


SMOKE TACKETTS
ORINOCO
 CUT FINE FOR CIGARETTES—CUT COARSE FOR PIPE



THE ALIBI
 —BY—
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 Author of "Darkness and Dawn," "Beyond the Great Oblivion," "The Empire in the Air," "The Golden Blight," "The After-Glow," "The Crime-Detector," etc.

"Yes, but it is," he answered, in a deep, quiet voice, shaking that massive head of his with its white mane of hair. "It was found last night behind some ash-barrels in the basement of the bank, where he evidently threw it in his haste and panic. He has acknowledged it as his. That fact joined with the others has completed the circle of proof."

"It's a conspiracy, father!" the girl cried hotly. "Somebody else did it and is trying to lay it off on him! Somebody—"

"Nobody else could have done it, my girl. In no possible way could anybody else have done all the various things and left all the different trails which all converge to one local point, where Arthur stands! We know certain things, and what we don't know we have absolute proof of. Arthur admits having robbed the bank of a small sum—"

"It must have been for some big, noble motive!"

"We know through Mr. Slayton's direct testimony that Arthur threatened to kill him in his own house unless Slayton would give him money to get out of some serious trouble not yet confessed. Slayton dissuaded him from this purpose and magnanimously bent him away. These are simple facts."

"On Slayton's word?"

"Naturally! Whose could be better?"

"Are you comparing Arthur and Slayton as men?"

"My dear—no! Heaven forbid! Once I might have. Now I couldn't possibly do Slayton so grave a wrong!"

"Go on, father. I'm glad you've told me this about Slayton. If all the testimony is based on things like that I have no fear—I'm not afraid!"

"We know the robbery was committed by a bank employee armed with the combination of the safe and understanding all about the location of the funds and the bookkeeping of the institution—technical matters I won't bother you with. An employee, at any rate did the evil work. It could have been no other than Arthur."

"Slayton's desk was broken open and the combination was stolen. It was broken open with Arthur's own paper-cutter. One of Arthur's gloves was found in the basement, buried in ashes, with blood-marks on the fingers—marks that corresponded to others on old Mackenzie's breast. The other glove was burned in the furnace; only the metal snaps were discovered. Bits of the paper were found

too, on which the combination had been written. Arthur must have dropped them when he burned—"

"Father! You're assuming everything and proving nothing!"

"On the contrary, Enid, I'm stating facts proved as certainly as anything well as can be. I'm giving you what Hillis & Ballantine have given me—"

"They're prejudiced just as you are."

"I, prejudiced? When I'm spending a lot of money to see if some loop-hole doesn't exist to free that boy? Good Heavens, Enid! Prejudiced?"

"I don't care, father! I know it's all a horrible brutal, ghastly mistake!"

"A mistake, eh, that the bullet that killed Mackenzie was shot from Arthur's automatic, and the pistol itself found—"

"No matter what was found! He didn't do it—he couldn't have!"

"Perhaps you'll deny that when he was questioned he turned on Mr. Slayton like a wild beast, and would have certainly assassinated him right there in the directors' room of the bank if the coroner and the doctor hadn't interposed?"

"Perhaps you'll deny that he had to be knocked insensible by a police club and be rather badly cut up before he could be arrested at all?"

"Perhaps you'll claim actions like those are the actions of an innocent man?"

Enid shuddered at the thought of such brutality, yet despite herself thrilled with pride at the thought of that battle royal. Arthur, unjustly accused, had fought! He had resisted, at any rate. He had not yielded meekly; he had not begged and supplicated. No! Right manfully he had struck out—and only force had conquered him.

"He's innocent, and he's a man!" the girl exclaimed. "Whatever they say, whatever they do, I trust him. And I love him, too; and nobody in the world shall ever take that away from me! No; not Slayton, nor lawyers, nor coroners, nor doctors, nor juries, nor judges, nor jailers or executioners; nobody shall! Nobody in this whole wide world—not even you!"

The banker shrugged his shoulders in despair.

"Enid," said he, quite slowly. "I fear we shan't get anywhere just now, even if we discuss this matter all night long. You view Arthur as a hero and a martyr, though Heaven alone knows how you can idealize crime to that extent! The world views him as a criminal of rather unusually dangerous tendencies, because endowed with more than usual intelligence. No doubt the law will deal severely with him."

"You and I and all of us have got to suffer much getting publicity. The bank will suffer. We'll all suffer."

"Poor old Mackenzie alone won't have to. His brother has arrived and will take care of his remains; in some way the good old chap is to be buried. I'm sure Arthur might well envy him at least. He might well envy him indeed!"

"Arthur will go free yet, and we'll be married some time. I wasn't quite sure I loved him before. Now I know!" cried the girl.

"You don't mean to say you're going to cling to him after all this horrible affair?"

"Would I be much of a woman if I didn't stand by? Of course, you know I've written him already and been to see him; and I've sent him some flowers and things. Well, every day I'm going to see him. I don't care whether such things are done or not; I'm going to do them. And everything that money can do for him in the way of lawyers shall be done!"

"By you, Enid?"

"I've got my own money, haven't I?"

