

TOO MUCH FOR TAPPENHAM

The Experiment of His Medium Knocked Him Out

And He Retired From Business and Threw Communion With His Conscience.

Mr. Aloysius Tappenhäm, of Stamford Road, was a dealer in frauds. It must not be understood from this statement that he was either a company-promoter or the manager of a philanthropic undertaking. On the contrary, he was as honest a man of business as you would find in London, and he earned his living by discovering and introducing new attractions in the shape of "Wonders," "Phenomena," and so forth.

The music halls where Mr. Tappenhäm's best customers, and when he successfully launched a new impostor, he reaped a handsome return in the way of commissions on the salary of the impostor, and the profits of the entrepreneur. All his portages were a success—a fact chiefly to be attributed to his unvarying habit of insisting that he himself should be shown "how it was done."

One day Mr. Tappenhäm discovered a treasure in the shape of a very attractive young lady whose name was Hopkins, but who proposed to call herself Mlle. Claire. Claire was hardly suitable to the music halls. Mr. Tappenhäm thought that she was above that, and proposed to "run" her himself in Bond street, on half-profit terms.

Mr. Tappenhäm was much struck with the dexterity of this performance. Of course, when explained, it resolved itself into some clever optical illusion, a little ventriloquism, and a good deal of tact in returning to the tempter in another form information pumped out of him beforehand. The materials were simple, the result was highly artistic, and Mr. Tappenhäm determined to furnish the only thing useful to set London aflame with the new marvel—namely, capital. However, before taking the last irrevocable step, he decided on a final trial. He prepared the mise-scene with due completeness, and invited Mlle. Claire to experiment on himself.

"Consider me as one of the public," he said, "and give me a hair-raiser."

Mlle. Claire protested that he was too much behind the scenes; but, on being pressed, she consented to try, and asked Mr. Tappenhäm to name his spirit.

"I thought for a moment, and then said, 'When I was a young man, I knew a girl called Nellie Davies—pretty girl, my dear. I darsay I didn't treat her over well, but that's neither here nor there. Let's have her.'"

"Clever little Claire asked a question or two—and Mr. Tappenhäm admired the neat and apparently undesigned nature of her questions—and then set to work, after drawing the curtains a shade closer, and turning the light a trifle lower.

Mr. Tappenhäm sat comfortably in an arm chair, his hands crossed over his white waist-coat, and a shadowy shape began to form itself a yard or two from Mr. Tappenhäm.

"Capital, capital!" he chuckled. "That'll fetch 'em." The shade grew more definite.

"What do you want?" asked Mlle. Claire. "I'll fetch 'em." "Is it like?" "Now, by Jove, it is rather! Make it speak."

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