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Better Eyesight

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

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The Flashing Cure

Do you read imperfectly? Can you observe then that when you look at the first word, or the first letter, of a sentence you do not see here where you are looking; that you see other words, or other letters, just as well as or better than the one you are looking at? Do you observe also that the harder you try to see the worse you see? Now close your eyes and rest them, remembering some colour, like black or white, that you can remember perfectly. Keep them closed until they feel rested, or until the feeling of strain has been completely relieved. Now open them and look at the first word or letter of a sentence for a fraction of a second. If you have been able to relax, partially or completely, you will have a flash of improved or clear vision, and the area seen best will be smaller.

After opening the eyes for this fraction of a second, close them again quickly, still remembering the colour, and keep them closed until they again feel rested. Then again open them for a fraction of a second. Continue this alternate resting of the eyes and flashing of the letters for a time, and you may soon find that you can keep your eyes open longer than a fraction of a second without losing the improved vision.

If your trouble is with distant instead of near vision, use the same method with distant letters.

In this way you can demonstrate for yourself the fundamental principle of the cure of imperfect sight by treatment without glasses.

If you fail, ask someone with perfect sight to help you.

Hypermetropia

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

THE importance of hypermetropia cannot be overestimate. It is sometimes acquired soon after birth, or it may be manifest at ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years of age. Eighty percent of eye troubles are caused by hypermetropia, while near-sightedness occurs in ten percent. There are only ten percent of normal eyes. These figures are startling. The majority of persons at the age of forty-five or over acquire hypermetropia, and it is of the utmost importance that such cases be carefully studied.

Nearly everyone has the symptoms of hypermetropia. When the sight is good for distant vision, that does not necessarily mean that the sight is also good for reading at a near point of ten or twelve inches. Too often such cases are not treated seriously. Poor sight for reading (hypermetropia) is usually corrected by the use of reading glasses, while vision at all other distances is neglected.

In middle age, serious eye diseases are caused by hypermetropia. Among the most common are glaucoma, cataract, and diseases of the optic nerve and retina. In the early stages of these serious diseases, they are more readily curable than after they become chronic and more serious, because the vision is only slightly affected and the treatment which cures hypermetropia is the treatment which prevents serious eye diseases. Cataract and glaucoma are now being prevented or cured by treatment which cures hypermetropia. It should be emphasized that early treatment of hypermetropia yields quicker, more continuous results than later treatment.

Eye physicians or ophthalmologists have almost universally believed that absolute glaucoma is not curable by any form of treatment. It has been demonstrated that glaucoma is caused by strain—the strain of hypermetropia. When this strain is relieved or corrected, glaucoma usually improves. This treatment is more successful than operation or eye drops. It is only in the last ten years that it was discovered that glaucoma is caused by a strain which produces hypermetropia and that when this strain is relieved the glaucoma improves. I think it is a mistake to condemn this simple method of relieving the hypermetropia, which also relieves glaucoma. The eye strain which produces hypermetropia also produces cataract.

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that in all diseases of the eyes which cause imperfect sight, the eye is under a strain and when this strain is removed all diseases of the eye are benefited. Patients with atrophy of the optic nerve have good sight when eyestrain is not present. For example, a patient came from Austria for treatment of amblyopia which was so advanced that the vision in one eye was only perception of light and in the other eye it was one half of normal. She had consulted many physicians who advised operation for the cure of the total blindness. She was give the hypermetropia treatment daily for about two weeks, at the end of which time the vision was normal in both eyes. Surely if hypermetropia treatment can be so beneficial, more physicians ought to know about it. There have been numerous similar cases.

It can be demonstrated that atrophy of the optic nerve can be caused by the eyestrain of hypermetropia. Palming, swinging, central fixation have always improved the sight temporarily or permanently. It is interesting to prove that such a disease as atrophy of the optic nerve can be benefited by the treatment which relieves hypermetropia.

Patients suffering from squint are benefited by hypermetropia treatment. Patients with hypermetropia not only strain to produce squint with one or both eyes turned in, but they also strain to correct the imperfect sight which is caused by the squint. This fact should be more widely known, because even at this time many physicians believe that the poor sight caused by hypermetropia is incurable.

