Evening Post.

There wasn't a copy in the directors' room, so the chairman of the board rang for an office boy. In came one, wide-eyed, shy and nervous. The chairman of the board barked at him to get a Saturday Evening Post. The boy didn't understand at all, but he wasn't going to say so. He just backed out.

Ten minutes went by, during which the important gentlemen were restive. (On an average, it is estimated, their time is worth a dollar a minute.) Then the boy came back, in his hand a small paper bag, which he handed the chairman of the board.

The latter took the bag with a very strange look on his face, and drew from it a sardine sandwich or so. We've known office boys to miss further than that. — The New Yorker.