

# Daniel Dunglas Home

Many consider DD Home to be the greatest of all physical mediums. His phenomena were dramatic and varied, and although his career lasted approximately 25 years, he was never detected in fraud of any kind. Allegations of fraud were made against him from time to time, but most were second or third hand, and none were substantiated.

## Biographical Remarks

Home was born in Edinburgh, in March 1833. Not long afterwards he was adopted by his maternal aunt, Mrs Cook. Then in 1842, when Daniel was nine, he and Mrs Cook emigrated to America and settled in Connecticut.<sup>1</sup>

Psychic experiences were not unprecedented in Daniel's family. His mother was frequently subject to clairvoyant (often precognitive) visions, and Daniel himself was apparently somewhat precocious in this respect. One vision, for example, announced the death of his mother and the hour at which she would die.

Not long after his mother's death, physical phenomena began occurring in Home's presence. These included 'loud blows on the head of [his] bed, as if struck by a hammer',<sup>2</sup> and the next morning at breakfast (to the horror of his aunt), loud raps sounding all over the table. Mrs Cook believed the noises were manifestations of the devil and sent for two ministers to attempt an exorcism. But the raps continued, and in the days ahead the phenomena escalated. Soon objects were moving about the room, and before long neighbours got wind of the peculiar goings-on. Eventually, Mrs Cook could no longer tolerate the apparent affront to her religious sensibilities, and she turned Daniel out of the house. He was then aged eighteen.

Daniel, unlike his aunt, felt that the manifestations were expressions of God's goodness. In any case, he was now on his own. Although he apparently neither asked for nor received direct payment for his activities, from this time until his death he survived on the hospitality and generosity of those attracted to and intrigued by his visions, trances, healings, and other physical phenomena. For several years Home travelled throughout New England, holding séances in the homes of his benefactors and attracting considerable attention among laypersons as well as academics. Numerous published accounts survive of Home's phenomena during this period, some apparently quite careful and detailed. (See below for some details.)

Evidently, Home was not originally interested in making a name for himself as a medium. Rather, he aspired to be a physician. In fact, one of his benefactors even sent him to medical school, although undoubtedly he would have been equally (if not more) pleased to finance a career for Daniel as a spiritualist missionary. But Home's health, which had been delicate since childhood, interfered with his studies. His persistent and debilitating cough was diagnosed as consumption, and his physicians recommended (inscrutably) that he move to England. Armed with

little more than that questionable medical advice and a few letters of introduction to English spiritualists, Daniel left America in 1855.

The most important phase of Home's career as a medium now began. Before long, his reputation spread throughout Europe, and Home quickly became an international celebrity and frequent guest of royalty. Among his acquaintances and admirers were Napoleon III, the German Emperor, the Queen of Holland, and many members of the Russian royal court.

As noted above, Home was often accused of fraud (it comes with the territory), but never detected in fraud. As Eisenbud remarked,<sup>3</sup> the charges against Home seem mostly to have been cries of outrage against the very possibility of the phenomena being genuine. Home's keenest and most persistent nineteenth-century critic was [Frank Podmore](#), an active member of the new [Society for Psychical Research](#) in London, who habitually favoured normal over paranormal explanations, however unsupported by the evidence.<sup>4</sup> But Podmore's attempts to explain away Home's most carefully studied manifestations are quite inadequate and transparently contrived (suggesting, for example, that Home might have used thin and nearly invisible horsehair threads for moving massive pieces of furniture from a distance). In fact (as will be explained more fully below), given the technological limitations of the period, it is difficult to imagine what sort of legerdemain Home could possibly have been practising. Actually, Podmore eventually and apparently reluctantly conceded that point. As far as Home's best phenomena are concerned, he had to fall back on the hypothesis of collective hypnosis, the weaknesses of which are considerable and are noted in the Encyclopedia entry on *Eyewitness Testimony*. In any case, Podmore can probably be forgiven for not realizing the crucial point that people differ markedly in their degree of hypnotizability and that as a result, his proposal was completely incredible. Individual differences in hypnotizability weren't well-documented until many years later.<sup>5</sup>

## Catalogue of Phenomena

By the time he moved to England in 1855, Home had already introduced most of the phenomena from his repertoire. Focusing just on physical phenomena (and excluding many apparent healings and trance-impersonations of deceased persons), the list of manifestations is formidable. The major items are as follows.

- Raps, or knocking sounds, heard not just in the séance table, but in all parts of the room, including the ceiling.
- Object levitations and movements, including the complete levitation of pianos and the movement and complete levitation of tables with several persons on top.
- Tables would tilt or move sharply, although objects on the table would remain stationary. Sometimes the objects would alternately move and remain in place in response to sitters' commands.
- Alteration in the weight of objects. On command, objects would become heavier or lighter. Before Crookes measured the phenomenon with instruments, its typical manifestation was that a table would become either

too heavy for one or more persons to tilt or lift, or at least more difficult to move than it was before.

- The appearance of lights or luminous phenomena in various parts of the room.
- The appearance of partially or fully materialized forms in various parts of the room.
- Touches, pulls, pinches, and other tactile phenomena occurring while the hands of all present were visible above the table.
- Auditory phenomena (such as voices and sounds), and also music occurring without instruments in various parts of the room.
- Odours, produced in the absence of any visible object with which they might be associated.
- Earthquake effects, during which the entire room and its contents rock or tremble.
- Hands, supple, solid, mobile and warm, of different sizes, shapes and colors. Although the hands were animated and solid to the touch, they would often end at or near the wrist and eventually dissolve or melt. Sometimes the hands were said to be disfigured exactly as the hands of a deceased ostensible communicator (unknown to Home) had been.
- The playing of an accordion, guitar, or other musical instrument, either totally untouched (and sometimes while levitated in good light), or while handled in such a way as to render a musical performance on the instrument impossible.
- The handling of hot coals, and the transfer of incombustibility to other persons and objects.
- Elongations, in which the medium grew from several inches to more than a foot.
- Levitation of the medium. This is perhaps the least well documented of Home's major phenomena, occurring (according to Home himself) only once in daylight.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, this repertoire of phenomena is impressive and presents an imposing challenge to the sceptic. While some phenomena appear to admit of simple normal explanations (for instance, elongations and the production of odours), others seem to allow none. And counter-explanations that have a certain degree of plausibility in some cases fail obviously for others. To explain the entire array as due to conjuring or fraud, one must (as will become clear) endow Home either with an implausible degree of conjuring skill or else with access to technology known to no scientist of his day (or, in some cases, even of today).

