July 1922

Better Eyesight

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE PREVENTION AND CURE OF IMPERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES

July, 1922

"PAGE TWO"

ON page two of this magazine are printed each month specific directions for improving the sight in various ways. Too many subscribers read the magazine once and then mislay it. We feel that at least page two should be kept for reference.

When the eyes are neglected the vision may fail. It is so easy to forget how to palm successfully. The long swing always helps but it has to be done right. One may under adverse conditions suffer a tension so great that the ability to remember or imagine perfectly is modified or lost and relaxation is not obtained. The long swing is always available and always brings sufficient relief to practice the short swing, central Fixation, the perfect memory and imagination with perfect relief.

Be sure and review page two frequently; not only for your special benefit but also for the benefit of individuals you desire to help!

Persons with imperfect sight often have difficulty in obtaining relaxation by the various methods described in the book and in this magazine. It should be emphasized that persons with good vision are better able to help others than people who have imperfect sight or wear glasses. If you are trying to cure yourself avoid people who wear glasses or do not see well. Those individuals are always under a strain and the strain is manifested in their face, in their voices, in their walk, the way they sit, in short in everything that they do.

Strain is contagious. Teachers in Public Schools who wear glasses are a menace to their pupils' sight. Parents who wear glasses or who have imperfect sight lower the vision of their children. It is always well when treating children or adults to keep them away from people with imperfect sight.

THE STORY OF VIOLET

BY W. H. Bates, M. D.

Just what, in simple words, is Central Fixation? If you will read this story of a ten-year-old girl who discovered it for herself you will know, not in terms of theory or in scientific phrases, but in practical simplicity.

SOME years ago a young girl, aged 10, was brought to me for the cure of imperfect sight and squint. She was wearing quite strong glasses for relief.

The right or squinting eye, even with her strong glasses, had very poor vision. The best she could see with this eye with or without glasses was counting fingers at about three feet. Looking straight ahead of her with this squinting eye, with the other eye covered, everything was visible and, she said, perfectly dark, and what she did see at any time with this eye was off to one side. She was unable to read with this eye with or without her glasses.

With her left eye her vision was improved by glasses so that she had about one-quarter of normal vision and could read large print with more or less difficulty for short periods of time. She usually had a headache every day and at times great pain in one or both eyes.

Reading or studying her lessons was a punishment. Unlike other children she had no pleasure in reading story books. The trouble with her eyes interfered with her play. She spent most of her time sitting alone with no desire to talk and kept her eyes closed a good deal of the time. Without her glasses she could not read at all ordinary print.

The case to me was very interesting because of the results obtained in a short time, three weeks. When the mother asked me how long it would take, I believed and told her that if the girl got any improvement in three months she would be very fortunate. In fact she was practically cured in a week but I was so fearful of a relapse I had her come a few weeks longer to be sure she retained what she had gained.

Glasses Off

The first thing I had her do was to discard her glasses altogether. With both eyes open her vision was 10/200. When she was able to see the large letter on the card clearly or well enough to tell what the letter was, I asked her if she saw it all alike. She said "No." She told me that she noticed that when she looked at the top of the letter she saw it bent and the bottom worse. When she looked at the bottom of the letter she saw the bottom of the letter bent and the top worse.

"But," I said, "The top is just as black as the bottom and one side is just as black as the other side. The letter is perfectly black in all parts."

"Yes," she said, "but I do not see it that way."

I told her to try it that way. She said at once the letter blurred so that she could not tell it. When I brought the letter up close, at three feet away she saw it more distinctly than at ten feet.

"Now," I said to her, "when you try to see the letter all alike what happens?"

She answered, "It blurs and if I try hard enough I can-not even tell what the letter is."

I said to her, "You know the letter is perfectly black and when you see one part bent you are seeing something that is not so, aren't you?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Now when you see something that is not so you do not really see it—you only imagine it, don't you?"

She answered, "I do not see one part bent, I only imagine it."

Then I pointed to the second line, first letter, "Can you imagine the top of this letter is blacker than the bottom? Make believe it is," I told her.

"Oh," she said, "I can make believe it is, I can imagine the top bent."

