

GEORGE ZORAB AND 'KATIE KING'(1)

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Some would say that, once one has taken the first step towards acknowledging any phenomenon as paranormal, one forfeits the right to draw the line at any phenomenon whatsoever, no matter how absurd or fantastic it may be, so that the very word 'impossible' drops out of one's vocabulary. Yet, however that may be, most people would recognize degrees of paranormality, perhaps according to the strain which a given instance imposes on our credulity or according to the violence it appears to do to our cherished conception of the world we inhabit. For each of us, whether we are aware of it or not, brings to bear on our experience a personal cosmology or world-view which can admit certain things as conceivable, as falling within the realm of possibility, while, equally, rejecting others as inconceivable or beyond the pale. No doubt such cosmologies will vary as between one individual and the next, according to what Renee Haynes has called our 'boggle threshold' but, even more strikingly, they will vary as between one epoch or culture and the next. At the present time there is likely to be a broad consensus among the educated in the Western world as to the relative magnitude of some hypothetical phenomenon on a scale of paranormality. Thus psi phenomena of the statistical type, as currently studied by parapsychologists in their laboratories, would fall somewhere near the bottom of such a scale. Spontaneous phenomena of the more dramatic sort would occupy a higher position. Higher still - still more at variance with the prevailing cosmology - would come physical phenomena of the sort we associate with poltergeist outbreaks or with physical mediumships: apports, teleportation, the levitation of objects or of people, the interpenetration of matter through matter and so forth. Then at the uppermost extreme we encounter the phenomenon known in the literature of psychical

research as 'materialization', a term that implies the sudden coming into existence of some object or organism which, in the normal way, could only come into being as the end product of a lengthy natural process. The correlative term 'dematerialization' implies the reverse effect. The supreme example of a materialization, the ultimate expression of the miraculous, is the so-called 'full form' materialization, that is to say the sudden emergence of a complete live human being who can, for the duration, walk, talk and freely interact with other human beings as if no different in kind. I think most people would regard such a phenomenon as more incredible than any other and I do not think this is just a reflection of our prejudice, of the fact that the idea of a transient human being is something so remote from our everyday experience. What we find so hard to credit in this case is the sheer complexity of the processes that required to produce such an outcome. This makes it qualitatively different from those lesser paranormal phenomena that merely involve the transgression of some accepted scientific law.

Full form materialization is a phenomenon that is very much bound up with the history of the Spiritualist movement. Originally, spirits were supposed to communicate with the living either by signals such as raps etc. or, better still, using the voice or hand of the medium to speak or write or, even better, by direct voice but, obviously, the best thing of all would be if they could somehow manifest themselves in bodily form so as to be recognized by their dear ones in this world with whom they could then converse as they would have done in their lifetime. One of the earliest cases of this kind is associated with Kate Fox who between 1861 and 1866 is said to have given some four hundred private sittings for a Mr. C. F. Livermore, a wealthy New York banker, at which his recently deceased wife Estelle is said to have materialized.

During the 1870's, a number of English mediums claimed to produce full materializations but, thereafter, the phenomenon becomes rarer, although partial

materializations are more frequent. As the 20th century proceeds and as the Spiritualist movement declines, physical mediumship of any description becomes a rarity until, today, it is virtually impossible to find a physical medium who will submit to proper investigation, let alone one who would claim to produce a full form materialization!

Perhaps the last exponent of that phenomenon to whom we need pay attention was Helen Duncan (1898-1956) (2). It goes without saying that the Spiritualist movement in general and physical mediumship in particular was permeated with fraud. The temptation to resort to the art of conjuring in order to achieve the desired effect must at all times have been strong given the money that could be made by a successful practitioner. Nevertheless, and contrary to what the sceptics have us to believe, the question as to whether, amid all this morass, there might not have been some genuine cases of full form materialization, remains an open one, although one which, given the absence of comparable cases today, is likely to remain open. Speculation need not be a waste of time, however, for it brings us up against the problem of conflicting evidence in its acutest form and confronts us with the most taxing of dilemmas, namely what is one to do when all the available interpretations are utterly implausible? Faced with something as bizarre as full form materialization, the Humean sceptic will argue that no testimony whatsoever could outweigh the antecedent improbability of such a phenomenon. A non-Humean empiricist, however, will ask by what token we can arrogate to ourselves the right to exclude, a priori, phenomena for which there is evidence? What if reality is much stranger than we reckoned? At all events, nothing better illustrates these perplexities than the case which is the theme of this paper. It concerns the English medium, Florence Cook, whose 'Katie King' materialization culminated in the year 1874. It is by no means the strongest case of its kind in the literature but it is, perhaps the most famous if only because its authenticity was vouched for by one of the

most distinguished scientists of the late 19th century, William Crookes.

The fact that Crookes endorsed the phenomenon and never retracted his opinion allows of only three possible interpretations:

1. 'Katie King' was, indeed, a full form materialization as Crookes declared.
2. Crookes honestly believed that this was so but he had been duped.
3. Crookes knew all along that this was a hoax but, for reasons of his own, chose to pretend otherwise.

Each of these three possible options has found some support among scholars although each has to contend with some formidable objections. In what follows, however, we shall be concerned mainly with options 1 and 2 because the two views which I want to discuss and contrast are those of George Zorab who believes that Crookes was justified in accepting the reality of the phenomenon and those of Trevor H. Hall who maintains that Crookes was an accessory to fraud. Whatever either of them may think of the other, here we have two very learned scholars who have both made a special study of the case and who can both bring to bear on it an extensive knowledge of the background of 19th century spiritualism but who reach diametrically opposite conclusions. This in itself should warn us that the truth, wherever it may lie, is not obvious or easy to come by.

The Hall Thesis:

I shall start by considering the views advanced by Trevor Hall since it was, after all, his book, The Spiritualists (1962), from which I first learned about this episode in the history of physical research. It aroused a storm of controversy among the experts yet, despite detailed criticisms by such authorities as Thouless (1963), Stevenson (1963) and, especially Medhurst and Goldney (1964) and finally, Zorab himself

(1964 a, b,) & (1980), his book was republished in 1984 without amendments, even with respect to some factual errors, and without a new preface acknowledging the contributions of these other scholars to the ongoing controversy. The title of the book alone was changed to The Medium and the Scientist which is certainly more explicit.

