

Reverting to the sensible spot in the retina, it does not appear that we are authorised to term it a spot. The same law governs vision when we look to a fine point of a needle, or to an object in an extensive landscape. We look to the point of a pen, and we can rest the attention on the point upon the one side of the slit, to the exclusion of the other, just as we can select and intently survey a house or a tree. If the sensible spot were regularly

“ efficacy, it is necessary that the almost infinitely minute impulse  
 “ of the adjacent ethereal molecules should be often and regularly  
 “ repeated, so as to multiply and concentrate their effect. Thus,  
 “ as a great pendulum may be set in swing by a very minute  
 “ force, often applied at intervals exactly equal to its time of  
 “ oscillation, or as one elastic body can be set in vibration, by the  
 “ vibration of another at a distance propagated through the air,  
 “ if in exact unison, even so we may conceive the gross fibres of  
 “ the nerves of the retina to be thrown into motion by the conti-  
 “ nual repetition of the ethereal pulses: and such only will be thus  
 “ agitated, as from their size, shape, or elasticity, are susceptible  
 “ of vibrating in times exactly equal to those at which the impulses  
 “ are repeated. Thus it is easy to conceive how the limits of visible  
 “ colour may be established: for if there be no nervous fibres in  
 “ unison with vibrations more or less frequent than certain limits,  
 “ such vibrations, though they reach the retina, will produce no  
 “ sensation. Thus, too, a single impulse, or an irregularly re-  
 “ peated one, produces no light. And thus also may the vibrations  
 “ excited in the retina continue a sensible time after the exciting  
 “ cause has ceased, prolonging the sensation of light (especially  
 “ if a vivid one) for an instant in the eye in the manner des-  
 “ cribed.”—Sir J. F. W. Herschel, *Art. Light. Enc. Met.*

Now it does appear to me that this reasoning is inconsistent with the phenomena above noticed.