

# THE RATTLE WON

CHAPTER L.  
WHEN ROGUES FALL OUT.

James Redmond was at Grahame Towers, occupied in the prudent pursuit of making hay while the sun shone. As soon as it was discovered that Mrs. Redmond had failed to kill Nessa in the arena, he saw the folly of relying on farther hopes in that direction. Destitution, and the fear that Nessa would find friends before long to protect her interests, prompted him to return to the towers, with a view to getting what he could from the estate before the hour came when he must bolt to escape arrest and punishment for his wrong-doing. He set about cutting timber with his hands in his pockets, scowling at them in sullen silence as they ate and drank with greedy voracity the things he had provided for himself out of that unlucky wheelwright's money.

"Now, then," said Cummings, when his cravings were appeased, "let's have a pipe and a glass of whiskey, and come to business."

"I don't think at this time of the day," growled Redmond.

"I do," said Mrs. Redmond, helping herself largely to the whiskey.

"We've agreed," said Cummings striking a match on his leg, "to go shares. Now, Mr. Redmond—taking a pull at his pipe—'what's the assets?'"

He was quite in a cheerful frame of mind by this time.

"I've got nothing in the world but what you see in this room," said Redmond.

"Humbly," said Cummings, sententially, striking another match.

"Rot," said Mrs. Redmond, setting down her glass.

"You're at liberty to search the place, if you like. Why don't you?"

"Oh! we don't intend to give ourselves any trouble about it," said Cummings, thrusting his hands in his pockets, and spreading himself out with growing confidence.

"We've picked up a little information from the men at work in the park. Information that Dr. Meredith and the people on the other side would pay handsomely for."

"That's it," said Mrs. Redmond, and we shall sell to the highest bidder."

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" muttered Redmond between his set teeth.

"It is," said Cummings, calmly looking up at the smoke wreathing over his head.

"You can't get blood out of a gate post," Redmond said, after a pause. "I tell you I've got no more than what you see here."

"Jim, you always were a liar," his wife said; "you know you were."

"And a fool as well, if he couldn't invent anything better than that to take you in with," Cummings chimed in.

"Jim, are you going to act square?" asked Mrs. Redmond waxing impatient.

"I'm not to be bullied. You won't frighten me, though you have brought a man to back you up. I know you. You're as cursed a coward as ever drew breath. You wouldn't have dared to come here without him. You've brought him, thinking to have me on the bounce."

"She brought me because she couldn't leave me behind—because she had'n't enough to bring her down alone," said Cummings. "Never mind that. Let's stick to business. Now, then, about this timber. From what we picked up as to the value of trees, and a rough calculation as to the number you've cut down, it's pretty clear that the sum realized runs into four figures. Where is it?"

"Where is it?" cried Redmond, exasperated to think that the money was not in his possession. "Why, here it is," and pulling out his notebook, he showed the rough account he kept there of money owing, and made it clear, rather by his manner than the statement of facts, that he could not get the debtors to pay. His vehement indignation was real. He even went so far as to own to the extortion of a trifle from the wheelwright that morning.

"Well, if the money has not come in yet, we must wait till it does," said Mrs. Redmond, refilling her glass. "I can make myself comfortable here."

"We shall soon find out whether you are telling the truth or not," said Cummings. "I shall stroll over to Lullingsford to-morrow, and make inquiries."

"Oh, will you?"

"Yes, I shall."

Redmond looked at the disreputable pair with savage chagrin. He surmised rightly that the general reluctance to pay now was based upon the hope of not having to pay at all. The rumer he knew had got about that the timber was not his to sell—that he was in difficulties which would oblige him soon to bolt. He was aware that his own poverty-stricken appearance encouraged that belief, and strengthened the debtors in their determination to withhold payment as long as possible. The presence of two other needy wretches at the Tower must make matters worse. And if this Cummings, with his blotchy face and threadbare, clerical costume (looking half prize fighter, half rafter), carried out his threat of making inquiries at Lullingsford, all hopes of getting money—even from the wheelwright—would be at an end. If they refused point blank to pay, he could not force them to do so. It was not in his power to take out County Court summonses against them.

