

## THE WIRE TAPPERS

were still buying freely, eagerly; yet already purchasers were having more difficulty in getting the commodity than when, weeks before, it had stood two hundred points lower. And still the sea of faces fought and howled and seethed, but still the price of cotton went up.

Durkin searched more carefully through that writhing mass of frenzied speculators for a glimpse of Curry himself.

He caught sight of him, at last, standing cool and collected and rosy-faced, a few paces in front of the New Orleans blackboard, at the edge of the little sea of frantic men that fought and surged and battled at his side. Spot cotton had already soared to 17.55. The wires were reporting it at eighteen cents in New Orleans. Hurry orders from Liverpool were increasing the tension.

Durkin took a second and closer look at the great bull leader. He made note of the large emerald flashing in his purple cravat, of the gaily dotted white waistcoat, in the armholes of which were jauntily caught the careless thumbs, of the black derby hat tilted a trifle down over the careless, rosy face. This was the man who was so lavishly giving away houses and jewels and automobiles. This was the man on whom men and women in all walks of life, in every state and territory of the Union, were pinning their faith for established twenty cent cotton and the balm of affluence that it would bring