Reliable documents concerning Home's phenomena come from many sources, domestic and foreign. The best known—if not always the best documented—are from the investigations of Sir William Crookes (discussed below). But one reason Home's case is important is that good evidence for his phenomena come from many different sources during a period of nearly 25 years. In fact, the reader cannot hope to assess the evidential weight of the case without appreciating the full range of conditions under which phenomena apparently occurred, and the sheer length of time during which alleged frauds would have gone undetected, despite careful efforts to expose or prevent them.

## An Early Séance, 1852

The first decent description of Home's phenomena concerns a séance held early in 1852 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Some distinguished guests arrived at the home of Rufus Elmer, where Home was staying, for the purpose of testing Home's powers. Among them were poet William Cullen Bryant and Professor David A Wells of Harvard. After several sittings they published a signed statement concerning the results of their investigation.<sup>7</sup>

The undersigned ... bear testimony to the occurrence of the following facts, which we severally witnessed at the house of Rufus Elmer, in Springfield ...

1. The table was moved in every possible direction, and with great force, when we could not perceive any cause of motion.
2. It (the table) was forced against each one of us so powerfully as to move us from our positions—together with the chairs we occupied—in all, several feet.
3. Mr. Wells and Mr. Edwards took hold of the table in such a manner as to exert their strength to the best advantage, but found the invisible power, exercised in an opposite direction, to be quite equal to their utmost efforts.<sup>8</sup>
4. In two instances, at least, while the hands of all the members of the circle were placed on the top of the table—and while no visible power was employed to raise the table, or otherwise move it from its position—it was seen to rise clear of the floor, and to float in the atmosphere for several seconds, as if sustained by some denser medium than air.
5. Mr. Wells seated himself on the table, which was rocked for some time with great violence, and at length, it poised itself on the two legs, and remained in this positions for some thirty seconds, when no other person was in contact with it.
6. Three persons, Messrs. Wells, Bliss and Edwards assumed positions on the table at the same time, and while thus seated, the table was moved in various directions.
7. Occasionally we were made conscious of the occurrence of a powerful shock, which produced a vibratory motion of the floor of the apartment in which we were seated—it seemed like the motion occasioned by distant thunder or the firing of ordnance far away—causing the table, chairs, and other inanimate objects, and all of us to tremble in such a manner that the effects were both seen and felt.
8. In the whole exhibition, which was far more diversified than the foregoing specification would indicate, we were constrained to admit that there was an almost constant manifestation of some intelligence which seemed, at least, to be independent of the circle.
9. In conclusion, we may observe, that Mr. D.D. Home, frequently urged us to hold his hands and feet. During these occurrences the room was well lighted,

the lamp was frequently placed on and under the table, and every possible opportunity was afforded us for the closest inspection, and we admit this one emphatic declaration: We know that we were not imposed upon nor deceived.

Wm. Bryant

B.K. Bliss

Wm. Edwards

David A. Wells

## Sample Reports

Subsequent reports of Home's phenomena, drawn from numerous sources (including reports by sceptics), allow us to construct a profile of a typical Home séance. Sometimes Home was in a trance state in which he referred to himself as 'Dan' or 'Daniel' and in which he talked as if another were speaking through him. But in many instances he remained in a waking state, sometimes conversing with sitters about ordinary matters, and other times sitting silent and still. Séances usually began with sitters feeling a cold breeze, and then loud raps would be heard in various locations about the room. Then more spectacular phenomena would occur, sometimes beginning with the earthquake effect.

Before considering sample descriptions, readers should note that the phenomena reported were frequently produced in locations never before visited by Home. Sometimes the séances were arranged on the spur of the moment, so that there can be no question of Home knowing beforehand where he would need to produce phenomena, or of his being able to plant an apparatus or an accomplice at those locations. Moreover, the objects moved during the séances (such as large tables, heavy and filled bookcases, and pianos, as well as personal items belonging to the sitters) were certainly not props carried by Home from place to place, nor items to which he had access before the séance began.

Consider, now, some sample reports, a very modest selection from hundreds of private and published accounts.

### **Amsterdam, 1858**

First, from a paper by Zorab, about an enquiry made in Amsterdam in 1858.<sup>9</sup> The tests were conducted by members of a somewhat hard-nosed Protestant society, decidedly unsympathetic to spiritualist claims (as well as to claims of Biblical miracles), but with an avowed interest in seeking out the truth. Three sittings were held in Home's hotel room in a period of just over 24 hours. Although the séance room was Home's own, the reader will be hard-pressed to explain what sort of advance preparation could have produced the phenomena that occurred during the séances. The number of investigators ranged from 7 to 10 for the sittings described below (and 5 for the middle sitting, not excerpted). They were held around a massive round mahogany table, 80 centimetres (32 inches) high, resting on a heavy central column, and capable of accommodating 14 people easily. Four bronze

candelabra with wax candles were placed on top of the table, and two were placed beneath. In order to allow for an unobstructed view under the table, the tablecloth was folded up toward the center of the table, leaving a free space of about 18 inches wide around the table for the sitters' hands.

Mr. Home, who talked very little himself, urged us, in order to remain in a normal state, to go on talking freely among ourselves. This we did, continuing our conversation now in Dutch and then again in French. He also insisted that we should observe him and all his manipulations as closely as possible ...[10](#)

[In order to frustrate any possible attempt by Home to hypnotize them] everyone present talked freely with his neighbors, making all kinds of comments and, laughing mockingly concerning the matter at hand, gave expression to his disbelief, especially in reference to the dogmatic [spiritualistic] beliefs connected with the phenomena ...[11](#)

... the table started to make a sliding movement toward the place where Mr. Home was sitting. Those sitting at Mr. Home's side of the table were requested to try to stop this movement; this, however, they could not do. At the other side of the table (i.e., our side) the same maneuver was attempted, but without any more success ...[12](#)

The table now started to rise up on one side ... The rising up ... took place in spite of the fact that some of us tried very hard to prevent the table from going up and that [one of the sitters] took his hands off it and, with a light in his hand, squatted on his haunches under the table to investigate.

We then ordered the table to become as light as possible so that we should be able to lift it with one finger. And so it came to pass. When the order was reversed (i.e., to increase the table's weight) the table could hardly be lifted at all in spite of our utmost efforts.