"Of course, if you are telling the truth, we shall have to stay on till the money does come in," continued Cummings.

"Yes; that's all very well," said Mrs. Redmond; "but we mustn't let the grass grow under our feet. If that gets blown, we shall have to look it fast—all three of us. And it may get blown at any moment."

"That's clear enough," said Redmond.

"We must get the money at once."

"That's easier said than done."

"Oh, is it?" said Mrs. Redmond with a sniff and a toss of her head. "You shall see. These fellows want a woman to talk to 'em. Men are no good at that game. I'll go round to 'em, and let 'em have it straight. They won't find me taking no for an answer."

Redmond turned away in mute dismay. He took part no further in their discussion, which grew more animated as they dipped deeper and deeper into the stone jar of whiskey; but sat with his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands, watching them with malignant hatred. They drank on until they became quarrelsome and Redmond fostered the hope that they might end in a fight, in which one might mortally injure the other; but they drank on still, and became maudlin and imbecile. They drank more and more, insatiable with long forced abstinence, and their speech grew thick and incoherent, and their hands scarcely steady enough to refill their glasses.

Then Redmond, watching them, began to bite his nails, while a thousand pleasing possibilities resolved in his mind. So many accidents might happen to wretches besotted with drink as they were, and some of these accidents might be fatal to both. The merest trifle, like the movement of a hand, might lead to such an accident. As this thought oc-

urred to him, he raised his hand, yet still gnawing his nails at the quick, and looked round the room in eager search of the trifle that was to rid him of these two who threatened to ruin his last chance of success.

## CHAPTER LI.

THE VENGEANCE OF HEAVEN.

Redmond's eye fell upon the lock of the door and dwelt there. The key had been lost, and to secure it when he left the house he adopted a simple expedient; he removed the screw that fastened the knob to the spindle of the handle on the inside, so that when the door was closed, by withdrawing the spindle from the room, he could practically leave the room secure against any inquisitive intruder who visited the house in his absence. This saved him the trouble of fastening the windows and doors below whenever he chose to go out. The precaution was taken because of the workmen engaged in cutting timber near the house. As he looked at the door now, he thought how easy it would be to imprison his visitors in the room by just going out and withdrawing the spindle from the closed door. Of course, in the natural order of things, they could eventually find means to unlock the bolt; but it would take them a long while to find a square instrument that would fit the place of the spindle, and in that time a good deal might happen.

His eye, wandering from the door, fell upon the window. The light was fading; it would soon be dark. The window looked on to the court. That was paved with cobble stones. The room was on the second floor. A man throwing himself from the window must inevitably smash his skull or break his back.

His wandering glance was next arrested by an oil lamp on the chimney piece. It wanted filling. Following a natural sequence of ideas, he looked into the corner of the room where he kept the stores, and distinguished among the miscellaneous objects there a can of paraffin.

With a gulp of feverish interest he turned his attention to the man and woman at the table. Cummings had a clay pipe in his mouth; his head wobbled heavily from side to side, and he was rubbing up a screw of tobacco between his palms. Mrs. Redmond's arms were folded on the table; her face rested on this pillow, and she yawned incessantly. Her bonnet was on the floor; her tow-like hair fell in clotted wisps over her shoulders.

Redmond's temples throbbled with excitement; he felt the necessity of movement and fresh air. He rose and left the room, feeling the loose door handle as he passed. His going was an occasion for his visitors to fill up again from the whisky jar, and wish each other good luck.

There was perfect stillness out on the terrace. Not a sound came from the sombre park. Redmond crossed the open space, and walked down the avenue till he came to the part where the woodmen had been at work. They were gone now; the avenue was deserted and ghostly in the fading twilight and perfect silence.

As he turned to the house, he heard Cummings singing with droning voice, and when he ceased a hoarse burst of laughter from his wife. On the threshold he paused and looked round him once more with vague apprehension. Then overcoming his irresolution, he turned and ran upstairs two steps at a time. Mrs. Redmond and Cummings were disputing again, gibbering idiotically across the table at each other.