"But, my girl, think of the publicity! You'd far better take a trip to Palm Beach, or the Riviera, or—anywhere till—"

Enid laughed for the first time since the murder.

"I'm your daughter!" said she. "Remember, I'm the daughter of Edward Bruce Chamberlain! And you talk to me about being afraid of publicity! You talk to me about running away in a pinch when the man I love needs me?"

In sudden shame the banker dropped his head.

TO ALL WOMEN WHO ARE ILL

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"Enid forgive me!" he whispered, reaching out and taking her slim hand in his wrinkled, corded one. "My daughter—yes, you're my daughter, all right. I see that now plainly enough. You are the daughter of old Chamberlain—thana heaven the metal still rings true!"

She rose and threw her arms about his neck and kissed him fervently.

"He is innocent, isn't he? He is, he is, he is!"

"Heaven knows! Faith like yours could move mountains!"

"Mountains? Worlds! Universes! It shall move everything! Arthur shall be vindicated! He shall go free!"

Tears started hotly in the old man's dimming eyes.

"Let me go now, Enid," he begged, gently pushing her away. "To-morrow, when we both have slept on this dear problem, we may have more and clearer light. But for now—good-bye!"

"Good night, father! Don't condemn me for my faith!"

Chamberlain made no answer for a moment of fierce silence. He took the girl's eager face in both his hands and looked into her dark eyes. Tears dimmed his vision.

"Your mother had eyes like yours, Enid," he said, very slowly, very gently; "and faith like yours, too. Once I gave her cause to test that faith, and it held true. Maybe your faith may yet be justified—Heaven knows! You can't know how fervently I hope so for your sake and for his. So perfect and sublime a trust deserves to live. Heaven grant it may not suffer disillusion!"

He kissed her forehead and her hair, and then her eyes—those eyes where he still seemed to see the spirit of the woman dead and gone away forever from his love.

"Good night, Enid—and Heaven keep you!" he whispered.

Then he left her there silently in the warm sweetness of her room.

At the same hour had you peered into a certain steel cage in the dismal recesses of the castle rightly named "the Tomb," you would have seen Arthur Mansfield sitting in an attitude of unshakable despair on his hard bunk. Silent, motionless, alone he sat there, shoulders bowed, head drooping, eyes fixed upon the dirty cement floor. Above his head a raw incandescent, slightly swaying, threw harsh lights and shadows over his wavy hair, his broad forehead—crucially cut and bruised on the right temple—his unshaven cheeks now sunken with grief, anger, and the fever of his violent emotions.

His blue eyes had grown dull and lifeless. From his face the fresh, healthy color had departed. Nerveless, his hands hung over the knees of his torn and wrinkled trousers. Less than eight and forty hours' experience of the majesty and dignity of the law had altered the boy almost beyond recognition.

Peters somewhat tempered the air of the cell with their sweet breath. A little breeze, woody, camping-out picture, reminiscent of one of their happy times together—stood on the bare board shelf in the corner near the crumpled letter that had brought it to him—the letter she had written with tears as bitter as his tears in reading it; the old-read letter; one of those that by their faith and trust and womanly tenderness and love had thus far sustained him from the Valley of the Shadow.

Beside him on the bunk another letter lay. Sighing, Arthur flicked it up and once more looked at it with hollow eyes. He knew its every line and word by heart, and still he searched it through, hoping against hope some

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TORONTO

word or meaning might have escaped him, to bear him hope from the desolated home whence now all hope was vanished.

"Piling in pretty fast just now, isn't it?" he whispered. "Pretty fast and pretty hard!"

The letter said to him:
 Millerton, New York, Friday.
 My Boy:
 Your mother will stand by you, come what may. I know this whole thing is a terrible conspiracy of lies. You are innocent! Yes, Arthur, I know it.

I am only an old woman now, and crippled as I am I can't go to you. Dr. Harris says it might kill me to go. I'm needed too much to take any risks. But even though I can't see you, Arthur, I can send you all my love and help and devotion.

God has put heavy burdens on to us to bear. Our money is nearly gone, as you know, but the old house is worth a few hundred dollars, and I'm dickering with Swasey now. I can raise enough for legal fees that way. The case can't be long. Just let me get your story to the jury men and you'll be freed. I know it, Arthur; I know it! You're innocent, and that means you'll soon be free.

The news of your arrest on this trumped-up charge struck your father down as if he had been shot. That was yesterday noon. Cyrus Barker told us the news. He was as kind as could be, but it just missed killing him outright. He was sitting in the big rocker by the stove in the kitchen when Cyrus came in. As quick as he understood, he jumped up and cried in a terrible voice.

That was as far as he got. He fell and cut his head on the stove. It was another stroke. This makes his second, and he has been lying paralyzed ever since, and unconscious most of the time. Dr. Harris says he hasn't much chance. So he may be taken away from us, my boy, before you ever see him again.

He and you are all I have now, and you're in jail and he's at death's door. Oh, Arthur, Arthur! If tears were dollars to free you and bring you back again, Heaven knows the payment would be full by now.

