

THE WIRE TAPPERS

glasses. But now he mixed drinks and drew beer for Custom House Charley.

If Eddie was there —

"Look here, you two," cried Durkin decisively, coming to a full stop to gain time. "I've struck it heavy and honest this time, and, as you people put it, I've got the goods on me. I can make it worth five thousand in spot cash to each of you, just to let this thing drop while you've still got the chance!"

The Central Office man looked at O'Reilly. Durkin saw the look, and understood it. One of them, at any rate, if it came to a pinch, could be bought off. But O'Reilly was different. "Look here, you two," said Durkin, showing the fringe of his neatly banded packet of notes.

The Central Office man whistled under his breath. But O'Reilly seemed obdurate.

"Double that, young man, and then double it again, and maybe I'll talk to you," Doogan's detective said easily, as he started on again with his prisoner.

"And if I *did*?" demanded Durkin.

"Talk's cheap, young fellow! You know what they're doing to us boys, nowadays, for neglect of duty? Well, I've got to get up against more than talk before I run that risk!"

"By heaven — I can do it, and I *will*!" said Durkin.