

THE WIRE TAPPERS

That single-throated challenge was like a match to waiting ordnance.

With arms still extended and gaunt fingers outstretched he kept it up, for one moment. Then the explosion came. Already, it seemed he had imparted his madness to the men who screamed and fought and gesticulated about him.

"Buy July sixty-three! Buy July sixty-four! Buy July sixty-five — sixty-seven — sixty-eight!"

The frenzy in the Pit increased. Up, up went July cotton to seventy, to seventy-one, even to seventy-two. In thirty years and over no such price had ever been known. Eighty-five million dollars' worth of cotton bales, on paper, were deliriously exchanging hands. But, all things must reach their end. The bow had been bent to the uttermost. The tide had flooded into its highest point.

A sudden change came over Curry. He flung up his two hands, and brought them smartly together over his jauntily tilted black derby. This done, he elbowed and pushed his way hurriedly to the ring-side. The market hung on his next breath.

"Sell twenty thousand May at sixty!"

A silence; like that which intervenes between the lightning flash and the thunder-clap, fell in the Pit.

The leader was unloading. It was rumored that five thousand bales more than the whole crop had been sold. The bubble had been overblown. There was still time to be on the safe side. And like peo-