

Dixon Hawke's Case Book—No. 3

"Even yet he might deny all—declare his ignorance of what was hidden in the wardrobe," muttered Hawke. "He shall prove his own guilt."

Stooping, the detective raised young George Gerrard in his arms and swiftly bore him to the adjoining room, where he laid him in as comfortable a position as possible. Returning, he listened for a moment, and heard the steps of Wilfred Drake crossing the lobby and beginning to ascend the stairs.

Dixon Hawke swiftly extinguished the candle, stepped into the wardrobe and closed the door.

Tommy to the Rescue.

SHUT in his narrow retreat, Hawke could hear the would-be murderer approach, enter the room, and halt before the wardrobe. He could guess that the man was now setting down the candle he had brought, and then a key rattled in the wardrobe lock.

Hawke caught the other's sharply-muttered ejaculation as the already unlocked bolt refused to turn; then the door was jerked open—and the detective leapt out upon Wilfred Drake.

An awful, piercing shriek tore from Drake's lips—another and another. He sprang back from the detective, crouching like a cornered wild beast, frantic with terror.

"Not dead!" he gasped.

Dixon Hawke advanced to lay a hand upon him, but the man backed away, snarling. And as the detective suddenly grappled with him he fought with the ferocity of madness, shrieking and cursing wildly. Finally, despite Hawke's utmost efforts, he contrived to wrench himself free, and, darting to the open wardrobe, snatched up the hammer, and, whirling it aloft, swung round upon the detective.

Hawke had barely time to throw up an arm in guard when the heavy weapon, wielded with all the mad-

man's murderous strength, came crashing down upon him. The full force of the blow was thus broken and its aim deflected, but Hawke's arm dropped to his side numb and paralysed; the head of the hammer caught his shoulder, and, like a felled ox, he went reeling to the floor.

With a yell of triumph Wilfred Drake towered over the prostrate, half-stunned detective, whirling the hammer again aloft.

But before the fatal blow could be dealt, a lithe form launched itself across the dim-lit room, grasped the falling hammer, and hurled it aside, so that the ponderous iron head crashed harmlessly against the boards. And Tommy Burke, clutching the madman by the throat, bore him backwards, and the pair rolled together on the floor in a life-and-death struggle.

Waiting outside the cottage, and watching intently for any signal from Hawke, Tommy Burke had been startled by Drake's wild shrieks, and had seen the swaying, leaping shadows cast by the candlelight upon the blind as the detective and his assailant grappled and fought. And, scrambling up as Hawke had done before him, he had leapt in by the open window and rushed to his chief's assistance in the nick of time.

Dixon Hawke, recovering swiftly, scrambled to his feet, and, though dazed and partially disabled, staggered across to help Tommy Burke in turn. Between them the frenzied, raving Wilfred Drake was at length overcome and his arms and legs securely bound.

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Young Gerrard made a complete recovery, and some months later Hawke and Tommy Burke were amongst the guests at his marriage with Miss Burnett, the pretty typist who had helped to save her lover's life.

As for Wilfred Drake, the man who committed the murderous attack, he proved to be a hopeless lunatic, and was duly confined in a criminal asylum.

THE CASE OF *The Gentleman Crook*



"GOOD evening, Hawke."

The greeting came in unison from half-a-dozen men seated in the smoke-room at the exclusive Minerva Club, as Dixon Hawke dropped into his favourite chair.

"Good evening, gentlemen."

The famous criminologist ordered a drink, and the waiter who served him handed him a thick, sealed envelope. Dixon Hawke slit it open and extracted a letter and a wad of crisp banknotes. A soft laugh came from his lips as he read the letter, and the others glanced at him curiously.

"Backed a winner, Hawke?" Chief Inspector Deakin asked.

"No, it is a repaid loan from a friend in Australia, and thereby hangs a tale."

"A tale, eh?" replied Deakin. "Let's have the yarn, Hawke."

The criminologist settled himself back in his chair.

"Ever heard of Nick Temple?" he began, glancing at the group before him, which included several Scotland Yard men.

"Have we not!" one man laughed. "It isn't so very long since Nick Temple amateur cricketer and gentleman cracksmen, gave us more trouble than all the other crooks in London put together. Regular cat-burglar. He had a long run before he was suspected, mixing with the best people in society. Let me see, how long is it since—"

"It is exactly eleven years since Temple was sent to Portland for a seven-year stretch," Inspector Deakin remarked. "You were the man who roped him in, Hawke."

Dixon Hawke nodded.

"Quite right, Deakin," he said; "you have a wonderful head for dates. Perhaps some of you remember Temple's trial and the boast he made from the dock."

"He laughed when he was sentenced," one of the listeners answered, "and boasted that when he was released he would play another innings against the police. Nick always talked in cricket parlance."

"That's the yarn I'm going to tell