

THE WIRE TAPPERS

edge blackboard rested his tired fingers. Brokers sat about on little camp-stools. For the first time Durkin could catch the sound of the sustained note of the telegraph keys clicking busily away. The sunlight fell across the paper-littered floor. The crowd in the gallery grew less. The operators were joking and chatting. A messenger boy had fallen asleep on his bench. The army was waiting for the return of its leader.

Curry re-entered the Pit quietly, with a toothpick in one corner of his mouth. He stood there for a moment or two, his thumbs in his waistcoat armholes, rocking comfortably back and forth on his heels, enigmatically and indolently watching the floor which his reappearance had first reanimated and then thrown into sudden confusion.

Durkin, in turn, watched the leader closely, breathlessly, waiting for the beginning of the end. He saw Curry suddenly throw away his toothpick and signal to a bent and pale-haired floor broker, who shot over to his leader's side, exchanged a whispered word or two with him, and then shot back to the brass railing. There he flung his hands up in the air, with fingers outthrust, and yelled like a madman:

"Buy July fifty-one! Buy July fifty-two! Buy July fifty-three — four — five! Buy July fifty-six!"