

A Dalmatian Detective.

The Wonderful Exploits of a Member of the London Police.

One of the most remarkable of the London police is Druskowitz. No one looking at the short, blond-mustached and rather dandified young man would suspect him of being the cleverest of detectives. He is about thirty-four years old, but looks less. His father was a Dalmatian. He himself speaks any number of languages, and is thus nearly always sent abroad where any case occurs in a non-English speaking country needing the services of an English detective. In London his special work is among the foreigners, who go there as fugitives from justice. It is generally found that such persons betake themselves to special localities. Usually they lie hiding for a few days, but they soon find it impossible to remain in-doors any longer; and so, having shaved off their beards, if they had one, or putting on a false beard if they had formerly shaved, and wearing a wig and spectacles, they sally forth at night, and, being in want of amusement, they betake themselves to the Alhambra. That is a favorite resort of foreigners in London, and Druskowitz is therefore a frequent visitor there. He appears much interested by the performance, but his thoughts are elsewhere. He is watching some one individual in the audience, follows him when he leaves, tracks him to his hiding place, and then sets to work to find out who he is. Woe to the man who really is a criminal if Druskowitz be on his trail. There is little chance for him. Druskowitz has an extraordinary moral influence over criminals; it is something like that of the rattlesnake upon the bird. He carries no arms, yet he does not fear to go up to an armed and desperate man and arrest him; and, though armed and desperate, he succumbs. Druskowitz was engaged nine years ago in a remarkable case. In 1866 Vital Douat, a Bordeaux wine merchant, went to Paris and insured his life for a sum equal to £5,000. Shortly afterward he went to London in order to escape the consequences of a fraudulent bankruptcy. Some time later his wife, clad in widow's weeds, presented herself at the insurance office with the necessary legal document attesting her husband's death. There was nothing suspicious in the papers. Nevertheless, the company determined to make some inquiries before handing over the amount of insurance. Druskowitz was called in and he ascertained that on December 1, 1866, [someone] named Bernandi had called at the registrar's office in Blatow and registered the death of Douat, and it was entered as due to heart disease. Druskowitz found out the undertaker who had conducted the funeral, and learned that everything had been properly ordered and paid for, and that the funeral had been performed at Leytonstone by the Catholic priest. One thing seemed strange. The coffin had not been sent to any private house, but direct to the cemetery. Further inquiry failed to discover any doctor of the name attached to the certificate of death. The next step was to obtain an order for exhumation, and the coffin being opened there was found, not the body of Vital Douat, but a block of lead. Further inquiry elicited the fact that Douat had been present at his own funeral and afterwards gone to America, whence he supplied his wife with the documents intended for the insurance company. Some time afterwards he returned to Europe, went to Antwerp, bought a ship, sent her to sea with a lot of rubbish, and having previously insured her for a large sum, had her burned. Arrested and brought to trial, he was visited by Druskowitz, who felt sure that this was the man he wanted. Douat was found guilty and condemned to imprisonment with hard labor, but the French Government claimed him under an extradition treaty, and he was tried on the charge of fraudulent bankruptcy, found guilty, and sentenced to penal servitude for a comparatively short period.

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