

into unproductive channels. I have shown, I think satisfactorily, however, in my Article on Light,\* that the applicability of the analogy of the colours of thin plates to those of natural bodies is limited to a comparatively narrow range, while the phænomena of absorption, to which I consider the great majority of natural colours to be referrible, have always appeared to me to constitute a branch of photology *sui generis* to be studied in itself by the way of inductive inquiry, and by constant reference to facts as nature offers them.

(2.) The most remarkable feature in this class of facts consists in the unequal absorbability of the several prismatic rays, and the total abandonment of anything like regularity of progress in this respect as we proceed from one end of the spectrum to the other. When we contemplate the subject in this point of view, all idea of regular functional gradation is at an end. We seem to lose sight of the great law of continuity, and to find ourselves involved among desultory and seemingly capricious relations, quite unlike any which occur in other branches of optical science. It is, perhaps, as much owing to this as to anything, that the phænomena of absorption in some recently-published speculations, and in the view which Mr Whewell has taken in his Report of the progress and actual condition of this department of natural philosophy, read to this meeting, have been characterized as peculiarly difficult to reconcile with the undulatory theory of light. In so far as I have above

\* This refers to the Article on Light published in the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana" in 1826-7.