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Mr. Hare in a
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, Hare became

subdued and thoughtful—even irritable at times, and more than once a tear was in Roselyn's eye at a harsh word, to which she had been heretofore unaccustomed. To all her enquiries from me as to whether anything was worrying "Arochie" at the office I could but answer that I knew of nothing, neither was I able to deny that I saw the change as well as herself.

Sometimes when there was an especial press of business, Hare and I were kept in the City until a late hour in the evening, not that my services were absolutely required, but I really stayed to accompany him on his way home. Letter after letter he had to answer, column after column of figures he had to justify, and bill after bill he had to enter in the bulky ledgers, that were so heavy with their records of human miseries that I could hardly lift them. I often used to speculate in my own small mind, what a blessing it would be to humanity if No. 57, Old Broad Street were burnt to the ground, and these volumes of iniquity destroyed. Our offices consisted of four large rooms, two on each side of an entering passage. The left-hand ones were occupied by old Grab, and the right hand ones by Mr. Hare and myself: the outer of the two being the clerks' room, and the inner one being devoted to the use of clients as a waiting chamber.

One afternoon old Grab, who usually left at five o'clock, come into our room with a large roll of papers in his hands.

"Mr. Hare," he said in his oiliest accent, "I am sorry to keep you, but I must get you to attend to these little matters before you go."

"With pleasure, Sir," Hare replied cheerfully.

"I have jotted down a list of notices you will kindly pen. This account of Bell's must be closed—Putney cannot have the loan without further security—Greatorox must take the consequences of his own imprudence, tell him I can do nothing for him—Moore must pay or sell at once—and Sir John Gore may count upon my immediate attention to his request."

He then blandly bade us "Good night," and withdrew; but he came back in a moment and said, as if it had been a matter of second thought, "And, Mr. Hare, you may as well enclose Mr. Gregory these three five-pound notes he sent this morning, and tell him that nothing shall induce me to renew his bill, which you may also post on to Smirke with orders to sue at once—without a moment's delay."

Hare, who had listened mechanically, started at this, and turning on his stool confronted his master.

"Sir, excuse me making the remark, but I do most earnestly beg you to think twice over the step you are taking. When I went at your bidding the other day to Mr. Gregory's house, I saw his young wife, and—and," he seemed ashamed of his weakness, "it will break up his home—ruin him. They have one little child, and they seemed so like myself and my wife and little one that—"

"You grew sentimental."

He heeded not the sneer. "Moreover, Mr. Gregory," he continued, "has been grossly misled—swindled I may say—by an old school-fellow, a young man of fortune who has gambled away his means and dragged his friend into the mire with him."