Here, briefly, are the key events in the story as reconstructed by Mr. Hall. Soon after the birth of their first child, Florence (3 June 1856) (3), Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cook leave their home in Kent and settle in London where they take a house in Hackney. As Florence starts to grow up word gets around that she has mediumistic gifts. The earliest mention of her mediumship in print occurs in a letter to The Spiritualist dated 9 June 1871 which brings her to the attention of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. Her parents realizing the commercial possibilities which this development opens up have her trained by two notorious fraudulent mediums of that time, Frank Herne and Charles Williams. Soon she begins to manifest similar phenomena to theirs, notably the production of 'materialized' faces at an aperture at the top of the 'cabinet', a closet from inside which she operates, ostensibly bound hand and foot to the chair on which she is seated. Her seances are well received by the local spiritualists and before long she is brought to the attention of Charles Blackburn, a wealthy Manchester businessman and a devout spiritualist, who agrees to pay her a regular allowance so that she would not have to become a professional medium dependent on fees from her clients.

Emboldened by her initial success, Florence is now ready to meet the next challenge, that of producing a full form materialization. This means that her 'spirit control' 'Katie King' (4), instead of just showing her face at the aperture at the top of the cabinet must now step outside the cabinet, suitably clad in some white drapery, and mix freely with the sitters. This new phase begins in the Spring of 1873 and continues throughout the Summer and Autumn at the Cook family house in

Hackney in the presence of invited guests "amidst the enthusiastic commendations of the spiritualists and to the delight of Charles Blackburn" (5). Then, one unlucky day, disaster strikes in the person of a Mr. William Volckman, who is well known in spiritualist circles, who attends a seance on the 9th December 1873 in the course of which 'Katie' rashly proffers him her hand. Volckman, convinced by then that the spirit was none other than Florence herself refuses to let go exclaiming that he had caught the medium in the act. A scuffle follows in the course of which 'Katie' is freed and, by the time the cabinet is opened, Florence is found correctly seated in her black dress and button-up boots with all her fetters and seals intact. Volckman is roundly denounced in the spiritualist press, however, Blackburn begins to get suspicious and threatens to stop payments.

What happens next, according to Florence, herself, is that she goes to call on Crookes, without the knowledge of her parents or friends, and offers herself 'a willing sacrifice on the altar of his unbelief' (6). Crookes finds her irresistible and the eminent 44 year old scientist duly becomes infatuated with the charming young 18 year old medium. He takes her off to his home at 20 Mornington Road (near Regents Park), ostensibly to carry out an investigation but actually to carry on an affair with her without arousing the suspicions of his wife, Ellen, then in the advanced stages of pregnancy while expecting their tenth and last child. By the 3rd February 1874 we find Crookes writing to The Spiritualist pleading for more time before he can pronounce a definite verdict on Florence Cook but on the 30th March he writes again this time to proclaim that he has obtained 'absolute proof' of the reality of 'Katie King' as a distinct entity. Finally, on the 21st May, 'Katie King' takes her departure from this world at a

seance at the Cook house in Hackney at which Crookes is present.

Meanwhile Blackburn is still restive, resentful perhaps at the way Crookes has come to monopolize Florrie. Mr. and Mrs. Cook now become alarmed and decide that the time is ripe for their second daughter, Kate, to take the place of Florence in Blackburn's affections and she is duly groomed for the role. By April 1877 we find her giving performances exactly like those of her elder sister with a spirit form calling itself 'Lillie Gordon'. The plan works and Blackburn succumbs to the allure of 'Lillie' who, between seances, takes to writing him long 'spirit' letters full of friendly and homely advice.

Florence, herself, has now become the wife of Edward E. Corner, a sea-captain whose mother and sister regularly undertook the examination of Florence before and after seances to make sure that there was nothing concealed on her person. The marriage took place on 29 April 1874. Her career as a medium continues, 'Katie' is replaced by 'Leila' and then soon afterwards by 'Marie' purportedly a young French girl. Disgrace once again looms up, however, when, at a sitting of the 9th January 1880 attended by Sir George Sitwell, 'Marie' is seized and found to be Florence herself in her underwear. She somehow manages to survive this much publicized exposure (7) and goes on giving seances although with diminishing success. Blackburn has now retired and moves permanently to London where he takes up residence with the Cook family at a new address. When he died in 1891 he leaves most of his fortune to the Cooks, the main beneficiary being Kate, but he leaves nothing at all to Florence who, in 1904, dies at her home in Battersea Rise, London, from pneumonia. In 1907, her husband marries Kate.

This saga of deceit and intrigue has a dramatic posthumous sequel. In 1922 a Mr. Francis Anderson calls

at the office of the Society for Psychical Research in London and asks to speak to their Research Officer (at that time Dr. E.J. Dingwall). He then tells Dr. Dingwall, in strictest confidence, that many years ago, as a young man down from Oxford, he had had an affair in the course of which she had confided in him that her mediumship had been fraudulent and had served as a cover for the affair she was having at the time with William Crookes. Many years later, in 1949, Mrs. K.M. Goldney, who knew Anderson personally, urged him to amplify his original deposition. This he does mentioning among other things how Florence had told him that her sisters, Kate and Edith, were also fraudulent. A full statement is drawn up which Anderson then signs in the presence of Mr. W.H. Salter (the Honorary Secretary), Dr. Dingwall and Mrs. Goldney herself. This Mr. Anderson, be it noted, had no special interest in psychical research and the information he vouchsafed was given purely in the interest of truth.

This, then, in broad outline, is the narrative as retailed by Trevor Hall with a mass of supporting evidence to back it up. Although Hall himself frankly admits that there are many gaps which have to be filled in by surmise, such is his skill as a polemicist that his version of events has now widely come to be accepted as historical fact and not just by historians (8) but by those for whom Crookes is little more than a name. Indeed, when I first read Hall's book, I could not understand how any rational person could arrive at any different conclusion. In due course, however, thanks at first to the late George Medhurst and more recently to George Zorab, I began to realize that there was hardly anything in this narrative, apart from the actual datable events, that was not open to challenge! Before we discuss the alternatives, however, let us summarize the main arguments on which Hall rests his case:

1. The striking resemblance between 'Katie' and Florence, on which the sitters so often comment,

strongly suggests that the former was the latter in disguise.

2. We have no convincing evidence, other than Crookes' own testimony, for thinking that Florence ever possessed paranormal powers, let alone that she could produce a full form materialization, or that she was ever anything other than a fraud.

3. In the seances which Crookes held in his own house he had free access to the cabinet, a privilege not granted to other investigators. The cabinet was, in fact, his own library which adjoined his laboratory which he used as the auditorium for the sitters. In these circumstances it is inconceivable that he did not know what was really going on. However, one is hard put to think of any motive other than a sexual one that would explain why he was willing to be a party to the deception.