[At the final sitting], hardly had we seated ourselves—within ten seconds—than we heard soft rappings that soon changed into loud knocks. These raps were heard to come from all sides of the large room. They were accompanied by a complete rocking movement of the ceiling which became so violent that, together with the chairs on which we were seated, we felt ourselves going up and down as if on a rocking-horse. We experienced the same sensation and movement as when sitting in a carriage on springs while driving along the highroad.

The table behaved more or less in the same manner observed in the former two sittings, i.e., rising high and then descending smoothly to the floor without any abrupt movements.[13](#)

And now phenomena were produced that would make those who possessed weaker nerves than we had believe that there indeed existed a world of spirits. Here are the facts. One of us suddenly asked his neighbour if he had touched him, a question the latter answered in the negative. The gentleman who had been touched declared that he felt something touching his cheek. The unbelievers loudly laughed at him, and all these men wanted also to be

touched. Their desire was at once gratified. The one was touched on his arm, another felt something touching his knee, a third one was contacted on his cheek, etc. This went on to such an extent that one only needed to think of a limb or of some other part of one's body to be touched and at the very same moment this wish would be fulfilled. In the case of one of us, this touching and contacting went on continuously during twenty minutes and the touching took place on various parts of his body. Another man was so violently clutched at all of a sudden that he jumped from his chair.

Then one of us took out his handkerchief and threw it onto the floor in front of himself. He then requested that it be put into the hand of the man sitting opposite to him. The gentleman indicated laid his opened hand upon his knee, while the sitter next to him kept his eye constantly upon it. After a few moments the handkerchief flew into the hand on the knee; but as the owner of the hand did not close his fingers quickly enough, it dropped again onto the floor, and in the next instant it returned to the spot from where it had departed, viz., at the feet of the gentleman who had made the request. This gentleman then picked up the handkerchief and wound it around his little finger. Thereupon he placed his hand on the table and asked that the handkerchief be taken away from him. Immediately a force started to tug at the handkerchief, continuing to do so all the time until the handkerchief was slipped off the gentleman's little finger. All of us—some of us looking on above the table while others were watching under the table—saw all this happening. Other persons were keeping a constant eye on Mr. Home in order to see if he was exercising some influence on the phenomena.

I myself then pulled out my handkerchief, wound it around the whole of my right hand, and requested that it be taken away from me. Within a few seconds I had the sensation as if an invisible hand was trying to wrench the handkerchief off my hand. But I was holding on so firmly to the handkerchief that, after some repeated unsuccessful attempts lasting several minutes, the force could not succeed in getting the handkerchief off. I then took hold of the handkerchief between my thumb and one of my fingers; and at my request, it was immediately pulled away from my fingers.

... nothing could be observed that could give rise to even the slightest suspicion that Mr. Home was acting in a fraudulent manner.[14](#)

### **Testimony Reported by the Society for Psychological Research**

In 1889, [William Barrett](#) and [Frederic Myers](#) published a review of *DD. Home, His Life and Mission*, written by Home's second wife.[15](#) To their lengthy and generally favourable appraisal of the evidence, they appended a series of additional testimony, solicited on behalf of the [Society for Psychological Research](#). For reasons discussed by the authors, the descriptions that follow are clearly above average as evidence—for example, because of independent corroborating testimony, or because the accounts were written immediately after the event, or because the phenomena occurred in locations never before visited by Home, and (in every case) because the descriptions are not supplied by Home's wife. But as far as the

phenomena reported are concerned, they are remarkably typical of accounts written over the entire extensive period of Home's mediumistic activity.

... Home arrived at our house shortly before dinner. After dinner we agreed to sit in the drawing room at a square card table near the fire ... In a few minutes, a cold draught of air was felt on our hands and knockings occurred ... My gold bracelet was unclasped while my hands were on the table and fell upon the floor ... I think I asked if the piano could be played; it stood at least 12 ft. or 14 ft. away from us. Almost at once the softest music sounded. I went up to the piano and opened it. I saw the keys depressed, but no one playing. I stood by its side and watched it, hearing the most lovely chords; the keys seemed to be struck by some invisible hands; all this time Home was far distant from the piano. Then a faint sound was heard upon my harp [a few feet from the piano, and across the room from Home], as of the wind blowing over its strings ... Later on in the evening, we distinctly heard two voices talking together in the room; the voices appeared to come from opposite corners, from near the ceiling, and apparently proceeded from a man and child, but we could not distinguish the words. They sounded far off. Home was talking the whole time the voices were heard, and gave as his reason that he might not be accused of ventriloquism.<sup>16</sup>

Another witness, a veteran of several Home séances, writes,

The séances begin by sitting round Mr. Home's table, which is rather large, as it holds 10 people sitting round it. We lay our hands flat on the table before us. After a while there is usually a trembling of the table and often a strong tremulous motion of the floor and chairs, and loud raps sound about the room and under the table. Then the table usually heaves up with a steady motion, sometimes clear off the floor, sometimes on one side to an angle of about 45 deg. Mr. Home makes a practice of asking anyone present, usually the last comer, to sit under the table to be enabled to assure his friends that no trickery was possible. I have sat so several times and heard raps about my head, some loud, some soft, and have seen the table rise from the floor and have passed my hand and arm clear through between the floor and the pedestal of the table while it was in the air. It has happened several times when we have been sitting in this way that some one of the company has been drawn back in his chair from the table, and once Mrs Parkes, who was sitting next to me, was drawn at least a foot back and then sideways about six inches. A bell, bracelet, or pocket-handkerchief, or anything taken in one hand and placed under the table is taken by the 'spirit' hands, which are palpable warm fingers of various sizes and feeling, but which when attempted to be grasped always seem to dissolve in a curious manner and leave airy nothing.

Mr. Home has an accordion; it is not a mechanical one, for he left it by accident at Mrs Parkes' house one day, and I carefully examined it. He takes this in one hand by the side of it which is furthest from the keys and places it just beneath the edge of the table. In that position I have watched it attentively as I stooped with my head and shoulders thrust under the table, and have seen the bellows begin to rise and fall, and then faint sounds to issue which, gaining in strength, at last swell out into the most beautiful spiritual airs of a strange and fantastic



character. On any particular air being called for it is played, sometimes beautifully, sometimes in a very fitful uneven manner ... I have several times sat next to Mr. Home when 'the spirits' are playing the accordion, and he always holds one hand on the table and supports the accordion with the other. Sometimes 'the spirits' remove the instrument from his hand and carry it to some other person, when the same result is the consequence.


