

globe, but it has introduced us to the knowledge of the bodies which compose the solar system, and of the countless hosts of stars which are scattered through the firmament, thus expanding our views to the remotest confines of creation. As the perceptions supplied by this sense are at once the quickest, the most extensive, and the most varied, so they become the fittest vehicles for the introduction of other ideas. Visual impressions are those which in infancy, furnish the principal means of developing the powers of the understanding: it is to this class of perceptions that the philosopher resorts for the most apt and perspicuous illustrations of his reasonings; and it is also from the same inexhaustible fountain that the poet draws his most pleasing and graceful, as well as his sublimest imagery.

The sense of Vision is intended to convey to its possessor a knowledge of the presence, situation, and colour of external and distant objects by means of the light which those objects are continually sending off, either spontaneously, or by reflection from other bodies. It would appear that there is only one part of the nervous system so peculiarly organized as to be capable of being affected by luminous rays, and conveying to the mind the sensation of light, and this part is the *Retina*, so named from the thin and delicate membranous network, on which the pulpy extremities of the *optic nerves*, establishing an immediate communication between that part and the brain, are expanded.

If the eye were so constructed as to allow the rays of light, which reach it from surrounding objects, simply to impinge on the retina as they are received, the only perception which they could excite in the mind, would be a general sensation of light, proportionate to the total quantity which is sent to the organ from the whole of the opposite hemisphere. This, however, does not properly constitute Vision; for in order that the presence of a particular object in its real direction and position with respect to us, may be recognised, it is necessary that the light, which comes from it, and that light alone, should produce its impression ex-