4. Everything we know about Florence, her family and her entourage encourages us to suppose that she was fraudulent from the start. Her mentors, Herne and Williams were repeatedly caught in fraud. Her friend and fellow medium, Mary (Rosina) (9) Showers who participated with her in joint materialization seances under Crookes' own supervision, and to his satisfaction, was later discovered, by Crookes himself, to be a fraud. Her own sister, Kate, was implicated with the American mediums, Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Fletcher, who were convicted of fraud at the Central Criminal Court and sentenced to a year in prison. In short, in whichever direction we turn we come up against fraud.

5. The conditions of the seances and, more especially, the fact that the medium always had the final say as to what was permitted or how much light could be used etc. were as if designed to make fraud practicable. In particular, the use of the cabinet and the repeated failure to get clear evidence of the medium and her spirit form at one and the same time, speaks for itself.

There is no denying that these are powerful arguments. Can they be rebutted? Let us now consider some

counter-arguments.

Critique of the Hall Thesis:

Unless we are prepared to disqualify as a witness anyone who was a spiritualist, or even anyone who took spiritualist claims seriously, it is simply false to say that there was no worthwhile evidence to support Florence's claims before Crookes entered the arena. To begin with, members of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, which first took her in hand, though they may not have been the most sophisticated intellectuals, were, by all accounts, sincere and earnest about their beliefs. They knew perfectly well that the Movement had become exploited by dishonest practitioners and they had everything to lose if, as a result of being too permissive, they were to be caught with egg on their faces. Given the severe disadvantage which the set-up imposed and which could be countermanded only at the cost of getting no phenomena at all, the precautions they took to guard against deception were both elaborate and ingenious. If, in the end, they were outwitted, it could not be said that it was for want of trying. The development of Florence's mediumship as recorded in the pages of The Spiritualist proceeds from the violent, poltergeist type phenomena of her earliest seances to the manifestation of faces at the opening of the cabinet, after Herne and Williams had taken her on, to the eventual debut of 'Katie' as a fully fledged person in the seance room. Zorab shows that there are strong indications of paranormality at every stage of her progress.

Nevertheless, it could still be argued, by the hard-line sceptic that the men in charge of her, men like W.H. Harrison, the editor of The Spiritualist, or J.C. Luxmoore, who presided at most of these seances and took over the responsibility of fettering the medium, knew all along that she was fraudulent but saw her potentialities as propaganda for the Cause and decided

to promote her. Indeed, Hall himself in places insinuates as much. So let us consider next three key witnesses who were never part of the Dalston coterie but who satisfied themselves as to the paranormality of the phenomena before Crookes came along. The three whom I shall discuss are: Dr. J.E.Purdon, an American physician living in Britain, Dr. James Gully, a well known English physician of that period and Alexander Aksakoff, a Russian aristocrat and the leading Russian psychical researcher of that period who was well known internationally. If nothing more, it should prove instructive to see how Hall copes with testimony from persons of that calibre.

Dr. Purdon invited Florence to stay with him at his house in Sandown on the Isle of Wight in the hope that there he might be able to carry out some foolproof tests with her. However, at one of the first seances on 10th July 1872, things went badly awry. He had put Florence into a canvas jacket threaded with whipcord and had tethered her to the floor with leather straps. When later he opened the cabinet, however, he found that her fetters and straps had been slashed through as if by a knife. No knife was found on her, of course, ostensibly it was the work of evil spirits, but, whatever it was, it makes no sense from the standpoint of a fraudulent medium. Anyway, Purdon duly wrote to Harrison to report the failure of the seance and Florence, too, wrote a letter of apology. Purdon persevered, however and was gratified to find that Florence never raised any objections to any conditions which he sought to impose although of course, she continued operating from within the cabinet. At all events, his patience appears to have been rewarded because we find him writing again to Harrison on the 11th September 1872 as follows: "...I was seated in the room with Miss Cook alone; and I found that, after a few minutes she was tied in a way that put effort and assistance on her part out of the question. On the same evening she was lifted on the table several times, having been previously tied firmly to her chair.

Hands and faces were also felt and seen. One face was perfectly black. I can confidently direct the attention of investigators to the advantage to be derived from a sitting with this young lady" - J.E.Purdon M.B.

This very brief account is sparse on information although it indicates that she was not in this instance confined to the cabinet since she was repeatedly hoisted onto the table. Since it is relevant to Hall's contention that there would be no reason to think that Florence had any paranormal powers if Crookes had not vouched for them, we may wonder how Hall disposes of Dr. Purdon? He does so by the simple expedient of alluding to his initial failure but refraining from saying anything about his ultimate satisfaction.

Let us next summon Dr. Gully to the witness box. Gully (1808-1883) was famous in Victorian England as the exponent of hydrotherapy. He was the author of a number of medical tracts such as 'The Water Cure in Chronic Diseases' and he ran a clinic in Malvern which attracted some of the most celebrated figures of the day including Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin and suchlike. Daniel Home was also among his clientele and it may well have been he who converted Gully to a belief in spiritualism. Hence, when Crookes decided to investigate Florence Cook, Gully was an obvious choice as a second-in-command since by then he was already familiar with her mediumship. One of the surviving photographs of 'Katie King' shows her with Gully and Hall thinks it likely that it was Gully who operated the camera for those shots which show Crookes arm-in-arm with 'Katie'. Rightly or wrongly, Gully in due course became fully convinced of the genuineness of her phenomena. Thus, in a letter to the American writer on spiritualism, Epes Sargent, dated 20 July 1874, he opines: "To the special question which you put regarding my experiences of the materialization of the spirit-form with Miss Cook's mediumship, I must reply that, after two years examination of the fact and numerous seances,

I have not the smallest doubts, and have the strongest conviction, that such materialization takes place and that not the slightest attempt at trick or deception is fairly attributable to anyone who assisted at Miss Cook's seances". (10)

Gully could scarcely be more categorical. What, therefore, are we to make of such testimony in the light of Hall's assertion (1984, p.174) that 'her mediumship, one would have thought, would have deceived no one of sane mind'? Hall deals with Gully in a way that only a desperate prosecutor would resort to: character assassination. Thus, in a lengthy footnote (p.41) he rakes up the case of Charles Bravo and the harm it did to Gully's reputation. Bravo, a barrister by profession, died mysteriously of poisoning and his wife, Florence, was the prime suspect. Because of the lack of evidence the case never came to trial but there was a public inquiry in the course of which it transpired that Gully had been Mrs. Bravo's lover before her marriage to Bravo when she was the widow, Mrs. Ricardo. Since Florence Ricardo had also been Gully's patient this was a clear breach of medical ethics for which Gully had to pay the penalty of being struck off the register. Anyone who has read the very sympathetic portrait of Dr. Gully in the book of that name by the distinguished English writer, Elizabeth Jenkins, may feel that Gully had a raw deal (11). He would, after all, have gladly married Florence Ricardo if his second wife, from whom he had long been separated, had not still been alive. Be that as it may, whether we adopt a censorious attitude, like Mr. Hall or a permissive attitude like Miss Jenkins, it is hard to see what possible relevance this scandal could have to the question with which we are here concerned: was Florence Cook genuine or fraudulent?