... All these phenomena ... have been done not in the dark, which some people say is necessary in a séance, but in bright light. I should also say that I have seen them in Mrs Parkes' own house, where she invited Mr. Home one evening and I was present; it was the first time he had ever put foot in her house, and the tilting and rapping and music was just the same, and the table travelled along the floor, turning and pushing chairs and stools about, right up to one side and along the side of a sofa. Mr. Home also stretched up his hands above his head, and rose in the air 3 ft. from the floor. Mrs Parkes was sitting next to him, and she looked at his feet and then he descended.[17](#)

Next, the following excerpt from a letter written by a sitter to his wife, concerning a séance held in Edinburgh in 1870. The letter agrees, in important ways, not only with notes made at the time by another witness, but with a subsequent account given verbally to Barrett by the author of the letter. At the time the verbal account was offered, the author did not know that his earlier letter was still in existence.

... Home ... held [the accordion] in his right hand by the bottom, i.e., upside down under the table, and it began to play chords. By his desire I looked under the table, and distinctly saw it open and shut as if some one was playing upon it. It first played an air which no one knew, then 'Still so gently' was asked for and played. Also, 'Home, sweet Home'. Elizabeth then held the instrument and it played some beautiful chords. [Home then proposes to see what will happen if the company moves into the library.] The library opened into the landing, where there was a bright gaslight, but the room itself had no light. The door was, however, left wide open; we were round a little table, the rest seated, and I on my knees. In an instant the table began to rock, and a very weird sound was heard in the corner of the room. An immense shifting bookcase, that would require at least four men to move, began slowly to come toward us.[18](#)

Testimony such as the above must be considered serious evidence for the reality of physical phenomena, and not be dismissed on the grounds that human testimony is unreliable, biased, and so forth (for supporting arguments see [here](#)). Moreover, when the conditions of observation are not conducive to malobservation (especially gross malobservation), and when the phenomena apparently observed are extraordinarily impressive, appeals to faulty perception or memory are also of little utility. Likewise, last-ditch appeals to collective hypnosis or hallucination are egregious. Finally, considering the nature and magnitude of the phenomena and the conditions under which they were observed—as well as the technological limitations of the period—and, in addition, assuming (plausibly) the accounts to be truthful, conjuring or fraud seems equally out of the question.

## **William Crookes**

Nevertheless, many believe (quite naively) that the testimony of  William Crookes ordinary laypersons or academics in the humanities is inherently less reliable than that of prominent scientists. And because this prejudice is remarkably stubborn, the investigations of Home by [William Crookes](#) constitute an especially valuable body of evidence. But more important, Crookes carried out some unprecedented experiments with Home, experiments that undoubtedly strengthen the case even further.

Initially, Crookes was sceptical about spiritualistic phenomena. But as he explained,

I consider it the duty of scientific men who have learnt exact modes of working, to examine phenomena which attract the attention of the public, in order to confirm their genuineness, or to explain, if possible, the delusions of the honest and to expose the tricks of deceivers.[19](#)

Crookes adds,

Faraday says, 'Before we proceed to consider any question involving physical principles, we should set out with clear ideas of the naturally possible and impossible'. But this appears like reasoning in a circle: we are to investigate nothing till we know it to be possible, whilst we cannot say what is impossible, outside pure mathematics, till we know everything.

In the present case I prefer to enter upon the enquiry with no preconceived notions whatever as to what can or cannot be.[20](#)

It was in this spirit that Crookes invited Home to submit himself for investigation in 1870. The studies took place either at ordinary séances (during which Crookes occasionally introduced measuring instruments or other devices), or at more formal experimental sessions in which Crookes imposed special test conditions. Many of the most compelling sessions took place in Crookes's house.

Crookes first investigated Home at a séance on 21 April 1870. He conducted a number of additional informal séances after this, before initiating more careful experimentation in 1871. The first séance in which anything like an experiment took place was on the evening of 9 May 1871. Guests were seated around a 32 lb table. Light was provided by one candle on the table, two on the mantelpiece, and one on a side table. Some extra light was emitted by a dull wood fire. Crookes had brought a spring balance with him, and after some table tilting, Home invited him to attach the device to the edge of the table, in order to measure the force required to tilt it. (In order not to disrupt the flow of the séance, Crookes postponed taking control measurements until the sitting had ended.) The command, 'Be light', was issued, and an upward pull of 2 lbs was required to lift one of the feet off the ground. The table was then told, 'Be heavy'.

As soon as this was said, the table creaked, shuddered, and appeared to settle itself firmly into the floor ... All hands were, as before, very lightly touching the upper surface of the table with their fingers.[21](#)

Crookes found that a force of 36 lbs was now required to lift the foot of the table from the floor. He lifted the table up and down several times to assure himself that the balance read properly, and indeed, it continued to hover around the 36 lb mark. On one of these occasions Home removed his hands from the table, and his feet at all times were tucked back under his chair.

Crookes attempted several more trials. When told to be light, a force of 7 lbs was required to tilt the table. When next told to be heavy, a 45 lb force was required, and this time sitters placed their hands *under* the table top, so that any unconscious force applied to the table would tend to decrease its apparent weight. Then another 'heavy' trial was conducted with hands beneath the table. This time, although the table did not move, the index on the balance rose steadily to the 46 lb mark. Finally, the table rose an inch, but then slipped off the balance's hook and fell to the floor 'with a crash'. When Crookes examined the iron hook, he found that it had become distended. After the séance ended, Crookes measured the table's weight, and found it to be 32 lbs. Tilting it in the manner adopted for the trials required 8 lbs of force. (Crookes claimed that the balance was accurate to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb.)

After some accordion phenomena, a table levitation, and other manifestations, Home

went to the candle on a side table (close to the large table) and passed his fingers backwards and forwards through the flame several times so slowly that they must have been severely burnt under ordinary circumstances. He then held his fingers up, smiled and nodded as if pleased, took up a fine cambric handkerchief belonging to Miss Douglas, folded it up on his right hand and went to the fire. Here he threw off the bandage from his eyes and by means of the tongs lifted a piece of red hot charcoal from the centre and deposited it on the folded cambric; bringing it across the room, he told us to put out the candle which was on the table, knelt down close to Mrs W.F. and spoke to her about it in a low voice. Occasionally he fanned the coal to a white heat with his breath. Coming a little further round the room, he spoke to Miss Douglas saying, 'We shall have to burn a very small hole in the handkerchief. We have a reason for this which you do not see.' Presently he took the coal back to the fire and handed the handkerchief to Miss Douglas. A small hole about half an inch in diameter was burnt in the centre, and there were two small points near it, but it was not even singed anywhere else. (I took the handkerchief away with me and on testing it in my laboratory, found that it had not undergone the slightest chemical preparation which could have rendered it fire-proof.)