"Can you imagine the bottom bent if you want to?"

"Yes I can imagine the bottom bent and the top worse."

"What letter is it?" she answered: "A letter R."

"Is the letter R as black as the big C?"

"No," she answered, "it is quite gray and all blurred on the edges."

"You know it isn't gray don't you?"

"Yes, I know it isn't gray but that is the way I see it."

"Isn't that an illusion? when you see gray you are seeing something that isn't true, aren't you?"

"Yes, when I see it gray I am seeing something that isn't true."

"Now suppose you make believe that the letter R is just as black as the big C, which it really is. Can you do that?"

"I can make believe it is, I can imagine it is, but I have to imagine one part at a time."

"All right," I said, "I can forgive you for that. Keep on imagining one part is blacker than the rest," and then she screamed with delight.

"Oh goody, the whole card is getting better and I can see a thousand times more then I could before."

Better Vision Quickly

In her eagerness to prove that her sight was better, almost breathlessly, she read several lines.

I said to her, "Why do you stop?" She answered, "They all turn gray."

"Oh," I said, "Someone, they didn't all turn gray. You only made believe they did. Suppose you make believe they are black all the time, not some times gray, and other times black, because they are not. You know those letters are continuously black."

"Yes I know it but I do not always imagine or make believe they are."

"Can you make believe they are?"

"Oh, yes I can and can read more of them," and this she did and apologized, saying that she could not read them or imagine them perfectly black unless she made believe she saw a part of the letter bent.

I was very much impressed with the fact that this child had discovered for herself what I call Central Fixation or the ability to see a part of a letter better than the rest of it. She found, without any suggestion on my part, that she could not read any of the letters with maximum vision unless she did see one part bent. When she came to the smaller letters she hesitated and failed to see them.

"What is the trouble?" I asked.

"Oh," she said, "They are so small it seems as though I ought at least to see a small letter all alike and tell what it is."

Then I called her attention to the fact that she could not tell any of those small letters when she tried to imagine the letters all alike. I brought the card closer and encouraged her to imagine one part bent of the smaller letters. At a nearer point than ten feet she was able to imagine even the letters on the bottom line, one part bent, and distinguish them. She was able to demonstrate that when she saw the small letters all alike that her sight was not so good. When she looked at the card at ten feet she became able, by alternating with looking at the card nearer, to see the small letters, one part bent, as well as she could at a nearer point.

Real Practice

She practiced with the card at home and did what very few of my patients are able to do, she improved her sight practicing by herself. In a few days her vision with both eyes together became normal. Then I had her cover the good eye, the left, and practice in the same way with the squinting eye, which had such very poor sight. With her eyes closed she could imagine one part bent of a large letter at ten feet continuously. By flashing the large letter with the squinting eye, alternately, her ability to see one part bent improved, at first in flashes and later more continuously.

When she was at home her mother said the child was spending all her time with the card. She shortened the time of her meals in order to be busy with the Snellen Test Card for a longer time. She even brought the card to the table and practiced with it while she was eating. It was difficult to induce her to go to sleep because she wanted to practice more. She was up in the morning soon after daylight and practiced with her card while she was dressing.

She very soon had her reward, for in less than a week's time she had normal vision with each eye and the squint disappeared never to return.

It was very interesting how she improved her ability to read fine print at the near point. When I asked her, "Do you see those small letters of the diamond type one part bent?" she answered "Yes."

"Do you see the period of the diamond type one part bent?" "Yes, but when I get started I can read it so fast that I do not have time to notice that I am seeing the letters one part bent."

Higher Mental Efficiency

This child accomplished what I have never seen anybody else do. She could read the diamond type with each eye by central fixation so close to her eyes that the page touched her eye lashes. She could read signs further off than any person I ever knew.

With the wonderful improvement in her sight came an increased mental efficiency. Her memory was unusual. She could read perfectly a page of history and because she saw it perfectly she was able to remember it perfectly. As a cor-sequence her scholarship became very good indeed. Formerly she was at the foot of her class, afterwards she was at the head. She astonished her teacher with the quickness of her perceptions, her ability to understand. Formerly when her sight was poor she was a very unhappy, depressed person, later she was full of life and action and seemed to enjoy life to the utmost.

i One day she met one of my patients on the street. "How are you getting along?" she asked. The patient answered gloomily, "Not as well as I would like. How are you?"

