

## THE WIRE TAPPERS

"Give me a gin rickey," said the officer on his left.

"A silver fizz," said Durkin, between them.

That, he knew, would take a little longer to mix. Then there came a moment of silence.

Durkin's long, thin fingers were drumming anxiously and restlessly on the polished wood of the mahogany bar.

The busy bartender, with a nervous little up-jerk of the head, gave these restlessly tapping fingers a passing glance. Something about them carried him back many months, to his operating-desk at the Postal Union. He listened again. Then he bent down over his glass, for he was mixing the silver fizz first.

It was the telegrapher's double "i" that he had heard repeated and repeated by those carelessly tapping fingers, and then a further phrase that he knew meant "attention!"

Yet he worked away, impassive, unmoved, while with his slender little sugar-spoon he signalled back his answer, on the rim of his mixing-glass.

"Get a move on, boss," said O'Reilly, impatiently.

"Sure," said the bartender, abstractedly, quite unruffled, for his ear was a little out of practice, and he wanted to make sure just what those finger-nails tapping on the mahogany meant.

And this is what he read: