

THE WIRE TAPPERS

he looked down at the collapsed figures. "Even when they come back?"

"Oh, they daren't do much bleating, and go and peach right out, seeing they were in after graft and we could show 'em up for neglect o' duty, all right, all right! But they'd just hound me, on the side, and keep after me, and make life kind o' miserable. Besides that, I always wanted to see St. Louis, anyway!"

The swing doors opened as he spoke, and Custom House Charley himself hurried in.

"I've got to climb out for a few minutes, Chink, with a friend o' mine here," said his assistant, as he pulled on his coat.

He turned back at the swing door.

"You'd better put those two jags out before they get messin' things up," he suggested easily, as he held the door for Durkin.

A moment later the two men were out in the street, swallowed up in the afternoon crowds swarming to ferries and Elevated stations, as free as the stenographers and clerks at their elbows.

Durkin wondered, as he hurried on with a glance at the passing faces, if they, too, had their underground trials and triumphs. He wondered if they, too, had explored some portion of that secret network of excitement and daring which ran like turgid sewers under the asphalted tranquillity of the open city.