

easier than to make either of them disappear as if blotted out from the sky, by looking full and fixedly *at* it, while the other remains conspicuously visible. In this way I find stars of the second magnitude considerably enfeebled, though they cannot be made wholly to disappear. Those of the first are but little affected. I have found many persons incredulous on their first hearing of this fact, who yet have satisfied themselves by trial of its reality. I at one time believed that this comparative insensibility of the centre of the retina arose from the greater wear and tear consequent on directing the attention continually to it, and habitually directing it to any more conspicuous object, but I find that the same thing happens to very young persons to quite as great an extent—in whom, of course, this cause of deterioration cannot have gone so far as in adults. There is reason to believe moreover, that this comparative insensibility of the middle part of the retina to faint impressions extends over a pretty considerable area, for I find that in a room but feebly lighted, and with the back to the light, it is possible by long looking fixedly *in the direction* of an object of considerable angular diameter, gradually to lose sight of it, and at length entirely cease to see it—and then, by an effort of the will, accompanied with some kind of organic act in the eye itself, which I know by sensation, but am unable to describe in words, but which is not the action of adjusting the focus, it is at once realized to sight, without any alteration of the direction of the optic axis, or any motion given to the head or person. It is an experiment which will not