Don't worry, dear, about what will become of us. If they really indict and try you it will be better for your father to go now and get home where there is rest and peace. As for me, Arthur, I don't care. I can work for you, and will! There is still strength in this heart and in these hands.

That's all I want in life now—to work and free you and clear your name. Can I ever feel tired, then? If I did I wouldn't be your mother.

Poor Enid! That dear girl of yours! I will write her, telling her to have faith and trust in you, even as I have. I know what such a tragedy must mean to her. Night and day I will pray and work for you.

I have retained Lawyer Swasey, of Swasey & Hardacre, to defend you. He will start for New York to-morrow. Be not downcast. Truth is mighty and will prevail. After these storms will come calm. God knows best. All my kisses and all my love to you, my boy! Your Mother.

P. S.—Lawyer Swasey has just been here. He seems unwilling to take the case after all, though he won't say why. It surely can't be that he thinks he would fail to clear you. I will see Dutton at once and engage him.

Maybe Swasey is afraid he would never get his money. He tells me your father's business is in bad shape, and in spite of the twelve hundred and fifty dollars you made on that Rio Hondo investment and sent us—like the good, dear boy you are—everything is very much involved.

But don't worry, Arthur. There will yet be a way. God can make one for you, as He did for the Israelites through the Red Sea. Remember, He can do everything!

I read the twenty-third Psalm, especially verse 4. God keep and bless you, my poor lost boy.

Mother.

For a few minutes Arthur held the poor, painfully written letter in his hand. His eyes dimmed as he gazed upon the hating lines, dotted with tears. Then he crushed it to his mouth and kissed it passionately.

"If she can only be kept from knowing the truth about father's business, and why he needed that twelve hundred and fifty dollars!" thought he. "If she can only be kept from knowing where I got it!"

A pang transfixed his heart. That much at least she would have to know. That much was all admitted. But his father, stricken down, unconscious, dying, would never need to understand.

"Thank Heaven for that at least! Thank Heaven!" he murmured.

Suddenly he stood up, went over to the little shelf—it was but a step or two away—and took the Bible in his hand. With it he returned to the hard bunk. After some seeking he found the twenty-third Psalm, the psalm already recited by many a miserable wretch who had sought its comfort in that steel cage of his.

He read the verse:

"Yea, though I walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

All at once it seemed to him he heard his mother's voice, reading the words of consolation, faith and trust. Or was it Enid's? Strangely the thought of those two women calmed and quieted his fevered soul.

"Yea, though I walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death—"

he said, and repeated the words with slow insistence.

He put the book up on the shelf again, lay down upon his bunk, buried his face in both his arms, and let body, mind and soul relax. The close



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air was poison to his lungs, which loved the fresh, pure winds of sea and sky. The sounds and sights of that great catacomb of human agony all sickened him. Yet with the thought of his mother and of Enid's eyes upon him he could forget—forget, and rest a while.

Thus the boy lay, thinking, longing, dreaming, wonderfully at peace.

"I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me—"

"I am with thee, Arthur," echoed his mother's voice.

"I am with thee," he heard Enid's. "With thee—w-in thee!"

Under his closed eyes the tears started; but now they blessed and comforted and soothed.

Soon he slept—slept soundly in that den of tragedy and grief and woe—slept and was blessed by the one greatest boon of all—oblivion.

(To be continued.)

Some Hope for Him.

Don't you know it's very wrong to smoke, my boy?" said an elderly looking woman in a railroad waiting room puffing a cheap cigarette, much to the old woman's discomfort.

"Oh, I smoke for my health," answered the boy, emitting a volume of smoke from his mouth, which almost strangled the old woman.

"But you never heard of a cure from smoking," continued the woman, when she regained consciousness.

"Oh, yes, I did," persisted the boy, as he formed his mouth into a young Vesuvius working at full time, "that's the way they cure pigs."

"Smoke on, then," quickly replied the old woman, "there's some hope for you yet."—Exchange.

Picturesque Quarry.

A limestone quarry which is about a mile long, picturesque in appearance and dangerous to work in is located near Rockland, Me. There 300 laborers, chiefly foreigners, toil in chasms having perpendicular sides 500 feet high and no way of entrance or egress except by means of the derricks which hoist and lower about a dozen men at a time. Approximately 1,000,000 barrels of lime are prepared in the vicinity of Rockland annually.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

Increase in Muskrats.

As an illustration of how rapidly the muskrats increase in some districts, the Davaoan commission which reports on the matter says in Sohlus-selburg in 1911 there were ten muskrats—we don't know who counted them—while in 1913 the number had increased to about 300, and in 1914 to more than 1,500. In some places it is said the energetic muskrats had driven away the water birds, "after destroying the eggs and young had taken possession of the floating nests and converted them to their own use."—Farm Life.

BETTER THAN THE ECHO.

(Passing Show London)

Guide—See, here is an extraordinary echo to be heard at this point, or instance, as you shout "Two muskrats!" as loud as you can and listen.

Simple Tourist—Two muskrats of beer? (Pause) I can't hear the echo.

Guide—No, sir? Well, anyhow, here comes the beer.

Nothing better is made



Nothing better can be made