

Here we may interrupt our inquiry to observe how inconsistent these phenomena are with the favourite hypothesis—that light produces vision by exciting vibration in the fibres of the nerve. By all the laws of motion from which this hypothesis is borrowed, we know that if a body be set in motion, it is easily kept in motion; and that if a chord vibrate, that vibration will be kept up by a motion in the same time. It appears to me natural to suppose, that if these fibres of the nerve (which, be it remembered, are also imaginary) were moved like the chords of a musical instrument, they would be most easily continued in motion by undulations in the same time: that if the red ray oscillated or vibrated in a certain proportion of time, it would keep the fibres of the nerve in action more easily, than a green ray, which vibrates in a different time; and if the colour of a ray depended upon the peculiar undulation or vibration, before the green ray could produce a motion corresponding with itself, it must encounter a certain opposition, in interrupting the motion already begun.*

* “ Although any kind of impulse or motions regulated by any
“ law may be transferred from molecule to molecule in an elastic
“ medium, yet in the theory of light it is supposed that only such
“ primary impulses, as recur according to regular periodical laws,
“ at equal intervals of time and repeated many times in succession,
“ can affect our organs with the sensation of light. To put in
“ motion the molecules of the nerves of our retina with sufficient