

THE WIRE TAPPERS

York, just as by night the Tenderloin is the most watched — here, with hundreds hourly passing to and fro and Central Office men buzzing back and forth, Durkin knew there were unusual perils, and need for unusual care.

Yet early that morning, under the very eyes of a patrolman, he had casually and hummily entered the Postal Union conduit, by way of the manhole not sixty yards from Broadway itself. In his hands he carried his instruments and a bag of tools, and he nodded with business-like geniality as the patrolman stepped over toward him.

"Got a guard to stand over this manhole?" demanded the officer.

"Nope!" said Durkin. "Three minutes down here ought to do me!"

"You people are gettin' too dam' careless about these things," rebuked the officer. "It's *me* gets the blame, o' course, when a horse sticks his foot in there!"

"Oh, cover the hole, then!" retorted Durkin genially, as he let himself down.

Once safely in the covered gloom of the conduit, he turned on his light and studied a hurriedly made chart of the subway wire-disposition. The leased Curry wires, he very well knew, were already in active service; and the task before him was not unlike the difficult and dangerous operation of a surgeon. Having located and cut open his cables,