Mr. Home again went to the fire, and after stirring the hot coals about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and putting it on his right hand, covered it over with his left hand so as to almost completely enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporised until the lump of charcoal was nearly white-hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers; he fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal in front and said, 'Is not God good? Are not His laws wonderful?' [22](#)

Crookes was particularly impressed by Home's accordion phenomena, and he devised a method for testing it that would not interfere greatly with its normal mode of production. Home's customary procedure was to hold the accordion at the end away from the keys, just under a table, with his other hand supporting him, resting on top of the table. His explanation for this was that the 'power' was greatest under the table. Naturally, that appears suspicious, even though Home regularly invited sitters to check under the table and was never caught cheating. But Crookes hit upon a way of allowing Home to hold the accordion under the table, while ruling out the possibility of chicanery.

First, Crookes purchased a new accordion for the occasion, and Home saw it for the first time when the experiment began. Clearly, the test instrument wasn't a prop prepared in advance by Home. Next, Crookes went to Home's apartment and watched him change clothes. That enabled him to determine that Home hadn't concealed some device that would allow him to manipulate the accordion surreptitiously (although it's unclear what sort of hidden—or even overt—contraption in 1871 would have been able to produce the relevant effects).

Crookes then brought Home to his house, where he had prepared a wooden cage, wound with insulated copper wire and netted together with string. The cage fit under Crookes's dining table, and the accordion was placed inside it. There was enough space between the cage and the table for Home to reach in and hold the accordion at the end away from the keys. But there wasn't enough space for Home to reach in further and touch or manipulate the keys. Furthermore, Home couldn't operate the accordion with his feet, because the cage rested on the floor. Besides, Home had boots on, and nine observers were keeping an eye on him, one of them eventually located under the table with a lamp.<sup>23</sup> So it would have been obvious if Home had removed his boots and attempted to move or play the accordion with his feet. Home sat beside the table, holding the accordion at the end away from the keys with the thumb and middle finger of one hand. His other hand rested on top of the table.

Crookes describes what then happened.

... the cage being drawn from under the table so as just to allow the accordion to be pushed in with its keys downwards, it was pushed back as close as Mr. Home's arm would permit, but without hiding his hand from those next to him. Very soon the accordion was seen by those on each side to be waving about in a somewhat curious manner; then sounds came from it, and finally several notes were played in succession. While this was going on, my assistant went under the table, and reported that the accordion was expanding and contracting; at the same time it was seen that the hand of Mr. Home by which it was held was quite still, his other hand resting on the table.<sup>24</sup>

Then, while Home's feet were

being held by those next him, and his other hand resting on the table, we heard distinct and separate notes sounded in succession, and then a simple air was played. As such a result could only have been produced by the various keys of the instrument being acted upon in harmonious succession, this was

considered by those present to be a crucial experiment. But the sequel was still more striking, for Mr. Home then removed his hand altogether from the accordion, taking it quite out of the cage, and placed it in the hand of the person next to him. The instrument then continued to play, no person touching it and no hand being near it.[25](#)

Next, Crookes ran an electric current to the insulated copper wire around the cage. Then,

The accordion was now again taken without any visible touch from Mr. Home's hand, which he removed from it entirely and placed upon the table, where it was taken by the person next to him, and seen, as now were both his hands, by all present. I and two of the others present saw the accordion distinctly floating about inside the cage with no visible support. This was repeated a second time, after a short interval. Mr. Home presently re-inserted his hand in the cage and again took hold of the accordion. It then commenced to play, at first, chords and runs, and afterwards a well-known sweet and plaintive melody, which it executed perfectly in a very beautiful manner. Whilst this tune was being played, I grasped Mr. Home's arm, below the elbow, and gently slid my hand down it until I touched the top of the accordion. He was not moving a muscle. His other hand was on the table, visible to all, and his feet were under the feet of those next to him.[26](#)

No magician has attempted to replicate Home's accordion phenomenon under conditions similar to those described above, and for good reason.

Crookes then took Home to an apparatus located in another part of the room. The device was supposed to test Home's apparent ability to alter an object's weight. It consisted of a mahogany board, 36 by 9.5 by 1 inches, onto whose ends had been crewed mahogany strips 1.5 inches wide. One of these 'feet' rested on a 'firm table', and the other was supported by a spring balance hanging from a sturdy tripod. This apparatus was rigged so that the mahogany board lay horizontally between the table and the tripod. As in the case of the accordion, Home had never before seen the device. (A variation of this experimental setup was successfully employed in a subsequent sitting.)[27](#)

Home sat at the table where one end of the board rested and placed his finger tips lightly on that end of the board. Crookes and Huggins sat on either side of the board. Almost immediately, the board and spring balance began to oscillate up and down. Home then placed a nearby hand-bell and matchbox on the end of the board, one under each hand, in order to demonstrate (he said) that he was not producing the downward pressure.

The oscillations of the spring balance became more pronounced, and Huggins, who was watching the index, saw it descend to 6.5 lbs, and later to 9 lbs. The normal weight of the board as registered by the balance had been 3.5 lb prior to the experiment.

Crookes adds,

In order to see whether it was possible to produce much effect on the spring balance by pressure at the place where Mr. Home's fingers had been, I stepped upon the table and stood on one foot at the end of the board. Dr. A.B. [Huggins], who was observing the index of the balance, said that the whole weight of my body (140 lbs.) so applied only sunk the index  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs., or 2 lbs. when I jerked up and down. Mr. Home had been sitting in a low easy-chair, and could not, therefore, had he tried his utmost, have exerted any material influence on these results. I need scarcely add that his feet as well as his hands were closely guarded by all in the room.