"Oh, I am all right. I am cured and I am very glad and happy over it. How much do you practice and how often do you go to see Doctor?"

"Oh, I practice once in a while, half and hour or so a day when I think of it and I call on the Doctor about once a week."

Then Violet exclaimed, "Oh how foolish, that isn't the way I did it. I wanted to get well and I wanted to get well quick and I did just exactly what the Doctor told me to do and the more I practiced the more I improved. I found it was a good thing to do what he said, so I did it.)ij When he told me to remember a period all day long I did it. He told me to do a whole lot of other things and some of them seemed hard, difficult, but when I found I could do them they seemed easier to do and I am glad of it."

When the patient told the of the meeting with Violet he asked me why she improved so much more than he had improved.

I asked him, "Did you follow my instructions as enthusiastically as Violet did? Was there any reason, any real reason why you could not do it?"

"No," he answered, "There was no reason why I should not have practiced as faithfully as Violet but my eyes are so bad that it is difficult for the to do the right thing although you repeatedly had me demonstrate that to do the wrong thing was a strain, an effort and required hard work and made me uncomfortable. When I did the right thing it was easier and I felt more comfortable."

This patient after his meeting and talk with Violet came to the office more frequently, practiced more continuously and made surprising progress. In a few weeks he went back to his former state of mind, and did not do so well. I have always thought if he could have had Violet with him most of the time or could have seen her daily he would have done much better. Most of my patients always do better when they have someone with perfect sight to encourage them by their example or advice.

Better Eyesight

NO one interested in children should fail to read The Story of Violet in this issue. The facts of child vision in America today are startling. In the New York City public schools the percentage of children with imperfect vision, and wearing glasses, is very high. It is customary in many schools for the teachers to send any child with imperfect sight promptly to a doctor to be fitted with glasses. Most such cases are of recent development and can readily be cured by the new opthalmology.

The Better Eyesight League, concerned with this state of affairs not only in New York but throughout the country, will devote its next meeting to its discussion.

The League is essentially an educational medium. It is an agency for the possible dissemination to thousands of parents and teachers of the wonderful information that can bring normal sight to tens of thousands of little sufferers.

Come to the meeting of the League, Tuesday, July 11, Room 504, 300 Madison Avenue, at 8 P. M. And bring with you as many parents and teachers as you can. They will thank you for the opportunity of learning, for the children in their care, what many teachers and parents before them have gratefully learned of the possibilities of normal sight.

Be sure to get the August School Number of Better Eyesight.

THE MEANING OF A LEAGUER

By Ross Varney

President, Better Eyesight League

IT is not a mere empty gesture to become a member of the Better Eyesight League. Those who attended its last meeting, in June, need no reminder of this; it was in the very air that night that the mission of the League is something finer than mere words, and its fulfillment to be realized by the endeavors and enthusiasm of each individual member.

The Secretary's report of work actually begun in relation to persons known to have imperfect sight, to physicians, teachers and industrial plant managers and welfare workers gave a new idea of the scope of our activities to many of those present. So, too, was Dr. Bates' incisive, well-considered message concerning general medical practitioners and the new opthalmology, and the many-angled discussion that followed, instructive to every person there as to actual conditions and methods to pursue in bettering them.

But if this last successful meeting and the other successful ones preceding it have made one fact predominant, it is that the cause of better eyesight rests in our individual hands. We the members of the League, have assumed the work of propagating this tremendous, this health-and-vision-revolutionizing information. Every discussion of ways and means that has arisen has ended finally in dependence on the individual—on the League as the united medium of expression but on the single member as the strength and motive spirit of the League.

The League is concerning itself today with the problem—a most serious problem—of child vision. No worthier cause could occupy the thought and time of any person. It is a problem that can be solved by education only—by education directed by the League and made effective largely through the individual efforts of the members of the League.