They took no notice of him when he entered the room; he passed close by them without attracting attention. At the further end of the room was a large four-poster bedstead; he seated himself upon it, and fixed his eyes upon the man and woman he had just left. He explored the woman's silhouette stood out faintly against the dim light from the window beyond. Besotted with drink, worn out with the fatigue of the day, they maintained a state of semi-consciousness only by the greedy desire to stave off sleep that they might still drink. Gradually they yielded to the growing stupor. Only an incoherent phrase as one attempted to speak from time to time broke the silence.

But their wits grew more and more sluggish Redmond's spirits became animated with a feverish, fendish energy. He explored the bed on which he sat, with his hands. It was a feather bed. Under that was a woollen mattress; below that a straw palliase. He was eager to carry out the purpose he had formed, and while his wife was yet maundering he got out his penknife and slowly ripped up the cases of the bed, mattress, and palliase from end to end. He felt the soft feathers, the knotted wool, the smooth straw with exulting satisfaction, taking up a handful of each in turn, still watching the singularly. At last they slept! He could just make out the figure of Cummings huddled in his chair, the form of Mrs. Redmond lying forward on the table, her head pillowed on her arms. There was no sound now but the stentorian breathing of the sleepers.

Redmond rose, and feeling his way carefully, reached the chimney-piece. With extreme caution he removed the glass from the lamp and lit the wick, lowering it so that the glimmer was only sufficient to reveal the sleepers and enable him to make his way about the room. Crossing noiselessly, he softly turned the handle, and opened the knob from the spindle and put it in his pocket. From the door he worked his way round to the bedstead again, and thrusting his arms through the slit tick, grasped a handful of straw and having stripped off the bed-clothes he drew the bed onto the floor and slowly dragged it to the table where his wife and Cummings were now dead asleep. Going down on his knees he thrust his arms through the slit tick and drew out the contents, silently spreading the feathery mass about the two sleepers. When that was done he returned to the bedstead, rolled off the mattress and emptied that, as he had emptied the bed, when once more he returned from the palliase, drew out an armful of straw and piled it upon the growing mass about the table. Patiently, stealthily, he went to and fro between the bedstead and the besotted sleepers until he had drawn out three parts of the straw from the palliase and piled it up around his wife and Cummings. He paused and drew a long breath as he surveyed this preparation. There was something diabolically grotesque in the appearance of the two sleepers half buried in the pile of litter, but it did not draw a smile from Redmond. He took the whisky jar, poured out a glassful, and having gulped it down, slowly emptied the jar on the piled-up straw, distributing it equally about the sleepers. Once his wife turned while he stood beside her with the jar in his hand, causing him to hold his breath with

apprehension of discovery, but she only opened and closed her clammy lips once or twice, and then snored again.

He put the jar out of his hand hurriedly, and fetched the can of paraffin from the corner. It was nearly full; there were more than he needed; but he emptied it, to do the work completely. Now all was ready, and there was no time to hesitate. The smell of the paraffin might alarm and arouse them if either awoke. He fetched the lamp from the chimney, glanced across the table to be sure that the door stood open ready for his escape, stooped down and whipping off the chimney, set the flame to the straw that surrounded his wife.

He had reckoned on the litter lighting gradually and on setting fire to the straw in several places, but it blazed up with a rapidity that upset his calculations. In an instant it seemed that the whole mass of saturated straw and sheet of flame leaping up to the ceiling and blinding him with its glare. Dropping the lamp, he dashed round the table and made for the door. The whisky jar stood in his way where he had left it; he struck his foot violently against it and stumbled, knocking it over. It rolled, and stumbling once more against it, he fell forward against the half-open door. It shut to with a bang; but above the crash his ear caught the appalling ring of the loosened handle as it slipped out and fell upon the floor. Redmond retreated as they crept to gasp for air. There was no air; the fire had sucked it up and there was no air; the fire wanted it. His wife and Cummings had ceased to shriek; the smoke stifled their cries; but he saw them groping in the smoke their figures marked out by the red smoldering patches on their burning clothes.