This experiment appears to me more striking, if possible, than the one with the accordion ... The board was arranged perfectly horizontally, and it was particularly noticed that Mr. Home's fingers were not at any time advanced more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the extreme end, as shown by a pencil-mark, which, with Dr. A.B.'s acquiescence, I made at the time. Now, the wooden foot being also  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, and resting flat on the table, it is evidence that no amount of pressure exerted within this space of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches could produce any action on the balance. Again, it is also evident that when the end furthest from Mr. Home sank, the board would turn on the further edge of this foot as on a fulcrum. The arrangement was consequently that of a see-saw, 36 inches in length, the fulcrum being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from one end; were he therefore to have exerted a downward pressure, it would have been in opposition to the force which was causing the other end of the board to move down.

The slight downward pressure shown by the balance when I stood on the board was owing probably to my foot extending beyond this fulcrum.[28](#)

On 30 July 1871, in the light of two large spirit lamps, Crookes recorded the following remarkable series of incidents. His remarks will be quoted at length, not only because the phenomena are interesting, but also in order to convey a sense of the density of phenomena occurring at some sittings. The proliferation of dramatic events involving objects not belonging to or prepared by Home is another fact about his mediumship that sceptics are hard-pressed to explain away. (During the séance, sitters were located as shown in Fig. 4.)

The accordion, which had been left by Mr. Home under the table, now began to play and move about without anyone touching it. It dropped on to my foot, then dragged itself away, playing all the time, and went to Mrs I. It got on to her knees.

Mr. Home got up and stood behind in full view of all, holding the accordion out at arm's length. We all saw it expanding and contracting and heard it playing a melody. Mr. Home then let go of the accordion, which went behind his back and there continued to play; his feet being visible and also his two hands, which were in front of him.

Mr. Home then walked to the open space in the room between Mrs I's chair and the sideboard and stood there quite upright and quiet. He then said, 'I'm rising, I'm rising;' when we all saw him rise from the ground slowly to a height of about six inches, remain there for about 10 seconds, and then slowly descend.

From my position I could not see his feet, but I distinctly saw his head, projected against the opposite wall, rise up, and Mr Wr. Crookes [Crookes's brother], who was sitting near where Mr. Home was, said that his feet were in the air. There was no stool or other thing near which could have aided him. Moreover, the movement was a smooth continuous glide upwards.

Whilst this was going on we heard the accordion fall heavily to the ground. It had been suspended in the air behind the chair where Mr. Home had been sitting. When it fell Mr. Home was about 10 ft. from it.

Mr. Home still standing behind Mrs I. and Mr. Wr. Crookes, the accordion was both seen and heard to move about behind him without his hands touching it. It then played a tune without contact and floating in the air.

Mr. Home then took the accordion in one hand and held it out so that we could all see it (he was still standing up behind Mrs I. and Mr. Wr. Crookes). We then saw the accordion expand and contract and heard a tune played. Mrs Wm. Crookes and Mr. Home saw a light on the lower part of the accordion, where the keys were, and we then heard and saw the keys clicked and depressed one after the other fairly and deliberately, as if to show us that the power doing it, although invisible (or nearly so) to us, had full control over the instrument.

A beautiful tune was then played whilst Mr. Home was standing up holding the accordion out in full view of everyone.

Mr. Home then came round behind me and telling me to hold my left arm out placed the accordion under my arm, the keys hanging down and the upper part pressing upwards against my upper arm. He then left go and the accordion remained there. He then placed his two hands one on each of my shoulders. In this position, no one touching the accordion but myself, and everyone noticing what was taking place, the instrument played notes but no tunes.

Mr. Home then sat in his chair, and we were told by raps to open the table about an inch and a-half.

Mr. T. touched the point of the [wooden] lath, when raps immediately came on it.

The planchette, which was on the table resting on a sheet of paper, now moved a few inches.

Sounds were heard on the accordion, which was on the floor, not held by Mr. Home.

The corner of the paper next to Mrs Wm. Crookes (on which the planchette was standing) moved up and down. (These three last phenomena were going on simultaneously.)

I felt something touch my knee; it then went to Mrs I., then to Miss A. Crookes.

Whilst this was going on I held the bell under the table, and it was taken from me and rung round beneath. It was then given to Mrs I. by a hand which she

described as soft and warm.

The lath was now seen to move about a little.

Mrs Wm. Crookes saw a hand and fingers touching the flower in Mr. Home's button-hole. The flower was then taken by the hand and given to Mrs I. and the green leaf was in a similar manner given to Mr. T.

Mrs Wm. Crookes and Mr. Home saw the hand doing this, the others only saw the flower and leaf moving through the air.

Mrs Wm. Crookes held a rose below the table; it was touched and then taken.

The sound as of a drum was heard on the accordion.

The lath lifted itself up on its edge, then reared itself upon one end and fell down. It then floated up four inches above the table, and moved quite round the circle, pointing to Mrs Wm. Crookes. It then rose up and passed over our heads outside the circle.

The planchette moved about a good deal, marking the paper.

The cloth was dragged along the table.

Then, after several more phenomena,

The water and tumbler now rose up together, and we had answers to questions by their tapping together whilst floating in the air about eight inches above the table, and moving backwards and forwards from one to the other of the circle.

Mr. H. Crookes said a hand was tickling his knee.

A finger protruded up the opening [between the leaves] of the table between Miss A. Crookes and the water bottle.

Miss A. Crookes, Mr. H. Crookes, and Mrs I were then touched.

Fingers came up the opening of the table a second time and waved about.

The lath, which on its last excursion had settled in front of the further window, quite away from the circle, now moved along the floor four or five times very noisily. It then came up to Mr. T., and passed into the circle over his shoulder. It settled on the table and then rose up again, pointing to Wm. Crookes's mouth.

The lath then went to the water bottle and pushed it several times nearly over, to move it away from the opening in the table. The lath then went endways down the opening.

The tumbler moved about a little.

The lath moved up through the opening in the table and answered 'Yes' and 'No' to questions, by bobbing up and down three times or once.[29](#)



After a few more phenomena, the séance ended.

## Comments

First, it should be clear that complete levitation of a large and heavy table requires at least an accomplice or an apparatus. But in the best documented of Home's table levitations, that is usually out of the question. For example, considering that those levitations occurred in hundreds of locations in Europe and America for nearly 25 years, not one, but an army of confederates would have been necessary, none of whom (we would have to suppose) ever later enjoyed the satisfaction of revealing the trick to the public. Moreover (to reiterate points raised earlier), séances often occurred on the spur of the moment, in locations never before visited by Home. And of course, no neatly concealable device or machine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century could have produced the appropriate effect. Finally, when (as often happened) the levitation is conducted in good light and with the opportunity at any time to examine the table and its surroundings, I think we must conclude that the phenomenon is genuine.

