

and strikes upon the opposite part of the retina from within outwards.

Another fact, which has surprised philosophers, is the insensibility of the optic nerve itself to light. If it be so contrived that the strongest beam of light shall fall upon the end of the nerve in the bottom of the eye, where it begins to expand into the delicate retina, no sensation of light will be produced. This ought not to surprise us, if I am correct in my statement that the gross matter of the nerve is not the organ of vision, but the exterior surface of it only. In the extremity of the optic nerve there is, of course, no posterior surface; and, indeed, nothing can better prove the distinct office of the nerve itself as contrasted with the expanded retina, than this circumstance,—that when the strongest ray of light strikes into the nerve, the impression is not received. It seems to imply, that the capacity of receiving the impression, and of conveying it to the sensorium are two distinct functions.

Is not this opinion more consistent with the phenomena than what is expressed by one of our first philosophers,—that the nerve, at its extremity towards the eye, is insensible, and forms what has been called the *punctum cæcum*, because it is not yet divided into those almost infinitely minute fibres, which are fine enough to be thrown into tremors by the rays of light.