What is the lowest degree of hypermetropia that can be produced? Is a question that has been asked. The answer is that there is no limit, not only to the low degree of hypermetropia, but there is no limit to the high degrees. In other words, by an effort hypermetropia of thirty diopters or more can be produced and, by treatment, perfect vision can be obtained just as readily. In studying the production of high or low degrees of hypermetropia it is interesting to discover the conclusions of well known ophthalmologies. One prominent doctor was asked this question: Is hypermetropia curable? He replied that it was not curable. He was then asked, "Why do you claim that no one can cure hypermetropia?" He answered, "I know that it cannot be cured because I was unable to succeed and if I cannot succeed no one else can."

Massage of the eyelids has been recommended for the cure of hypermetropia. Another doctor claimed that he was able to cure a majority of the cases of hypermetropia, and that if the patient was not cured by massage, no other doctor in the world could succeed. Other physicians, however, did not believe that massage was a cure for hypermetropia.

Since hypermetropia is so common and produces so many different kinds of eye trouble—imperfect sight, pain, dizziness, and other nervous symptoms to a greater extent than do other errors of refraction—it is well to understand as much as we can of the occurrence, symptoms, prevention, and cure of hypermetropia.

The best methods of preventing hypermetropia are the easy, reading fine print such as diamond type, palming occasionally, and imagining stationary objects to be moving when the eyes move in the same or opposite direction. The last one of these methods is not always easy to practice. Some cases are very obstinate without any known reason. They may try for days, without success, to imagine stationary objects to be moving. The cause of failure I usually due to concentration, staring, looking fixedly at stationary objects, and efforts to try to see.

When success is not attained, hold the finger about six inches from he chin while looking at distant objects and move the head and eyes from side to side, taking care not to look directly at the finger. When this movement of the head and eyes is practiced easily, continuously, the finger appears to move. This method is called the variable swing and most people have no trouble whatever in imagining the finger moving. The length of the movement of the finger is much wider than stationary objects regarded at ten, twenty, or forty feet or farther.

Another cure of failure occurs when the patient turns the head to the right and simultaneously turns the eyes to the left. It is a very painful experience. When one fails to obtain movement of stationary objects with the variable swing, he suffers much pain, dizziness, and other nervous symptoms.

Hypermetropia may be prevented by many other methods. The memory or the imagination of perfect sight prevents hypermetropia in the normal eye. The memory of imperfect sight is very difficult and the memory or imagination of perfect sight is easy.

In the city of Chicago a school teacher developed a method of treating children which prevented hypermetropia from being acquired. She had charge of about fifty one-more children at the age when fatigue is common. As a result, all the teachers in the Chicago school allowed their children to rest for a time at frequent intervals—about every half an hour in two. They were taught relaxation methods, although they were all under ten years of age. It was astonishing to observe how much they could remember, how much they could imagine, and how much their activities were improved with benefit to their eyes. Sometimes the usual exercises in the class room would be stopped and the children would be taught how to palm successfully and while palming to improve their imagination. They were taught to draw pictures which they copied form the blackboard twenty feet away. After some months, the hypermetropia was improved and finally entirely cure.

A school teacher in Long Island was treated by me for compound hypermetropia astigmatism. By the use of relaxation methods the hypermetropia and astigmatism were corrected and the patient obtained normal vision. The hypermetropia was prevented from increasing by curing it. The patient was very much pleased with the results and told the principal of her school that because hypermetropia was curable, it was also preventible. A negative proposition cannot be the truth. Hypermetropia could be prevented when it was found possible to cure it.

A number of teachers became interested and all those wearing glasses for hypermetropia were cured either by palming or swinging or by the memory of fine print. The principal was much pleased and place a Snellen test card in all the cases rooms with directions that it should be read by all the teachers and pupils who were afflicted with hypermetropia. The first patient cured of hypermetropia was to continue the work.

