

November 1923

Better Eyesight

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

November, 1923

The Book Perfect Sight Without Glasses

A GREAT many people have testified that they were cured by the help that they obtained from the book. A large number I believe have failed to be cured with its help although most people have been able to get some benefit from it.

On the first page is described the Fundamental Principle [link]. This should interest most people because if you can follow the directions recommended you will most certainly be cured of imperfect sight from various causes. If you have a serious injury to the eye which destroys some of its essential parts you will find it impossible to carry out the directions. At the bottom of the page is printed: "If you fail ask some one with perfect sight to help you."

It is an interesting fact that only people with perfect sight without glasses can demonstrate the Fundamental Principle. You will read that with your eyes closed you should rest them, which is not possible if you remember things imperfectly. The book recommends that you remember some color that you can remember perfectly because it has been demonstrated that the normal eye is always at rest when it has normal sight. A perfect memory means perfect rest. Should you have perfect rest you have perfect sight. Most people can demonstrate that they can remember some letter or other object or some color better with their eyes closed than with their eyes open. By practice some people become able to remember, imagine and see mental pictures as well with their eyes open as they can with their eyes closed. Then they are cured.

The Treatment of Myopia

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

MYOPIA or nearsightedness is usually acquired by school children and others at about the age of twelve, a period when the nervous system is naturally undergoing a change.

One can demonstrate that when the normal eye stares at one part of a letter of the Snellen Test Card continuously at twenty feet that it is a difficult thing to do; the eye tends to wander; and, to keep the eye fixed on one point requires an effort, a strain which lowers the vision and produces a temporary myopia. In all cases of myopia a stare or strain or effort to see at the distance can be demonstrated. When the vision is normal, as it may be for diamond type at six inches or further, one reads easily, readily, rapidly, without any effort or strain whatever. It can always be demonstrated that the white spaces between the lines, between the words or letters are whiter than the margin of the card. By covering over the black letters the white spaces between the lines are seen to have the same whiteness as the rest of the card or when one sees the white spaces between the lines whiter than the margin of the card one sees an illusion. An illusion is never seen, it is always imagined. We call the white spaces between the lines when whiter than they really are, Halos, which are really never seen but only imagined. The imagination of the Halos, however, may be so vivid that it is difficult for many people to realize the facts. It is most important that the patient should understand that the Halos are never seen, they are always imagined.

A great many cases of myopia have been cured by demonstrating this fact. All that was necessary to bring about a cure was to encourage the patient to imagine the Halos which is more easily done than to see the letters.

Patients who are nearsighted, when they regard the letters of the Snellen Test Card, see the black letters a shade of gray. When their attention is called to this fact they realize that they are imagining an illusion which lowers the vision and favors the increase of myopia. In some rare instances these facts have been understood by a few patients, who said to themselves: "I do not see these gray letters, I only imagine them gray. As a matter of fact it is easier for me to imagine the letters black than it is to imagine them gray." Then they went ahead and did it and were soon cured.

NO GLASSES

A person who has been wearing glasses to improve the sight of myopia and has worn these glasses for a number of years is quite dependent upon them. When the glasses are removed, the vision is much less than normal and it is a curious fact that the vision without glasses does not depend directly upon the amount of myopia. A person with two diopters of myopia may have just as poor vision without glasses as one who has six or more. When a myopic patient lays aside the glasses entirely for two weeks, when the vision is again tested it is often much improved. The facts demonstrate that wearing glasses always lowers the visual acuity much below what it is when the glasses are not worn at all. It is a matter of common knowledge that when the glasses are first worn that the patient does not always obtain a maximum amount of relief. Some eye doctors when asked to explain matters sometimes tell their patients that their eyes have to become adjusted to the glasses. It is not always easy to explain things satisfactorily, especially when some fault-finding patients complain that what they wanted was glasses to help their eyes and that they hardly expected to be called upon to adjust their eyes to fit the glasses.