Let us move on next to Alexander Aksakoff (1832-1903) who attended a seance at the home of the Cook family on the 22nd October 1873. As usual, it was Mr. Luxmoore who was in charge of the seance but Aksakoff was satisfied

that he bound her in such a way that she would not be able to rise from her chair without pulling at a string that was fastened to a table in the room. Although in the course of this seance Aksakoff never witnesses the medium and her spirit control at one and the same time, he was allowed to see the medium lying entranced in her regulation gear only seconds after the disappearance of 'Katie King'. It is worth quoting the relevant passage from his lengthy description of this seance even though it was not published until some time later (12):

"All the time the sitting lasted Katie chattered away with the sitters, her voice being very low as if she were whispering all the time. Several times she demanded: "Do ask me questions, reasonable questions that is!". Taking the hint I asked her: "Can't you show me your medium?". She replied: "Yes, certainly, come here very quickly and have a look!".

"In that very instant I stood up from my chair and drew back the curtain. I had only taken five steps to reach the curtain but the white clad figure had disappeared. In front of me in a dark corner, the figure of the medium, clothed in a black dress, was sitting in an armchair. She was wearing a black dress and because of this I could not see her quite clearly. As soon as I was seated again, Katie's white-clad figure appeared once more, standing next to the curtain, and she asked me: 'Did you have a good look?' I replied: 'Not so good because it was rather dark behind the curtain'. 'Then take the lamp with you and go and have a good look immediately!' Within a second I stood behind the curtain, holding the lamp in my hand. Every trace of Katie had disappeared. I found myself alone and facing the medium who, in a deep trance, was sitting on a chair with both her hands bound fast behind her back. The light shining on the medium's face started to produce its usual effect, i.e. the medium began to sigh and to awake. Behind the curtain an interesting dialogue started between the medium, becoming more and more awake, and Katie who wanted to put her medium to sleep again. But

Katie had to give way. She said 'goodbye' and then silence followed".

"The seance had come to an end. Mr. Luxmoore insisted that I should carefully test whether all bindings, knots and seals were still intact. I found everything absolutely intact, and when it was suggested that I cut the medium free, it was only with difficulty that I could get the scissors under the tape, so tightly were her hands bound together".

I was given an opportunity to observe Katie for the second time during a sitting held in Mr. Luxmoore's house on 28th October. The same control measures were taken and the very same Katie appeared again".

From another source we know that Crookes attended this second sitting on the 28th October. Aksakoff was a friend of Crookes and Zorab has suggested that it was probably on his recommendation that Crookes decided that it would be worth his while to investigate Florence.

What is one to make of the Aksakoff testimony? If one were searching for a normal explanation one would, I suppose, have to assume that the role of 'Katie' was played here by an accomplice (13) and one who was highly skilled at appearing or vanishing at the appropriate moment. But while such a trick might be plausible in the first seance held at the Cooks' house in Hackney it is much less plausible at the second seance held at Mr. Luxmoore's house unless, of course, Luxmoore was a party to the conspiracy. Otherwise one would have to assume that Aksakoff was either lying or else severely deluded. But what does Hall have to say? He gets over the difficulty by never mentioning Aksakoff in his book!

But, in the end, it is not the credibility of the witnesses that is crucial in a case like this but rather the grounds on which they base their belief and whether these do indeed preclude the possibility of trickery. In this instance there are two contingencies that an

investigator had to consider in designing his security precautions:

(a) that the medium might impersonate her spirit form and

(b) that she might get an accomplice to do so.

To guard against the first of these, measures were taken to immobilize the medium so that impersonation would become physically impossible. To guard against the second, the room would be searched before the seance began, it would be checked for hidden trap-doors etc., the doors would be locked and afterwards taped over and sealed (sometimes the windows too would be sealed). However, in this particular case, the possibility of an accomplice was more remote if only because of the speaking likeness between 'Katie' and Florence. For this at once poses the difficult question as to who this obliging double could have been? (14). Hall, wisely in my opinion, dismisses the accomplice hypothesis at any rate in those seances which took place in Crookes' home. More to the point, therefore, is whether the methods of fettering used were adequate.

These methods have come in for criticism on the grounds that it was customary to use long lengths of string etc. which would have been easier to wriggle out of than short lengths. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that not only were the medium's wrists tied together and her body bound to the chair but the cord round her waist was extended so that it could be tethered to some object in the seance room where it would remain visible throughout the seance. In addition, all the knots were sealed with wax on which one of the sitters would stamp his signet ring and sometimes the separate pieces of tape would be sown together in situ. A still more drastic method which Zorab (1980) discusses is the hair-lock method although this only seems to have been used for the early 'faces' seances. This involved gathering a lock of the medium's hair (after ascertaining that it was truly her own hair!), passing it through the eye of a large bodkin and fixing the

bodkin on the frame of the cabinet so that it was visible to the sitters throughout the seance. This effectively prevented the medium from moving her head more than a few inches yet, even under these conditions, phenomena were obtained.

Such then were the devices to constrain the medium physically plus the fact that the medium would be fully clothed and wearing boots. I think we would have to agree that, to elude such controls, one would need to be something of a Houdini and to resume one's original garb and position without destroying any of the knots or seals might even demand something more than the cunning of a Houdini or the virtuosity of a quick-change artiste! Such considerations weighed heavily at any rate with observers such as Dr. Gully (15).