Since she could not treat patients in the class rooms, she decided to treat them outside the school building. She made an arrangement with the teachers who wished treatment that she would teach them how to use their eyes properly and prevent or cure hypermetropia. She made arrangements with them all that after a teacher was cured, she would agree to teach, cure, or prevent some other teacher from acquiring hypermetropia. So much interest was shown by the teachers in this school building that it made an endless chain and a great many teachers and school children were cured of hypermetropia.

For many years, it has been believed that retardation is incurable. It seemed wrong that children, fifteen or sixteen years old and older should be kept in the grades with children ten years old or under. These children did not like to study. Many of them complained of severe headaches and other discomforts. Truancy was common. After retardation was cured by relaxation methods, most of the children started in and worked hard with their studies, with the result that many of them graduated into the rapid advancement classes.

I was told by many principals that imperfect sight was never found in the rapid advancement classes. Nearly all cases of retardation were suffering from hypermetropia. It was demonstrated that patients suffering from imperfect sight from any cause were also suffering from retardation. The teachers who devoted an hour or more every day to the cure of hypermetropia discovered much to their surprise that almost every disease of the eye and nervous system was benefited or cured by treatment which cured hypermetropia.

In one year, 20,000 pupils suffered from pain, headache, loss of memory, imperfect sight from hypermetropia. In one year after, 80 percent of the 20,000 children who were suffering form headaches and other nervous troubles all recovered after the hypermetropia was cured.

Christmas 1928

By Emily A. Bates

AS I began to write my Christmas story, a sense of four comes over me that I might forget to give credit where it is due, or to omit some important detail which helped to make our Christmas party, I think, the best we ever had, I should say "parties," for there were three of them.

One party was held at the office of a doctor here in New York, who specializes in ear, nose, and throat work. This doctor, with his untiring efforts, has saved the lives of many children who were suffering from a stoppage of the throat form diphtheria or some other diseases which affected the larynx and trachea. It doesn't matter what hour it may be, he is always ready to respond to a call at a time when other doctors are asleep. Both he and his nurse deserve only the highest kind of praise for the wonderful work that they are doing. Along with his private practice, he has a host of charity cases; among them are children of the slums, who would not be alive today if it were not for his skill.

The doctor's nurse gives untiringly of her time to the children who need her special care. In her kind, quiet way she explains to some patients how necessary it is to be clean. Most of these patients are little soldiers and never tell the doctor during their treatment whether it hurts or not. He knows and so does the nurse, so after the treatment is over they are usually repaid for their courage with good things to eat.

In the group assembled at our Christmas Festival were children between the ages of six and sixteen. The younger children all believed in Santa Claus and were anxious to know what he had brought for them. Mothers of some of them were present, and they shared in what there was to give.

We were quite certain at the Christmas party that the doctor was the happiest of the group. The large dining table was filled with tempting things to eat, and our Christmas fund provided all of his charges with useful gifts. Each of the boys over ten years of age received the usual necktie. Each of the younger boys received a mechanical toy of some sort, while each of the little girls received a doll; purses were given to the older girls. Boxes of good candy from Loft's, oranges, and apples were provided for all, including the mothers.

One of the poor patients of our own clinic, a woman whose sight was so impaired when she first come to us that she could not make her living, placed an envelope in the hand of our assistant, Miss Hayes, and said: "It is only a little that I have to give, but let me help someone less fortunate than I am, and you and Mrs. Bates will find that someone much better than I can." She made me think of "the widow's mite" and how much it meant to the greatest Teacher this world has ever had. When we opened the envelope we found one a mite, but ten dollars.

This woman had had what is known as compound myopic astigmatism. Her eyes at times were much irritated and the pain she suffered prevented her from doing any sort of work. She came for two years off and on and during the last year was able to earn her living again. When she first came her vision with the test card was 10/70 in the right eye and 10/30 in the left; her vision at the near point was also very poor and she had been obliged to wear glasses when she attempted to do any close work. When we last saw her, her vision had improved to 10/10 in each eye and she was able to read No. 15 on the Fundamental card at eight inches from her eyes. She no longer wore her glasses and she said that the pain from which she suffered had entirely disappeared.