One aspect of séances with Home (and Eusapia Palladino) that fuels sceptical suspicions is that only certain of the sitters claim to observe, say, an apparently materialized hand carrying an object, while others see a luminous cloud and others see only the object movement. To some, this suggests that the experiences are all delusory—that is, subjective constructs of some sort, perhaps induced by the medium's suggestion.

However (and quite apart from naïve assumptions about the ease of hypnotizing unselected subjects), one should not make too much of these discrepancies in the testimony. For one thing, many phenomena were reported by all present, and those are the ones that must first be explained. If no normal explanation does the job, then the divergent reports in the other cases are far less significant. They may even point to certain aspects of a paranormal process that are important to understand. Also, the object movements may be genuine and paranormal even if the spirit hands and luminous clouds are only subjective constructs.

But one should also keep in mind that some quite ordinary non-delusory physical phenomena are perceivable (or perceivable in certain ways) only from certain vantage points—for example, rainbows and electromagnetic fields (which may appear luminous only from certain positions). Even in the case of optical illusions (like mirages), which likewise are often not perceivable from all angles or positions, certain objective physical states of affairs account for the illusion. So the differing testimony from sitters located at different positions relative to the alleged phenomena fails to show that the sitters' experiences are nothing more than subjective constructs. As with optical illusions, they might even afford important clues as to the nature of an underlying objective process.

The apparent materialization of hands is another phenomenon meriting special comment. The hands appeared to be warm, soft, mobile, and flexible. Sitters claimed to see them move objects or play musical instruments. Yet they would melt or dissolve when grasped or suddenly disappear. Apparently, they were never dragged away, as they would have been had Home been trying to retrieve a

previously concealed device. Considering that the hands were often associated with object movements or other physical side effects that seem to have been genuine, sceptics face a formidable challenge. In order to account for the combination of physical effects along with tactile and visual impressions of the hands (including their mode of disappearance or dematerialization), presumably one would have to posit a complicated combination of hallucination (or hypnosis) and machinery. But for reasons noted earlier (and also [here](#)), hallucination (or hypnosis) leaves too much unexplained.

Moreover, the production of warm, fleshy, and mobile hands of varying colors, shapes, and sizes (much less hands that dissolve or melt) was beyond the technology of the period (and our own as well). The hypothesis that the hands were those of Home or that they were stuffed gloves is equally unsatisfactory. Home's hands were often visible while the spirit hands were seen, and often Home was located well beyond reach of the hands and their associated phenomena. Stuffed gloves, moreover, would not be warm, fleshy, or animated; nor do they dissolve or melt. And if the phenomena occur beyond the medium's reach, we must explain the means by which the hands and object movements were produced. Presumably, the sceptic would insist that Home resorted to a mechanical device to manipulate the hands and objects. But it is far from clear what mechanical contrivance of the period would have been both possible to conceal and capable of producing the additional associated physical effects.[30](#)

Consider the following account. The narrator (Frank L Burr, editor of the *Hartford Times*) had been describing some object movements and had just reported the slow and deliberate movement of a piece of paper. At this point in the proceedings, light was furnished only by the glow from a coal fire near the table. However, given Burr's proximity to the hand and the minuteness of his examination, the lack of better illumination (although regrettable) does not undermine the value of the testimony.

The quire of paper was placed upon the edge of the table, and so near my hand as to touch it. This was done slowly and deliberately, and this time at least I was permitted to see plainly and clearly *the hand that had hold of it*. It was evidently a *lady's hand*—very thin, very pale, and remarkably attenuated. The *conformation* of this hand was peculiar. The fingers were of almost preternatural *length*, and seemed to be set *wide apart*. The extreme *pallor* of the entire hand was also remarkable. But perhaps the most noticeable thing about it was the shape of the fingers, which, in addition to their length and thinness, were unusually *pointed* at the ends; they tapered rapidly and evenly toward the tips. The hand also *narrowed* from the lower knuckles to the wrist, *where it ended*. All this could be seen by as such light as was in the room, while the hand was for a few moments holding the paper upon the edge of the table. It suddenly disappeared, and in a moment the *pencil* was thrown from some quarter, and fell upon the table, where the hand again appeared, took it, and *began to write*. This was in plain sight, being only shaded by one of the circle who was sitting between the paper on the table and the fire. The hands of each one present were upon the table, in full view, so that it *could* not have been one of the party who was thus writing. Being the nearest one to the hand, I bent down close to it as it wrote, to see the whole of it. It extended no farther than

*the wrist*. With a feeling of curiosity natural under the circumstances, I brought my face close to it in the endeavor to see exactly what it was, and, in so doing, probably destroyed the electric or magnetic influence by which it was working; for the pencil dropped and the hand vanished. The writing was afterwards examined, and proved to be *the name, in her own proper handwriting, of a relative* and intimate lady friend of one in the circle, who passed away some years since ... That it was produced by no hand of any one bodily in that room I *know* and affirm.

The hand afterwards came and *shook hands* with each one present. I felt it minutely. It was tolerably well and symmetrically made, though not perfect; and it was *soft* and slightly *warm*. IT ENDED AT THE WRIST.[31](#)

This description is typical. Compare it to some of the brief descriptions collected by Barrett and Myers.[32](#) For instance, Frank Burr describes how, 'in the full light of the lamp', he shook hands with a hand apparently not attached to any arm. He continues,

When the hand found it could not get away it yielded itself up to me for my examination, turned itself over and back, shut up its fingers and opened them. It ended at the wrist.

Burr then pushed his finger through the hand. But the hole closed up, leaving a scar, and then the hand disappeared.

Another witness says of a large hand, 'I seized it, felt it very sensibly, but it went out like air in my grasp'. Another says of a 'little hand', 'I took hold of it; it was warm, and evidently a child's hand. I did not loosen my hold, but it seemed to melt out of my clutch'.

Count Tolstoy reports, 'Hands laid themselves in my hands, and when I sought to retain one it dissolved in my grasp'.

Yet another interesting passage is quoted by Gauld.[33](#) The account, from a letter to the *Hartford Times* in March 1853, describes a sitting with Home in a private house.

The gas light had been turned down, but sufficient light remained in the room to render ourselves, and most objects, quite visible, and the hands of the party, which rested on the table, could be distinctly seen. The spirits asked [by raps]:

'How many hands are there on the table?' There were six of us in the party, and the answer, after counting, was 'twelve'.