Suddenly there was a crash of glass; Cummings had found the window and torn the glass and sashes out with his hands in the frantic need of air. But with the inrush of air the flames burst up with fresh energy, wreathing the ceiling and curling out through the broken window to lick the air, enveloping the wretch who hung stupefied and powerless over the sill. With one deep groan, Mrs. Redmond fell backward on the ground. The flames were at Redmond's feet. He opened his mouth and gasped for breath, the fire seemed to penetrate to his very soul. He threw up his arms, reeled forward, and dropped with a thud. After that there was no other sound but the roar of the flames, the cracking of wood, and the fall of glass and plaster.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Loss of the Cruiser Serpent.

The loss of the torpedo cruiser Serpent is a severe blow to the British navy, 173 officers and men going down with her. As she was a new cruiser of a type that has been criticised for want of strength, the first suggested thought from news of the accident was that some structural weakness had been developed during the storm in which she went down, but later reports show that she struck on a sunken rock off Cape Finisterre, and the question as to structural weakness remains unanswered. Nor can the navigator be blamed, for the waters there are very could not be seen the most skillful captain would be liable to run among the rocks. Twenty years ago the British turret ship Captain went down in the same waters, and not one of the 500 persons on board was saved. The British Navy has been particularly unfortunate of late years, losing several war vessels with many men in 1889 and 1890. The Serpent, without her armament, cost the Government nearly half a million dollars.

### The Behring Sea Fishery.

In spite of the Canadian seal hunters appear to prosper. Returns received at Ottawa state that this year's catch of the 29 Victoria schooners, including two owned and sailed by Indians, was: Coast catch, 21,382 skins; Behring sea, 18,165 skins; total 39,547. The figures last year were: Seals caught along the coast, 12,985; in Behring sea, 16,585; Indian catch, 4,000; total 33,570. These figures indicate that this season the catch has been reversed as between the two hunting grounds, more skins having been obtained along the coast than in the disputed waters of Behring sea. Five schooners flying the American flag disposed of their catch at Victoria as follows: Coast, 74; Behring or Adele, which also entered at Victoria at coast and 431 for the sea, a total of 651. The grand total of seal skins from all sources received at Victoria this year is therefore 43,315, as against 49,998 last year. The fleet next year will comprise about 35 vessels claiming Victoria, B. C., as their home port.

### Manitoba Wheat.

A hundred and fifty car loads of wheat are leaving Manitoba daily, and shortly the figures will run up to two hundred car loads. This is the largest wheat movement yet. It indicates that the Manitoban farmer is collecting his earnings. A Pilot Mound paper wisely says that the large wheat crops should not lead people into extravagances in the matter of wheat growing. The business fluctuates, and some attention should be paid to the raising of pork. As a matter of fact there is no market in the world more free to Canadians, and that promises more satisfactory results, than the pork market. Canned fish and fruit are also articles in which Canada might do a big trade if so minded. Regarding the latter we cannot help expressing gratification that the Ottawa government has announced its intention to do all it can to encourage trade with Great Britain and the West Indies in canned goods. When Mr. McKimley framed his famous tariff bill, he little thought of the effect it would have on this country, and that instead of sitting down and pining, or even talking of retaliation, our people would rise like men and cast around for new markets and new spheres in which to show their capabilities, their enterprise and their energy. More power to the McKimleyites when the results are such as these.

