

unconscious." Should any reader desire to see a vivisection of the author's mind, he must conduct it for himself; for we do not think that our results, if we ventured to undertake it, would justify so painful an operation.

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*The Mechanism of Man: An Answer to the Question, What am I?* By EDWARD W. COX, Serjeant-at-Law. Vol. I. The Mechanism. London: Longmans and Co. 1876.

The design of this book is to show that there is something in man other than his material structure; a *distinct entity*, by which the material structure is intelligently controlled and directed; in other words, that man has, or is a soul. Serjeant Cox's faith in the existence of a soul was, he says, at one time shaken by what he calls the arguments of the great scientists of our time; he determined, therefore, to make for himself a laborious and careful study of the facts and phenomena upon which he supposes science to base its denial, and, as a result of that study, he proposes now to prove, in strict accordance with the methods and rules of science, that man is not an automaton, but a soul.

In the course of his scientific studies he has made acquaintance with the doctrine of the molecular structure of matter, and he immediately discerned in it the possibility of throwing a new and bright light upon operations previously unintelligible, and of explaining phenomena, before wrapped in mystery and marvel. For as matter is formed of molecules, so are molecules formed of atoms, and while our senses can perceive molecular structure they cannot perceive atomic structure; when matter, therefore, ceases to exist as molecular structure and becomes atomic, it is no longer perceptible—"matter is, in fact, *non-matter*, itself aggregated into the definite form we call *molecular*." But *non-matter* is as real as matter—is by no means a *nothing*; it is, in fact, matter which, by having been resolved into atoms, has become imperceptible, as Jack the Giant-killer became invisible by putting on his magic coat.

"If the molecules of which Mont Blanc is made were to be suddenly resolved into atoms, the mountain, without the slightest change in shape or bulk, would instantly vanish from our perceptions. We should cease to see it or feel it. We should even walk through it without the slightest con-

sciousness of its presence. But there it still would be as it was, in the same place, the same in size and shape—in every particle identical with the Mont Blanc that just before had confronted us. But because it is now *atomic* it is *immaterial*, and being therefore imperceptible by our senses, we should call it *Spirit*. If a prophet were to declare its presence, we might have faith in his assertion, but there would be no evidence to any sense of its actual existence. It would be to us a *spirit mountain*." Let the wave of an enchanter's wand combine the atoms into molecules, in an instant Mont Blanc would appear again, visible, palpable—a mountain mass of matter.

Look well to your footsteps, reader, for the astute and learned Serjeant is leading you by a way that ye know not into consequences which may occasion alarm, when they are perceived. Admitting his remarkable scientific discovery, you will be asked whether, when we cease to exist as molecular structure and become atomic, it is not permitted us to combine our atoms into molecules, and so make ourselves again perceptible to human senses? May we not be permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon after "that fell serjeant death" has laid his arresting hand upon us? Well may Serjeant Cox let slip an anticipatory hint of triumph. "There are problems of Psychology that may not be so insoluble as they seem." For here is spiritualism justified by science, and Psychic Force demonstrated "in strict accordance with the methods and rules of science."

The Serjeant is a stern upholder of the importance of *facts*, and severely censures the scientists for their inability to distinguish exactly what is and what is not a *fact*. He would have them imitate the exact and critical procedures of law in the trial of a case. He is prepared, in accordance with his principles, to exhibit a genuine molecule of matter to anyone who may wish to have matter made visible to him in that form, or at any rate to exhibit some one who has actually seen it, although, with a lawyer's dislike to hearsay evidence, he would only resort to this latter kind of evidence under special circumstances; he is prepared, also, we believe, not to show the invisible atoms—seeing that they are imperceptible—but while demonstrating that they cannot be perceived in any way, to demonstrate at the same time their existence and their combinations, and how they may be walked through without the least consciousness of their presence.

He goes on, after settling what matter is and what non-matter is, to discuss the entire mechanism of man—tells us how we grow, how we live, how we sicken, and how we die; what mind is, what is its mechanism, and what are its functions; what the soul is, where is its dwelling-place, and what is its *shape* after death. Yes; the soul, he declares, must have some definite shape, and there is no reason why it should change its shape when it enters upon its new phase of existence after death. Has the hunchback a crooked soul? Has the amputated body an amputated soul? These are questions which he shirks not to consider and answer. The soul must have power, he demonstrates in accordance with the strict methods and rules of science, to penetrate the most solid substances: “it is as certain as any fact in nature that, if permitted to revisit this world, it could come into a room with closed doors and stand in the midst with even more facility than the material body when living could have entered through the doorway.” Alas, poor ghost! that has attained not rest and peace in the grave, but art doomed for a certain term to walk the earth and give attendance at spiritual *séances*. Serjeant Cox is the president of a society which calls itself the Psychological Society of Great Britain: it is a society which certainly cannot lack material for investigation; for it is evident that its members must themselves furnish instructive studies in psychology.

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### PART III.—PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT.

#### 1. *English Retrospect.*

We greatly regret that the following notice of Reports of Asylums for 1874 should have been postponed, through pressure on our space, till now:—

ABERDEEN.—Dr. Jamieson, like many superintendents, objects to the number of incurable cases placed under his care. He says:—Observation tends to the conclusion that the operations of this hospital, as of others of a like nature, are liable to be influenced by a growing inclination to remit to the charge of an asylum for the insane various cases of mental weakness sometimes accompanying the latter stages of several physical diseases, which properly should be cared for at home, or be put under treatment in infirmaries and incurable hospitals. In particular the associated debility of body and dulness of mind, which