

THE WIRE TAPPERS

O'Reilly wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. The prisoner could feel the two officers interrogating each other silently behind his back.

"Step in here, then, before you're spotted with me," said Durkin. "Come in, just as though we were three friends buying a drink, and shoot me, straight off, if I make a move to break away!"

"Oh, you'll not break away!" said the man with the steel grip, confidently, still keeping his great handful of loose coat-sleeve. But he stepped inside the bar-room, none the less.

Durkin's heart beat almost normally once more. There stood Eddie Crawford, leisurely peeling a lemon, with his lips pursed up in a whistle. One hungry curb-broker was taking a hurried and belated free lunch from the cheese-and-cracker end of the counter.

Durkin stared at his old friend, with a blank and forbidding face. Then he drooped one eye-lid, momentarily. It was only the insignificant little twitch of a minor muscle, and yet the thought occurred to him how marvellous it was, that one little quiver of an eyelid could retranslate a situation, could waken strange fires in one's blood, and countless thoughts in one's head.

"What will you have, gentlemen?" he asked, easily, briskly.

"Highball!" said the officer on his right.