On two occasions, however, a more sophisticated method of control was adopted. This was the 'electrical test' devised by Cromwell Varley who, like Crookes was a Fellow of the Royal Society and is remembered as the designer of the first successful transatlantic cable for telegraphy. It was Varley, incidentally, who first got Crookes interested in spiritualism. The test consisted of placing the medium in an electrical circuit by having her grip two handles. Any movement on her part would then show up as a change in the resistance as registered on a galvanometer installed in the seance room. At the first seance where the apparatus was used, Varley himself monitored the fluctuations of the galvanometer. The seance took place at the house of Mr. Luxmoore and a variety of phenomena were observed although 'Katie' did not emerge fully from the cabinet. Varley, at any rate, was confident that Florence could not have cheated. The second seance was one which Crookes himself ran in his own house using the Varley apparatus and again reported a satisfactory outcome. The method has been discussed at length by C.D. Broad (1964) who reached the conclusion that, while one cannot rule out the possibility that one could elude detection by substituting a resistance coil

in place of one's own body, one should bear in mind that "In 1874, electrical apparatus was a rarity and familiarity with its workings confined to a few experts". This has led Hall to speculate that Crookes might have borrowed the apparatus from Varley before the first seance so as to coach Florence in how best to evade the control. However, Broad construes what Varley says to mean that he lent Crookes his apparatus only after the first test seance so Hall's surmise is very dubious, quite apart from the fact that it presupposes that Crookes was by then so far gone in sexual corruption that he would not flinch from conspiring with a fraudulent medium to deceive an old friend and loyal colleague!

Another consideration that convinced many at the time that Florence and Katie (as we shall hereafter call her) could not have been the same person was that, despite the marked resemblance, there were also some very definite physical differences. Regrettably, no measurements were taken or recorded, so far as I know, which might have constituted objective evidence say of differences in weight or height. Nevertheless, most observers agreed that Katie was some inches taller than Florence and she was often requested therefore to stamp her bare feet on the floor just to make sure no tiptoeing was going on! Her hands, too, were said to be larger than those of Florence and, more to the point, as Zorab has stressed, Katie had perfectly formed finger-nails whereas Florence was notorious for being an inveterate nail-biter! On one occasion Katie drew attention to the fact that her medium was wearing earrings whereas her own ears were unpierced. Crookes mentions, at one point, that Florence had a blister on her neck whereas Katie's neck was perfectly smooth and also that Katie's hair was of a different colour. Katie had once given him a lock of her hair to keep (after he had checked that it did truly grow from her head!) and he describes it as auburn in contrast to Florence's hair which was a dark brown. In general, most observers agreed that Katie was much

the finer specimen of womanhood! It may be that all of these alleged differences, some of which showed up on the many photographs that were taken, can be explained away somehow or other. However, they ought not to be ignored if one is being asked to jump to conclusions from the evident similarities in their appearance.

What cannot be explained away on any hypothesis, short of deliberate lying, are those instances where Katie is said to have dematerialized in full view of the sitters. There are not many such accounts in the literature but here, for what it may be worth, is an account written by the London Correspondent of the Belfast Newsletter that was published in Medium and Daybreak of 8th August 1873. This is the relevant passage:

"The most wonderful part of the manifestation I have still to narrate. After the apparition had walked out of the cabinet three times and had been photographed by means of magnesium light, it drew the rug aside, and at that moment it seemed to us that its whole body, with the exception of its head, melted and evaporated to form a kind of cloud. Its head gradually sank down to finally reach the floor. Posing again on the floor the head once again spoke to us and said: 'You may now awake the medium but do it slowly and softly'. Directly after these words one of the gentlemen pushed aside the curtain hanging above the entrance to the cabinet. But we could not perceive anything in the cabinet except the young girl who was lying in a deep trance and whose hands were so fastened together and the knots sealed as we had fettered her an hour ago".

One could wish that the author had cited the names of the other witnesses or even given his own name. He does mention that an 'eminent physician' was among the sitters on this occasion (almost certainly Dr. Gully) who kept his ear close to the cabinet to listen for any tell-tale noises that might occur. However, another

account which appeared in The Spiritualist of an earlier seance held at the Cooks' house on the 7th May 1873, which is signed by five witnesses (16), gives a very similar account:

"Towards the end of the sitting Katie said that her power was running very low and that this time she was really going to 'melt away'. Since the power was at a very low ebb, it seemed that returning to the cabinet her figure was gradually breaking down. Her body vanished until only her neck was resting on the floor. Her last words were that she wanted us to sing, and stay sitting quietly in the room, for 'it was a very sad experience to find one had no legs to stand upon'. This we did and in a short time Katie appeared again in the full length of her figure, as she had done soon after the beginning of the sitting. Once again she was successfully photographed. Thereupon she shook hands with Mr. Luxmoore, disappeared into the cabinet, and, by means of raps instructed us that we had to awaken the medium and take her out of the cabinet".

There are still other, even more vivid accounts of Katie in the process of dematerialization (17), although not as many as one could wish, but one should bear in mind that this phenomenon was often reported in connection with materializing mediums generally and the spirit form was often described as disappearing through the solid floor. Moreover, unless we are willing to entertain the possibility of collective hallucinations (itself a paranormal phenomenon) such accounts can only be disqualified by imputing deliberate falsehood on the part of the witness.

Enough has been said by now, I think, to show that well before Crookes took her under his wing, many seemingly sane and honest people had become convinced that Florence was a genuine materializing medium. There is no doubt, however, that, as Hall points out, Crookes was given a much better opportunity to get at the truth

about Florence than any previous investigator. If, therefore, she was fraudulent it is, I would agree, inconceivable that Crookes would not have discovered this. Since he did not expose her, this can only mean either that she was genuine (as Zorab insists) or that he was protecting her, presumably in return for her sexual favours. Now, when we are dealing with human nature nothing can ever be ruled out of court, so strange are its vagaries. We know that people's private lives may not at all match their public image and history provides us with some astonishing examples of highly respected persons who carried on elaborate secret deceptions and hoaxes for no obvious reasons (18). Nevertheless, there are certain features of this case which suggest to me that Hall is on the wrong track.

First, if these seances were nothing more than a charade, why were they accompanied by such intense research activity? And why was it necessary to conduct so many of them? Crookes, after all, was a very busy man. He held no university position or official appointment, he had to live by his wits. And yet the following, in no way untypical, describes his efforts to procure good photographic evidence of Katie King: "During the week before Katie took her departure she gave seances at my house almost nightly, to enable me to photograph her by artificial light. Five complete sets of photographic apparatus were accordingly fitted up for the purpose, consisting of five cameras, one of the whole plate size, one half-plate, one quarter-plate, and two binocular stereoscopic cameras, which were all brought to bear upon Katie at the same time on each occasion on which she stood for her portrait. Five sensitizing and fixing baths were used, and plenty of plates were cleaned ready for use in advance, so that there might be no hitch or delay during the photographing operations, which were performed by myself aided by one assistant.... Altogether I have fortyfour negatives, some inferior, some indifferent and some excellent"(19).