### BARING BROS.

#### History of this Famous Banking House.

When a great institution is in danger, it is always interesting to trace its history, and no house could have greater interest for Canadians than that of Baring Bros. The founder of the business was John Baring, the son of a Lutheran minister at Bremen, who followed William of Orange to England, and became a cloth manufacturer and merchant. John Baring sent his cloth to the American colonies in exchange for American products and made money on his out-going and in-coming cargoes. When his third son, Francis, who became Sir Francis in 1793 and was the founder of the London branch of the family, succeeded to the business it was already very large and was greatly increased by his exertions. Sir Francis Baring's interests were largely in the American trade and his second son, Alexander Baring, who married Anne Louisa, the eldest daughter of William Bingham, of Philadelphia, in 1798, and was created Lord Ashburton in 1835, was sent to the United States as the representative of the house in America in the closing years of the last century. Lord Ashburton negotiated the famous Webster-Ashburton treaty. Henry Baring, who also married a daughter of William Bingham, and was a gambler and scapegrace and, although a member of the house of Baring Brothers, the management of the business devolved upon Alexander. Henry Baring's son by a second marriage, Edward Clarke Baring, was created Baron Revelshoke in 1855. Alexander Baring established the foreign loan business of the house to which so much of the prestige of Baring Brothers was due. Lord Ashburton's eldest son, the second baron William Bingham Baring, was never connected with the business, and his second son, Francis, retired from a business when he became Lord Ashburton in 1864. The management of Baring Brothers then devolved upon Thomas Baring, who was the grandson of Lord Ashburton and the son of the late Bishop of Durham. Thomas Baring was the brother of Sir Francis the first Lord Northbrook, and of Charles Baring, Bishop of Gloucester, whose son, Thomas Charles, married Susan Carter Minturn, daughter of Robert B. Minturn, of New York. Thomas Baring who died in 1873, brought his sons and a number of his nephews into the house, so that now Baring Brothers comprises more members than at any time in its history. Times have greatly changed since John Baring and his son Sir Francis found a profitable trade in North America and since Alexander Baring negotiated the great loan for the restored Bourbons in France in 1818. So sadly changed are they indeed that even the Baring Brothers in attempting to follow in South America the gigantic loan policy of the first Lord Ashburton in Europe came to the very verge of downfall.

#### The London Workingman.

While General Booth is talking up his remarkable scheme for the regeneration of "Darkest England" and calling on his fellow-countrymen to furnish him with the necessary means, while many dignitaries of the church of England have expressed their sympathy with the project of the Salvation Army leader, the citizens of London are called upon to consider another social measure which has been adopted by the London County Council, and which aims at bettering the condition of the workingmen of the capital. The project, which was determined upon by a decisive majority of the council, contemplates the spending of a million and a half in buying up some acres of Bethnal Green, a district principally occupied by tenement houses, and pulling down and rebuilding the houses. The scheme is a carrying out of the doctrine, "decent houses for decent poor." The measure is not purely philanthropic. Houses are to be built and rented on terms which will pay—or are expected to pay—a moderate interest on the capital. London is to be, so far as this area is concerned, its own landlord. The movement is said to greatly rejoice the Socialists who hail it as the beginning of a new Socialistic era. Be this as it may, the scheme is one which if properly carried out will doubtless improve the condition of its beneficiaries. Should it prove satisfactory we may expect to find other cities following the example of the great metropolis.

#### Emigration not Remedy for Poverty.

There are not wanting signs that the people of Great Britain are awaking to the fact that in order to deal effectively with the poverty and distress which so greatly abound, something more radical must be done than sending their poor to other lands. The unexpected favor which the scheme of General Booth has met with from men prominent in church and State shows that emigration as a means of curing the evil is no longer believed in. Of those who have recently spoken upon the question Hon. Mr. Gladstone in his Midlothian speeches last week declared that emigration is a poor remedy for poverty or industrial depression, which can be effectively dealt with only by righting the wrong conditions at home. This dissatisfaction with the old methods which have allowed poverty to increase until now one-tenth of England's population are living so near the borderland of actual want that in "one month they would all be dead from sheer starvation, were they exclusively dependent upon the money they earn by their own work, or which they receive as interest or profit upon their capital or their property," is one of the best grounds for hope that something practical will be done. When too, the leaders begin to stir themselves, and men of place and power begin to discuss measures of relief, it is natural to expect that tangible results will follow. Many will watch with interest these stirrings over the sea, and will hope that the end aimed at, the relief of the poverty-stricken, the rescue of the fallen and outcast will be abundantly realized.

There is a persistent rumor afloat that the Prince of Wales is about to leave his somewhat circumscribed quarters at Marlborough House and reside henceforth at Buckingham Palace, which huge edifice is now only occupied by her Majesty three or four days out of the year, greatly to the public disgust. The palace, which was built in 1825-'37, occupies the site of the old Buckingham House, erected in 1703, and bought by George III. in 1761. Being surrounded by magnificent gardens, and situated in the heart of fashionable London, its neglect has long been regarded as a grave scandal.