

beyond a few straggly hairs, which went but a very small way towards satisfying the demands of the ravening ones.

Craven was somewhere at the other side of the globe, or he might have given his old friend a helping hand, in spite of the fact that his advice had been consistently ignored. But he was not available, and facts are facts, and figures are brutal things when they are against you—especially on the Stock Exchange, which is an institution based on prompt settlements, quick returns, each man for himself, and death to the defaulter. It was a crooked enough business when straightened out. The figures showed a balance against George Barty of something over £900, and the simple fact was that he had no means of paying it. What savings he had had, and the little his father had left him, had been used in playing the game. His present assets were himself, his wife, his two children, and his furniture; and his creditors desired none of these things. They wanted cash. No wonder he looked worn and haggard, and called himself by his right name at last.

Bankruptcy gibbered up at him out of every hole he jabbed in his blotting pad. It meant the loss of his place and probably the impossibility of getting another. It meant——

A rap on the counter recalled him to his work—a cheque for £950, payable to bearer, drawn by Lady Sarah Gwynne—presenter, a young man with a prominent nose and beady black eyes. Barty wondered vaguely if Lady Sarah had been getting into the hands of the Hebrews.

Just then the front door swung wide again to admit young Frazer Burney, the son of the house. Barty got the impression of a slight start on his part as his eye