If the object of the seances were merely to furnish him with a cover-story for his illicit affair why would he want this battery of photographs? Moreover, he never published them but kept them to show to a favoured few. Again, if this represented an isolated escapade of which, once he had recovered from his infatuation he must surely have felt ashamed, he would have tried later to suppress the record of it as far as was possible. But, although knowing the derision it was likely to provoke (his contemporaries were no less sceptical than Mr. Hall) he was relatively reticent about this episode, he did not refrain from alluding to it in his Researches into the Phenomena of Spiritualism (1874), a work mainly devoted to his experiments with D.D. Home whom he undoubtedly believed to be genuine. It is true that, after 1875, he reduces his involvement in psychical research the better to concentrate on his mainstream scientific work that was to bring him fame and fortune, but he never lost interest in it throughout his life and, already in 1875, so soon after he had finished with Florence, we find him reporting positively on the mediumship of Eva Fay on whom he applied the Varley electrical test.

Another consideration which goes flatly against the Hall thesis but which Hall never discusses is the attitude of Ellen Crookes, his wife, in all this. For, if Hall is right, it was she who was the injured party. Yet there is no hint that her suspicions of what her husband might be up to were ever aroused. Could her feminine intuitions have failed her in this instance? It is true that owing to her pregnancy she could take no active part in the Katie King investigation but there exists a letter which she wrote to 'Dear Florrie' dated 21 June 1875, that was subsequently published in The Spiritualist which shows her to be on the friendliest terms with Florence. In that letter she describes how she had assisted her husband at a seance at a time when 'Leila' had taken over from 'Katie' and she mentions

how, at one point, Florence suddenly rushed out of the cabinet while 'Leila' was still standing there (20).

Incriminating Evidence:

We must now address ourselves to the positive evidence which Hall brings forward which, on any reckoning, casts suspicion on Florence Cook. This can be considered under three headings:

- (1) On-the-spot exposures;
- (2) Suspicious associates and
- (3) Confessions of fraud.

With regard to (1), there are only two that call for attention: the Volckman exposure and the Sitwell exposure. The first of these is by no means a clear cut case. Volckman, himself, amazed at the fleshy substantiality of Katie and by her remarkable likeness to Florence, might well have concluded that by trapping the former he was exposing the latter. On the other hand the eleven other sitters at that seance (including the Earl and Countess of Caithness) disagreed with him as they made clear, in no uncertain terms, in a joint letter dated 9th December 1873 which they sent to The Spiritualist. I must admit that I find it suspicious that Katie had to struggle so hard to free herself from Volckman's clutches, one would have thought that any self-respecting phantom would know how to dematerialize in such a situation! There are many accounts in the literature of materialized hands which melted away when sitters attempted to grasp them. But we cannot even be sure that this did not occur to some extent in this instance. One of the sitters and co-signatories of that letter, the barrister, Mr. H.N. Dunphy, in an article he wrote for the magazine London Society, entitled 'Modern Mysteries', writes as follows:

"The apparition then advanced to the position of the room farthest from the cabinet when a person, who to me was a perfect stranger, jumped up, caught the figure round the waist and held it exclaiming 'It is the

medium!'. Two or three gentlemen rushed forward and caught him and a struggle ensued. I watched the result with considerable interest and observed that the figure appeared to lose its feet and legs (my emphasis) and to elude the grasp, making for that purpose a movement somewhat similar to a seal in water. It eventually disappeared behind the curtain. No particle of the veil was found in the room. The medium was subsequently observed to be tied by the waist and sealed as we had left her; and on being afterwards searched by the ladies of the party (who never lost sight of her) no white garments or veil were discovered"(21).

Medhurst and Goldney (1964) put a different and more sinister construction on Volckman's behaviour. It transpires that at that time the medium, Mrs. Guppy (22), had become insanely jealous of her rivals and, especially of young Florence Cook. Now Volckman was a regular member of Mrs. Guppy's entourage and, as it happens, he later married her after her husband died. Medhurst and Goldney think it quite possible that he went to the seance determined at all costs to commit mischief!

The Sitwell incident of January 1880 was, of course, quite another matter. This time there was never any question that it was Florence who was caught impersonating 'Marie' - the cabinet was opened and her clothes were strewn around an empty chair. What was in dispute was whether her impersonation had been deliberate or whether she might have been acting unconsciously or 'somnambulistically' while still in trance. The seance in question was held under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists and, at a subsequent council meeting of the Association convened to discuss the incident, Sir George and his friend Carl von Buch who had assisted him were invited to give evidence. It then transpired that von Buch who had had the responsibility for fettering the medium admitted that he had deliberately left the

knots loose enough to be slipped. This makes the somnambulist hypothesis that much more credible. Zorab, at any rate, who goes into the case at some length in his book, thinks that there is good reason to regard this as a case of unconscious fraud. He cites a letter to The Spiritualist of the 6th February 1880 from Frances Marryat (23) in which she describes a recent sitting she had had with Florence shortly after the Sitwell incident in which she was herself tied to the medium in the cabinet while 'Marie' manifested as usual outside!

And yet, there seems little doubt that, by then, Florence's mediumship was already on the decline. By the time she was being investigated by the French writer and researcher, Jules Bois, in the 1890's her seances were little more than the crassest tomfoolery and, by then, she had already taken to drink.

But if the mediumship of Florence Cook cannot be disposed of by reference to such exposures could she be convicted under the heading of guilty associates? Here, I must confess, the Rosina Showers episode does strike me as perhaps the most damning single piece of evidence which Hall produces in his book. We know that she and Florence held joint seances under Crookes' supervision which, at first, impressed him. Later he himself discovered that Rosina had been indulging in fraudulent practices and, through the good offices of Mrs. Fay, he even obtained a confession from her in her own handwriting confessing to these demeanours. Yet the obvious conclusion, as Hall points out, is that either Florence and Rosina were both genuine or else they were both fraudulent. After all, their respective spirit forms were accustomed to parade arm-in-arm! And yet this episode is not easy to reconcile with Hall's own hypothesis that Crookes was in league with Florence since, if he knew all along that Florence was a fraud, why complicate the situation by bringing in a second fraudulent medium with all the risks which this could

entail? Moreover, the evidence strongly suggests that Crookes was genuinely surprised and upset to discover that Rosina had been cheating him. Hall attempts to retrieve the situation from this point of view by suggesting that Miss Showers might have been another of Crookes' unfortunate sexual entanglements and there seems no doubt that her mother, Mrs. Showers, suspected the worst. But this seems to be stretching the hypothesis to an absurd degree. After all, he threatened to expose Rosina if she did not mend her ways. Finally, what still further complicates the issue is that, as Medhurst and Goldney (1964) are able to show, there is a fair amount of evidence in the literature that cannot be ignored which suggests that Rosina Showers was capable of producing genuine full-form materializations (24).