To bring about the beginning of an effective educational campaign in this one field alone will make the League a place in the history of rational and social betterment. And it comes down at first again to individual efforts in the League. A pioneer group of teachers already is bringing blessings to many pupils by the use of the new science. More teachers to begin to do this in the public schools are needed now. With every new teacher then put at work the education of a further two becomes more easy. A single teacher, interested by a Leaguer now, will mean a dozen this time next year.

Let every member realize that the League depends upon that member—now, in this matter of school-education-and in every other work that may be undertaken.

HOW CHILDREN HAVE HELPED THEIR PARENTS

By Emily C. Lierman

A little child shall lead them," is sometimes true in matters of health as well as things spiritual. More than one suffering mother has found relief through the guidance of a child, acquainted at the clinic with the new methods of obtaining normal vision.

ONE day a little girl ten years of age came for treatment of her eyes.()Shc was alone and explained that her mother was unable to come. Her name was Mary.

She complained that she had headaches, and the pain in her eyes was so bad that at times she was put to bed for a few days. Her mother told her she was to ask for glasses. The doctor in school ordered her to get them.

At first I found it hard to make her smile. Her head and eyes pained her so much that she found it hard to look pleasant. Then, too, she did not want glasses. They frightened her, she said.

I placed her in a comfortable position and showed her how to palm. After I had treated several patients, I asked Mary to remove her hands from her eyes and, to look up at me. She did so and smiled. That was encouraging. Adults, especially some women I know, imagine that there is something wrong when one smiles. Mary smiled because the palming cured her pain.

Her sight was tested and I found her vision was normal. While she was standing I taught her how to swing her body from side to side, first on one foot, then on the other. I did the swinging motion with her to be sure she was doing it right. At first she complained of dizziness which showed that she was making an effort or trying too hard. When I told her to take it easy and swing more gracefully, the dizziness left her and she became more relaxed and enjoyed it.

"I could keep this up all day," she said. "I like it because all may pain is gone." She was instructed to help till the palming and swinging at home and to come again the next clinic day.

The Mother Next

When Mary came again her mother was with her. The mother was anxious to know what there was about palming and swinging that could cure eye ertain. Was it a faith cure or did we perform a miracle? She said that Mary had suffered for a long time with pain in her eyes which prevented her from attending school regularly. But for the last few days Mary, after school, had played with the children in the street instead of going to bed. She had studied her home work without being told to, after palming her eyes for ten minutes or longer.

The mother was also anxious for me to know what palming had done for her. "At first my husband and I thought Mary was joking," she said. "We did not think that such a simple thing as covering the eyes with the palms of the hands could relieve pain. Ever since my children were born I have suffered with backache and my eyes have been troubling me. Mary suggested that I should try the palming also. My eyes were tested and my backache left me. Now, won't you please tell us about the swing, too?"

I went through the motions with her until she was able to do it. The last time I saw her she told me she was not half so cross with her babies since she learned how to swing her body and see things moving. Palming helped her to read evenings to her husband. Mary does not complain of pain any more, she said. She is more willing to help her mother about the house and never retires until bed time. Relief from strain, relaxation through palming and swinging the body, from side to side, cured this tired mother and Mary.

Anna's Mother

Anna, a very bright girl of twelve years, born of Jewish parents, unconsciously helped her mother at a very critical time, when most expectant mothers worry and suffer, most of them silently and uncomplainingly. Anna was very near sighted and had to have treatment for a long time before her sight improved at all. Her vision a few months ago was 10/70 in both eyes. Now she reads 15/15. Anna obtained a test card to practice with at home. This interested her mother so that she herself practiced palming.

One day the mother came to the clinic with a tiny bundle to her arms. With a smiling face she asked me to please look at her baby boy. So proud she was as she held out her arms for me to see. "I want to tell you," she said, "that palming helped me so much just before my baby was born. I thought of you and Dr. Bates at the time, and it helped me to relax. I am so glad my daughter came to you." This made me very happy because the mother tried the palming of her own accord. Her daughter received benefit, why shouldn't she? A great deal of credit is due her because her own good judgment was all that was necessary. Dr. Bates has records of patients who were benefitted greatly in this way. Some women have told him that palming and imagination of the swing, gave them great relief and freedom from pain during childbirth.

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