Although I am usually at the office during clinic hours, the Doctor's work keeps me in other parts of our office during clinic time each Saturday morning. Miss Hayes deserves all the credit for the cure of this poor woman, as well as other cases. Not once has she failed us in taking care of her charges and the many cases which have been treated and permanently cured by her are more than grateful.

The poor woman was very happy when she learned that her money was spent to make not only one, but eight unfortunate boys, happier than they had been for a long time. These boys had their first real Christmas party in all the years of their confinement in the Home for Feeble Minded. The one who had charge over these boys was a Bates' student. She came first to Dr. Bates as a patient and after she was cured she studied the method so that she could help others. Fate and good fortune brought her to this Home for the Feeble Minded in Thiells, N. Y., where hundreds of boys and girls and men and women are confined because their minds are not normal. The eight boys who were made happy because of our Christmas fund were between the ages of seventeen and twenty years of age, but their minds were like those of little children at the age of eight years or younger. Time and again those who took care of them left because the strain was too great. Others who were less tender hearted did not handle the boys properly, which did not aid in the improvement of the minds of these poor unfortunates.

For no other reason but to be of good service Miss Anna Wiesesser came to take charge and see what she could do for them. The boys responded quickly under her gentle treatment and care and changed in time from being destructive to being useful and willing to learn. Some of them had a constant desire to steal anything they could lay their hands on when she was not looking, but she did not lose patience with them or threaten them at any time. She mulled their greatest faults and weaknesses and taught them right from wrong.

Although she did not mention to the heads of the institution the method that she was using to improve the minds of her charges, she went about in a quiet way, teaching them relaxation and rest of the mind and body by using the Bates Method. She allowed them to come to her room after their work hours were over and encouraged them to read her test cards, teaching them how to rest their eyes by palming.

They would do anything to hear a fairy story, so while their eyes were closed and covered they sat quietly while she told them simple fairy tales. She taught them the long swing of the body, explaining how well the big elephant could do it and how restful and happy he was because it relaxed him. She explained that relaxation meant that he was on his good behavior when he did the long swing. Even though their simple minds did not grasp everything she told them, they at least understood what good behavior meant.

Miss Wiesesser's mother, one of the good old-fashioned kind one reads about, always had a package for her to take back to the home after her weekend visit with her family and friends. The package usually contained homemade jellies and home-made cake which the mother prepared, arranging everything temptingly for the boys. It was always a joy to the boys to see Miss Wiesesser return to them. When they did wrong, they were denied the good things which she had for them. When they repented and promised to do better next time, they were always to given and given their share of the contents of the package.

She taught them how to make flowers of tissue paper and being an expert herself at making wax flowers, she taught them how to do this also. Some of their work was placed on exhibition for visitors to see when they called at the home. When our Christmas package arrived for them, each boy received a tie as well as candy and oranges. One of the boys sent a letter which he had written all by himself; it was hardly readable, but expressed the gratitude of each one and the letter ended by saying that he was anxious that I should receive his most precious possession, a live "bunny rabbit," as a gift.

At our own Christmas party, which was held at our new offices, there were about eight children altogether. No partiality was shown among the children so the presents that were purchased for the boys were carefully chosen so that each one received a similar gift. The same thing was done in selecting the dollies for the little girls. The men received ties and the women handkerchiefs and purses. Our tree for the clinic family seemed more beautiful than ever; it was lit up with electric lights and placed in the reception room where everyone could enjoy it.

There was one old lady who was especially happy with her gift. She had saved up enough money from her husband's small earnings during the year to buy a much needed winter coat for herself; she had also managed to buy a cheap hat and now with her new purse, she had a complete new outfit. She had been coming to the clinic almost every Saturday for about a year. She had been suffering from cataract in both eyes; her vision was so bad when she first came that she was unable to came alone and had to be brought to the office by her sister-in law. She was very much frightened the first day, because, not knowing very much about the Doctor's work, she thought that he might advise operation as had other doctors whom she had consulted. She was very much relieved when she was told that Dr. Bates did not operate and that he had cured cataract without operation or eye drops. She was ready to devote as much time as necessary to home practice.