For the rest, however, Hall chooses to overlook the whole vexed problem of mixed mediumship which psychical researchers only slowly and painfully learned to comprehend and of which Eusapia Palladino represents the classic case (25). She too, after all, was a materializing medium although her materializations were of a very crude kind. Naturally we all find it hard to imagine that someone who was endowed with genuine paranormal gifts of the highest order should stoop to petty trickery and deceit as soon as their powers desert them but such, it would seem, is often the case. Crookes himself, at a Council meeting of the Society for Psychical Research in 1895, gave it as its opinion that "among a hundred or more mediums that he had to do with -with hardly any exception- all more or less at times resorted to trickery"(26). From this perspective we can look again at Hall's roster of Florence's fraudulent associates. True enough, both Herne and Williams were caught many times in flagrant acts of trickery but there is also serious evidence that both could produce paranormal phenomena, this is especially true of Charles Williams (27). Kate Cook undoubtedly indulged in dishonest and fraudulent practices yet some of her phenomena impressed even such a discriminating authority

as Frederic Myers. Zorab tells me that he has become convinced that both Kate and the youngest daughter, Edith, were genuine mediums and it is to be hoped that he will have more to say on this issue. To sum up, then, on the question of guilt by association, this is plausible only on the discredited assumption that a medium cannot be both genuine and fraudulent!

The Anderson Testimony:

We come lastly to the allegation that Florence herself confessed that 'Katie King' was nothing more than a put-up job that enabled her to pursue an adulterous affair with William Crookes. Now, I would not go so far as the late Robert Thouless who, after a searching examination of all three documents compiling the 'Anderson Testimony'(28) came to the conclusion that "the Anderson depositions are worthless as evidence". No doubt there was here plenty of scope for embellishment given the unwitting coaching which Anderson received from people like Clive Gregory, Eric Dingwall or Mollie Goldney before he came to make his final deposition. Moreover, as Stevenson (1963) has pointed out, it was only in the 1949 deposition that Anderson claims that Florence told him that Crookes had colluded with her in fraud and, by then, Anderson was talking of events that were some 56 years in the past. Nevertheless, I am quite willing to give Anderson the benefit of the doubt and to accept that he was telling the truth and that his memory had not played him false and this, incidentally, is the view which Zorab takes. More to the point, however, is whether Florence was telling Anderson the truth. Maybe she thought that boasting of her past conquests in this way would impress this young man from Oxford, at any rate he was most unlikely to be impressed by talk of paranormal feats to which he would have given no credence. It seems, then, that Hall cannot have it both ways; if Florence was a dishonest and immoral woman from the word go, how can we place any reliance on her own testimony? False confessions are nothing new, there are

all sorts of reasons, feelings of guilt and self-hatred and so on, which have induced people to accuse themselves of deeds that they have never done.

Ironically, Thouless, who is so reluctant to attach any weight to the Anderson testimony thinks that Anderson, may, nevertheless, be right if only because Jules Bois is said to have told a very similar story to Eileen Garrett just before he died in 1943, as a kind of deathbed confession. Zorab, on the other end, who does accept the Anderson testimony at face value, thinks that the Bois testimony is due to a confusion in the mind of Mrs. Garrett who would have heard about the Anderson testimony from Dingwall soon after 1949 (29). He points out that it is exceedingly unlikely that, in the circumstances, Bois could have had an affair with Florence, still less she then told him an identical story to the one she told Anderson. Bois certainly believed that she was fraudulent but we have only Mrs. Garrett's word that Florence told him so herself. One last stroke of irony in this comedy of errors is that the woman who introduced Florence to the young Anderson was none other than Frances Marryat who, as we have seen, believed passionately in her genuineness.

Conclusion:

Historical controversies rarely lend themselves to decisive resolution. In the end it all boils down to the question of whom one is to believe and whom one is to disbelieve. It is the question which every jury in every trial has to contend with. Scientific controversies, on the other hand, usually do get resolved because we are not ordinarily dependent on what particular bygone scientists may have said, we can observe the phenomenon for ourselves. If there were today even one individual who could do something similar to what Florence claimed to be able to do, it would put the whole argument on an entirely different footing even if it could not prove

that Florence herself was genuine. As it is, however, it looks as if Crookes' reputation will forever remain under a cloud. Opinion may differ as to whether he was a party to the deception, as Hall argued, or merely its victim but either way he stands convicted as a knave or a fool. Few will follow Zorab in giving him credit for discovering an amazing truth and of having the moral courage to proclaim it. For the fact is that Hall can count upon his reader's acquiescence even before he starts to unravel his train of evidence and the larger public who will never read his book will be content to cite his authority whenever the name of Crookes comes up in discussion. The situation has the mark of true tragedy in that, to some extent, it could be said that Crookes brought about his own downfall. For, when he got the unique opportunity to investigate Florence in the privacy of his own house, he relied far too much on his word alone. Although he invited observers to the seances, he treated them with condescension and never even bothered to list the names of those who attended on a given occasion, still less to get them to sign a report of what went on at that session as was already the custom at that time. When we reflect that these observers included professional men of the calibre of Dr. Gully or the barrister, E.W.Cox (30), this suggests a streak of arrogance on his part. In fact several of his acquaintances complained bitterly of his overbearing manner. He just could not see why anyone should doubt his word and hence why the corroboration of others was so vital in such a case. In fairness, he did say that he expected, once he had himself established the truth, that others less preoccupied than he was would follow up the case and provide the necessary backing but, even without the benefit of our hindsight, this was an extraordinarily rash assumption to make. In the event, the post-Crookes phase of Florence's mediumship was downhill all the way.

