

he scooped in the surplus. I got these erroneous ideas corrected, of course, but somehow I don't think nature intended me for the business, though I was always an unqualified social success. In due time I was advanced to a teller's position at one of the branches, but don't think I dazzled the public by my sparkling brilliancy as a teller. I lost \$100 the first day. A customer rushed in and said, 'Is my note due to day?' I said 'Yes.' 'Well, just give it to me, will you, and I will send my clerk in with the money.' The mercenary wretch left town on the next train, and I paid for my experience in monthly payments of \$5. The bank generously cancelled the debt after I had paid in \$95.

"I had a room off the office. One morning, about eight o'clock, I heard a modest rap at the door. 'Who's there?' I yelled, in a loud, angry voice. There was no reply. I yanked open the door, and confronted a quiet-looking, unassuming man. 'Is the manager in?' he inquired. I brought my eye-glass to bear on him, and proceeded to wither him with a look of haughty displeasure. 'My dear feller,' I said, 'don't you know the bank does not open until ten o'clock? I'm surprised at your ignorance.' 'I would like to see the manager at once, if convenient,' he said quietly. 'What?' I said, glaring with a look of rigid displeasure, and throwing a lot of supercilious scorn into my voice, 'Who are you?' 'I'm Samuel Coin, General Manager of this bank,' he mildly replied.

"I collapsed. When I sent in my resignation it was accepted."

"And wasn't it quite a strain on the bank, your leaving so suddenly?" I inquired.

"No," said Mole, sadly, "they seemed to worry along without me. If I remember rightly, the only thing that went up was the price of their stock." And he drifted off to his room.

E. A. C.

### THE FAKIR'S RETURN.



"HUNDER!" exclaimed the assistant editor, dropping his pen as the office door opened and a whiff of cigar smoke wafted into the room; followed by a well-known form. "If it isn't the Fakir! Thought you were in England raking in piles of ducats!

Made your fortune? Shake!"

"Yes, it's me," said the Fakir, flopping down into the editor's easy-chair, and airily knocking over the mucilage bottle on the table with his heavy-soled English shoes. "I'm back. Done pretty well in the Old Country, but it's slow, and I got tired of it. Don't know how it is, but I always leave Toronto swearing that the blamed place is no good and the people a lot of moss-backed chumps, and all that, but after I've been away awhile I'm sure to drift back again. There are worse places, after all."

And he beamed upon the staff with the air of one who has made a magnanimous concession.

"Got a match, by the way? and when you are about it you might as well give me a fresh cigar—that is, if you have a good one. Yes, there is more social freedom in this country—less of the embarrassing reserve that meets you at every turn in England. There's no geniality about the newspaper fellows there, like there is here. For instance, a countess which I met in London—I was rather a society lion, you know, for a while—had written a novel, something in the May Agnes Fleming style; two murders and an elopement in the first chapter, and a duel at the bottom of the sea, in which the combatants try to drown each other by destroying the diving apparatus; also a picnic on Mount Vesuvius, with a grand eruption scene and a fight with brigands, who turn out to be Cardinals and Jesuits in disguise, headed by the Pope. I tell you, it was really a splendid thing. Well, the countess, you know, didn't care for money—she is wealthy; I sold her a few lots in Mimico and Eglinton myself. All she wanted was reputation, and I always like to do business with these people who hanker after fame, and with which money ain't no object, eh? So I says to her, 'What's the matter with getting the *Times* to publish it in instalments?'"

"Oh, but they never publish stories," she said.

"No; that's just where they miss it. A good story would improve the *Times*—relieve the dulness of its editorials and Parliamentary reports. Besides, I guess the *Times* is just like other papers. They don't publish for fun. It's solid cash they're after, and if you could make it an object to them—"

"I tumble," says the Countess. 'I'll pay £500 if the *Times* will print my novel.'

"So I undertook the business. I'd long wanted to have a talk with the editor, and tell him that he was running the thing into the ground, and ought to make it more popular by giving shorter editorials and more stories and jokes. But do you know, I had the hardest work to find that fellow. I called about two dozen times, and they told me he was out or engaged. The clerks wanted to know my business. Even mentioning the name of the Countess didn't seem much use. Finally, after waiting two hours one day, I did get to see him. Working your way into a Masonic lodge without the password isn't a circumstance to it. Well, he asked me straight what my business was—didn't give me no chance to break the ice and chat about the weather, and Parnell, and so forth, and work up to the point gradually. I said I just dropped in to have a talk, and ask him out to have a bottle of wine, and you never saw a man look more surprised in your life. Said it wasn't the custom in England to drink before dinner. Just fancy! Then I got right down to hard-pan—told him how the *Times* was running down for want of a good sensational story to keep up the interest, and suggested that he should run the Countess' novel in instalments. 'Utterly unheard-of, sir! Preposterous! No, sir! money makes no difference; wouldn't do it for a hundred thousand pounds!' Now, is it any wonder the *Times* is losing its grip? But I got even with him, you bet. I remarked as I got to the door, 'Well, I suppose your experience with works of fiction has not been very encouraging. Pig-gott's story cost you much more than that.' Had him there, eh?"

"But did the Countess get her novel published eventually?" asked the dramatic editor.

"Yes," replied the Fakir. "I sold it for a couple of hundred to a big dry goods firm, and they issued a hundred thousand copies in cheap form, with their advertisements interspersed and her escutcheon on the title-page."