She sat in the sun every morning for an hour or longer; she palmed or rested her eyes every hour for ten minutes and practiced the long swing every night and morning. When she first came, her vision was 10/200 in the right eye and 10/100 in the left. She complained of a mist before her eyes, which was becoming worse all the time. Dr. Bates examined her eyes several times during the year and each time found an improvement in their condition. The last time her vision was tested, she could read the line next to the bottom at ten feet (10/15) with either eye and the mist which had troubled her for so long had almost entirely disappeared. It was only when she strained her eyes that it would bother her and after she relaxed her eyes it disappeared. She stopped coming soon after Christmas, before she was entirely cured, but I feel sure that she kept up her practice at home.

Dr. Bates, Miss Hayes, and I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who added to the clinic Christmas fund and helped to make our Christmas parties possible.

Notice

Dr. Bates, as well as the Central Fixation Publishing Company, has been receiving a number of letters recently from people who have been unsuccessfully treated by practitioners who have not taken Dr. Bates' course of instruction and do not understand the Bates Method thoroughly.

Dr. Bates gives a course of instruction to doctors, teachers, nurses, and others who wish to practice his method professionally. At the end of the course the student receives a certificate authorizing him to help others by the Bates Method. Those wishing further particulars may obtain them by writing direct to Dr. Bates at 18 East 48th Street, New York City.

A Suggestion

A great many people who have been benefited by Dr. Bates' book, "Perfect Sight Without Glasses," [link] Mrs. Bates' "Stories from the Clinic," [link] or by "Better Eyesight," [link] order copies of the books or subscriptions to "Better Eyesight" to be sent to some of their friends suffering from imperfect sight. Why not order books or subscriptions for some of your friends as a Christmas gift. We will mail books direct to the recipients, postage prepaid, and enclose your Christmas card.

Questions and Answers

Question—Would the reading of fine print at four inches be helpful?

Answer—The reading of fine print at four inches is usually helpful.

Question—You mention the black period in your book. Must this be any particular size? I only imagine large round black objects like cannon balls, the center of a target, or a moving football. This is restful, but is it beneficial?

Answer—No. Anything that is restful is beneficial.

Question—I have attained normal vision, but after reading for a while, my eyes feel strained. Would you still consider I had normal sight?

Answer—If your eyes feel strained you are not reading with normal vision.

Question—Seeing stationary objects moving appears to me to be merely self-hypnotism. I can't do it.

Answer—When riding in a train the stationary telephone poles appear to move in the opposite direction. Of course this is an illusion, but it is a benefit to the eyes to imagine all stationary objects moving.

Question—Is it possible to cure squint in a child under two years of age by the Bates Method, and what is the treatment employed?

Answer—A child, two years of age or younger, can be treated and cured of squint, with or without imperfect sight, by the Bates Method. The treatment is varied. The swing can be practiced by the mother holding the child in her arms. If the child is able to stand or walk, it is held by the hands and the sway is practiced with the child moving from side to side. Keeping time with music encourages the child to continue the swaying for a longer time.

Improving the memory and imagination of the child is also recommended. The child is encouraged to play with toy animals and is taught the names of the different animals. Usually the animals are placed on the floor in groups and the child is asked to pick up the animals as they are named. As the child reaches for one and then another, the parent may observe whether the child goes directly toward the toy or reaches to either side of it. This method is used in extreme cases of squint where the child does not see perfectly where is looking.

Colored yarns are also used in these cases. The child is taught the names of different colors. An improvement is always noted after such treatment, because the child is constantly shifting his glance from one colored skein of yarn to the other as he selects the one called for. The problem is to educate the eyesight. The more the eyes are used the better.

Palming is beneficial in the cure of squint. If the child is told that it is just a game of peek-a-boo, he immediately becomes interested and enjoys it. Reading a story to the child as he palms is usually beneficial, and improves the squint.

With children three years or older, the pot hook card I used. This is a test card with the letter "E" pointing in various directions. The child tells whether it is pointing up or down, left or right. If a mistake is made, palming is introduced in order to rest the eyes.

Children with squint are usually unruly, disobedient or destructive. When the squint is improved, a change in their conduct is also noted. They become quiet, obedient, and their mental efficiency is improved.

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