And yet, it can also be said from a different point of view that there was an heroic quality about Crookes that

one cannot but admire. Like Wallace or Richet he realized that his championship of the paranormal would earn him nothing but mockery from his fellow scientists but, like a true empiricist, he refused to disavow what he took to be the evidence of his own senses. Perhaps Richet best summed it all up when he used to say: "C'est absolument absurde mais c'est vrai". It is this point of view that George Zorab has attempted to vindicate. He has presented the evidence for thinking that 'Katie King' was indeed a paranormal phenomenon. He does not, needless to say, accept her for what she herself purported to be: a being from another world and the reemodiment of a woman who had lived in the 17th century, but he regards her as a genuine duplication of the medium herself; it was a special case of bilocation in which Florence was able to become, at one and the same time, the animated figure of Katie who disported herself among the sitters and the recumbent entranced body of Miss Cook trussed up inside the cabinet.

George has already defended this thesis but, I gather, there is more to come and that he is at work on a further study of the Cook mediumship about which he now feels confident enough to ignore Hall altogether. Whatever may be our own views on this ongoing controversy, we can but salute the pertinacity and audacity of this great scholar.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Gerd Hövelmann for kindly supplying me with copies of reports on this case that appeared in The Spiritualist and of other relevant material.
2. See M.Cassirer (1985). Since then Mr.Cassirer has completed a full length biographical study of Helen Duncan, a typescript copy of which has been deposited in the library of the Society for Psychical Research, London.

3. This is the date as given on her birth-certificate which Medhurst and Goldney had no difficulty procuring from Somerset House. Hall, however, was for some odd reason unable to obtain this document and this started him off on a train of speculation which led him to the conclusion that Florence was pretending to be younger than she really was in order to appear more innocent. In fact, as Medhurst and Goldney were able to show, she exaggerated her age by one month!

4. According to Medhurst and Goldney (1964) p.33: "'John King' often claiming to be in life the buccaner Sir Henry Owen Morgan, was a sort of universal Control as was his 'wife' 'Katie King' and his 'daughter' another 'Katie King', who purported to be in life Annie Owen Morgan. There was hardly a prominent medium throughout the second half of the nineteenth century who did not number among his principal Controls a John or Katie King". Florence Cook's 'Katie King' identified herself with Annie Morgan even to the extent of signing herself thus. Actually there is no evidence that such a person as Annie Morgan ever existed or that Sir Henry Morgan, who became governor of Jamaica under Charles II, even had a daughter.

5. See Hall (1984) p.25.

6. Actually it was at Blackburn's instigation that Crookes took over from Luxmoore the management of Florence's seances.

7. Sir George wrote a letter to the Times the next day and the episode is recounted in his son Osbert's autobiography. (Sitwell 1945).

8. Brandon (1983) follows Hall closely on this matter although Oppenheim (1985) while agreeing with Hall that it is impossible to believe in 'Katie' does pay some attention to the findings of Medhurst and Goldney.

9. Hall calls her Mary Showers but she is generally referred to in the contemporary literature as Rosina Showers which is the name we shall use here.

10. The letter is reproduced in Sargent's book Proof Palpable of Immortality (Boston 1876) p.51 and is cited by Zorab (1980) p.110.

11. Jenkins (1972) point out that when he was struck off the register it was done in the least offensive way available namely by writing after his name 'address unknown' -an obvious untruth. He was never expelled from the Garrick Club of which he had been a long-time member. I consulted Miss Jenkins in person regarding Gully's role in this connection and am grateful for her guidance.

12. See Zorab (1964) pp.174-175.

13. Since he shone a light in the medium's face he could not have failed to recognize that it was Florence.

14. A suggestion by Jules Bois (see below) that the accomplice might have been her sister Kate is not one that seems to have been entertained by anyone else. I do not know whether Kate did resemble Florence but she would have been barely 14 when 'Katie King' manifested in full form in the Spring of 1873 and, in any case, she would have been too well known to the circle that attended those seances to get away with it.

15. Gully wrote a long letter to The Spiritualist (20 Feb.1874) in which he dwells on the impossibility of anyone being able to resume the initial position in the cabinet "within one minute" after she has been seen before the curtain as a spirit figure" (author's emphasis).

16. i.e. Messrs. Luxmoore, Tapp and Harrison, Mrs.

Amalia Corner and Miss Caroline Corner. The letter is cited in Zorab (1980).

17. Frances Marryat (Mrs. Ross Church) a popular Victorian writer who was much concerned with spiritualism has described one such incident in her book There is no Death (1892) p.141. At the request of the sitters and against the wishes of Katie herself a demonstration was arranged to observe the effects of bright light. "She looked like herself" writes Marryat "for the space of a second only" then she began to melt away. I can compare the dematerialization of her form to nothing but a wax doll melting before a hot fire..." Unfortunately, Marryat is not taken seriously by scholars and cannot be relied upon as a witness.

18. Hall himself offers some striking cases of this kind in his reply to Stevenson's review of his book, see Hall (1964).

19. Published in The Spiritualist for the 5th June 1874 and reprinted in Medhurst, Goldney and Barrington (1972)p.137.

20. See Medhurst and Goldney (1964)p.69.

21. The account is reprinted in The Spiritualist for the 6th Feb. 1874.

22. As Agnes Nicoll, a poor struggling young medium whose speciality was flower apports (in season or out of season!), she had fascinated the great Alfred R. Wallace. Later on she became the second wife of the wealthy Samuel Guppy and grew prodigiously fat!

23. See footnote (17).

24. Medhurst and Goldney (1964)pp.111-112, cite a curious report by Charles Blackburn of a seance he had with Rosina Showers at his house in Didsbury near

Manchester. He threaded her pierced ears with a length of cotton and then held the two ends in a lighted room. Even then her spirit form 'Lenore' duly manifested yet there was no thread through her ears. Her feet, however, were, oddly enough, imperfect with only the large toe on each foot the rest appearing as if ossified!

25. I have discussed this case at length in Beloff (1985).

26. These are his words as reported by E.T. Bennett in a letter to Sir Oliver Lodge which is cited in Medhurst and Goldney (1964)p.50.

27. D.D. Home who was inclined to regard all mediums other than himself as frauds (including Florence Cook!) had nothing but good to say of Charles Williams. See Medhurst and Goldney (1964)p.46.

28. i.e. the deposition of 1922, the enlarged account of 1949 and the final signed statement of 1949.

29. It was Eileen Garrett who, as president of the Parapsychology Foundation, commissioned Trevor Hall to write his book on the Crookes-Cook case.

30. Mr. Cox is nearly always referred to in the contemporary literature as 'Serjeant Cox' in view of his honorific title of 'serjeant-at-arms'.

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(J.=Journal; Proc.=Proceedings; S.P.R.=Society for Psychical Research)

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