

THE WIRE TAPPERS

and in so doing exposed the busy arteries of most of Wall Street's brokerage business, he carefully adjusted his rheostat, throwing the resistance coils into circuit one by one as he turned the graduated pointer. It was essential that he should remain on a higher resistance than the circuit into which he was cutting; in other words, he must not bleed his patient too much, for either a heavy leakage or an accidental short-circuiting, he knew, would lead to suspicion and an examination, if not a prompt "throwing it into the quad," or the reversal to the protection of some distant and indirect wire.

When his current had been nicely adjusted and his sensitive little polarized relay had broken into a fit of busy and animated chattering, he turned his attention to the unused and rusted end of gas-pipe which careless workmen, months, or even years, before, had hurriedly capped and left protruding a good quarter-inch into the conduit. On this cap he adjusted a pair of pocket pipe-tongues. It took all his weight to start the rusted pipe-head, but once loosened, it was only a minute's work to unscrew the bit of metal and expose the waiting ends of the wires which he had already worked through from the basement end of the pipe. He then proceeded with great deliberation and caution to make his final connections, taking infinite care to cover his footsteps as he went, concealing his wire where possible,