

When the impressions are very vivid, another phenomenon often takes place; namely, their subsequent recurrence, after a certain interval, during which they are not felt, and quite independently of any renewed application of the cause which had originally excited them. If, for example, we look steadfastly at the sun for a second or two, and then immediately close our eyes, the image or *spectrum* of the sun remains for a long time present to the mind, as if its light were still acting on the retina. It then gradually fades and disappears; but if we continue to keep the eyes shut, the same impression will, after a certain time, recur, and again vanish; and this phenomenon will be repeated at intervals, the sensation becoming fainter at each renewal. It is probable that these reappearances of the image, after the light which produced the original impression has been withdrawn, are occasioned by spontaneous affections of the retina itself, which are conveyed to the sensorium. In other cases, where the impressions are less strong, the physical changes producing these spectra are perhaps confined to the sensorium. These spectral appearances generally undergo various changes of colour, assuming first a yellow tint, passing then to a green, and lastly becoming blue, before they finally disappear.

Another general law of sensation is, that all impressions made on the nerves of sense tend to exhaust their sensibility, so that the continued or renewed action of the same external cause produces a less effect than at first: while, on the other hand, the absence or diminution of the usual excitement leads to a gradual increase of sensibility, so that the subsequent application of an exciting cause produces more than the usual effect. One of the most obvious exemplifications of this law presents itself in the case of the sensations of temperature. The very same body may appear warm to

mascope or Phenakistiscope. I constructed several of these at that period, (in the spring of 1831) which I showed to many of my friends; but in consequence of occupations and cares of a more serious kind, I did not publish any account of this invention, which was last year reproduced on the continent.