

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1898.

COLOR-VISION.*

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THE domain of physiological optics, formerly much frequented by students of physics, has of late been administered chiefly by psychologists. So far is this true that I have hesitated in preparing an address upon a subject in this realm, lest I should be accused of passing entirely beyond that borderland which lies between us and our sister science, of trespassing in a foreign country, and risking international complications. Yet a subject which has owed its development to Newton and Young, Maxwell and Helmholtz, to mention no other names, can hardly be out of place here. The methods of investigation are largely those of the physicist, the phenomena attend every optical research, the results are of frequent physical application. Within the past few years, however, most of the work on color-vision has been done by other hands, and the results have not appeared in the physical journals. It seemed worth while, therefore, to review briefly the progress of scientific theory in this direction, and to sum up, so far as possible, the present state of our knowledge.

For our purpose we must go back as far as Sir Isaac Newton, to whom we owe the first definite and intelligible hypothesis as to the nature of color-vision.

*Address of the Vice-President before Section B—Physics—of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, August, 1898.