*Reply*—'There are thirteen'.

And there, sure enough, on that side of the table which was vacant, and opposite to the medium, appeared a *thirteenth* hand! It faded as we gazed, but presently up it came again—a *hand and an arm*, gleaming and apparently self-luminous; and it slowly moved ... toward the centre of the table! To make sure that we were not deceived or laboring under a hallucination, we counted our own hands, which were all resting in sight upon the table. There it was,

however, an arm and a hand, the arm extending back to the elbow, and there fading into imperceptibility. We all saw it, and all spoke of it, to assure each other of the reality of the thing. It emitted a faint but perceptible *light*. Presently it vanished, but we were soon permitted to see not only the same thing again, but the *process of its formation*. It began at the *elbow*, and formed rapidly and steadily, until the arm and hand again rested on the table before us. It was so plainly seen, that I readily observed it to be a *left hand*.

After attempting to write, the hand picked up a bell, rang it about six feet away from the circle, and then brought it to the writer, who took the hand instead.

It was a real hand—it had knuckles, fingers, and finger nails, and what was yet more curious ... it was soft and warm, feeling much like the hand of an infant, in every respect but that of size. But the most singular part of the strange occurrence is yet to be told—the hand melted in my grasp! Dissolved, dissipated, became annihilated, so far as the sense of feeling extended.

Some of Crookes's observations are also worth quoting.

A beautifully-formed hand rose up from the opening in a dining-table and gave me a flower; it appeared and then disappeared three times at intervals, affording me ample opportunity of satisfying myself that it was as real in appearance as my own. This occurred in the light in my own room, whilst I was holding the medium's hands and feet. The hands and fingers do not always appear to me to be solid and life-like. Sometimes, indeed, they present more the appearance of a nebulous cloud partly condensed into the form of a hand. This is not equally visible to all present. For instance, a flower or other small object is seen to move; one person present will see a luminous cloud hovering over it, another will detect a nebulous-looking hand, whilst others will see nothing at all but the moving flower. I have more than once seen, first an object move, then a luminous cloud appear to form about it, and, lastly, the cloud condense into shape and become a perfectly-formed hand. At this stage the hand is visible to all present. It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly life-like and graceful, the fingers moving and the flesh apparently as human as that of any in the room. At the wrist, or arm, it becomes hazy, and fades off into a luminous cloud ...

To the touch, the hand sometimes appears icy cold and dead, at other times, warm and life-like, grasping my own with the firm pressure of an old friend ...

I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get loose, but it gradually seemed to resolve itself into vapour, and faded in that manner from my grasp.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

This survey only scratches the surface of Home's case. More could be said, for example, about Home's earthquake effect and the handling of hot coals. But the

foregoing should suffice to indicate how seriously Home's case challenges the parapsychological sceptic.

In addition to the sources already noted, readers interested in learning more are directed to Adare (1871-1976); Braude (1985); Carrington (1930); Jenkins (1982); Lodge (1924); Zorab (1971; 1978). [35](#)

Stephen Braude

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## Endnotes

### Footnotes

- [1](#). The following discussion has been adapted from portions of the treatments of Home in Braude (1997; 2007).
- [2](#). Home (1863/1972), 5.
- [3](#). Eisenbud (1982), 127.
- [4](#). Podmore (1902/1963; 1910/1975).
- [5](#). These individual differences have proven to be quite stable. See, e.g., Hilgard (1965); Perry (1977).
- [6](#). Home (1863/1972), 39.
- [7](#). Home (1863/1972), 22-23; M. D.D. Home (1888/1976), 14-15.
- [8](#). The reader should keep in mind, when reading accounts of phenomena that might initially seem to be caused by the medium exerting an undetected effort of his own, that Home suffered from consumption for much of his life and therefore was arguably not even strong enough to produce some of his effects by normal physical means.
- [9](#). Zorab (1970).

- [10.](#) Zorab (1970), 52.
- [11.](#) Zorab (1970), 53.
- [12.](#) Zorab (1970), 54.
- [13.](#) Zorab (1970), 55.
- [14.](#) Zorab (1970), 55-57.
- [15.](#) M. D.D. Home (1888/1976).
- [16.](#) Barrett & Myers (1889), 127-28.
- [17.](#) Barrett & Myers (1889), 129-30.
- [18.](#) Barrett & Myers (1889), 124-25.
- [19.](#) Crookes (1874), 3; Medhurst, Goldney & Barrington (1972), 15.
- [20.](#) Crookes (1874), 4; Medhurst et al (1972), 16.
- [21.](#) Medhurst et al (1972), 163.
- [22.](#) Medhurst et al (1972), 165-66.
- [23.](#) Including Sergeant Edward Cox (an attorney), and William Huggins, a prominent physicist and astronomer—like Crookes, a Fellow of the Royal Society.
- [24.](#) Crookes (1874), 12; Medhurst et al (1972), 25.
- [25.](#) Crookes (1874), 13; Medhurst et al (1972), 26
- [26.](#) Crookes (1874), 14; Medhurst et al (1972), 25.
- [27.](#) See Crookes (1889), 117ff; Medhurst et al (1972), 197ff.
- [28.](#) Crookes (1874), 15; Medhurst et al (1972), 28-29. For a contemporary re-appraisal of the spring-balance experiments, see Ishida (2012) and for an evaluation of Crookes's intellectual character, see Kidd (2014).
- [29.](#) Crookes (1889), 118-21; Medhurst et al (1972), 199-203.
- [30.](#) Lamont (2005), makes a disingenuous effort to explain away the reports of hands, saying that the apparent hands were either stuffed gloves or perhaps even Home's foot. He conveniently fails to note that observers reported that the hands dissolved in their grasp, and also that the phenomena often occurred well beyond Home's reach. Lamont similarly gives only partial details—and gets other details wrong—in trying to debunk Crookes's accordion test. For more on the inadequacy of Lamont's conjectures, see Braude (2007), 45-46.
- [31.](#) Home (1863/1972), 59-61, (*italics in original*).
- [32.](#) Barrett & Myers (1889), 134-35.
- [33.](#) Gauld (1968), 17-18.
- [34.](#) Crookes (1874), 92; Medhurst et al (1972), 118-19.
- [35.](#) Also see the Encyclopedia entry on *Eyewitness Testimony* for some additional details concerning the unreliability of sceptical comments concerning Home.