When any progress is made in improving the vision of myopia, the wearing of glasses, even for emergencies, usually causes a relapse with loss of all the benefit gained by treatment. The use of opera glasses should be forbidden.

PALMING

One of the best methods of improving the sight of myopia is to cover the closed eyelids with one or both hands in such a way as to avoid pressure on the eyeballs. This is called palming. The patient is directed to rest his eyes and to forget them as much as possible by thinking of other things. When properly done the patient sees nothing but darkness or black. It is a failure when one sees red, blue, green, white or any other color. In such cases palming does not succeed in helping the sight. There are many cases in which palming may lower the vision and so one must keep in mind the fact that it can be done right or it can be done wrong. The length of time necessary to palm to obtain maximum results varies with individuals. Most persons can obtain improvement in fifteen minutes while others require a longer time, a half hour, an hour or even two or more hours of continuous palming to obtain any benefit. With improvement in the vision it usually follows that a shorter period of palming may obtain maximum results. The environment of the patient is an important factor to consider. When a patient is palming it is well to avoid all conversation or the presence of a quantity of people. Some patients like to be read to or they enjoy conversation with their friends. These cases seldom obtain any material benefit to their sight from palming. The improved vision obtained by palming is seldom perfect. Other measures usually have to be employed to insure a lasting benefit.

BLINKING

The normal eye when it has normal sight, blinks quite frequently. By blinking is meant closing the eyelids and opening them so quickly that neither the patient nor his observers notice the fact. The moving pictures have shown that in some cases the eyes were closed and opened five times in one second. This is done unconsciously and is rather more than I can do consciously. Blinking is necessary in order to maintain normal vision continuously, because if one consciously prevents blinking the vision for distance or the ability to read fine print are modified. It is interesting to me how blinking, which is so necessary for good vision, has been so universally ignored by the writers of books on diseases of the eyes. Blinking is a rest, it prevents fatigue, and very important, it improves the sight in myopia, and helps to maintain good vision more continuously.

SWINGING

It has been my custom after a nearsighted patient has palmed for half an hour or longer, to have the patient stand with the feet about twelve inches apart and sway the body from side to side, looking alternately at each side of the room without paying any particular attention to objects in front of him. By a little practice, patients become able to imagine all distant objects not regarded, to be moving from side to side in the opposite direction to the movement of the eyes. When the eyes move a foot or more from one side of a letter to the other side, the letter appears to move in the opposite direction, very nearly to the same extent. This movement of the letter or object is an illusion; and being an illusion, it is not seen but only imagined. A swing of an inch or more might be called the long swing, while a swing of a lesser degree might be called the short swing. When the long swing is practiced properly simultaneous retinoscopy indicates that the eyes are normal. When the short swing is practiced properly a greater improvement in vision usually follows, but the short swing stops from slight causes and the vision is then lowered. The short swing and long swing remembered with the eyes closed and remembered just as well with the eyes open, is a cure of myopia in many cases.

MEMORY

With the eyes closed, one may remember a small black period equally well as with the eyes open, while regarding the Snellen Test Card. When the period can be remembered perfectly at all times and in all places, the myopia is permanently cured.

Some people have difficulty in remembering a black period. They can, however, remember white, red, yellow, or some other color as well when regarding the Snellen Test Card or other objects with their eyes open, as they can with their eyes closed. After treating a girl aged fourteen suffering from a high degree of myopia, concave 15, she unexpectedly became able to remember white very well indeed. One day she announced that she was cured, after nine months of treatment. I tested her vision and found it normal for a familiar card. I then tried her with an unfamiliar card which she also read with normal sight. I asked her the question, "Explain the facts." She answered with one word: "Starch," meaning that the memory of the whiteness of starch with her eyes open as well as she could remember it with her eyes closed, had brought about a cure.

The memory of black and the memory of white seem to be more popular with patients than the memory of other colors.

IMAGINATION

The imagination has accomplished more in the cure of myopia than some other methods. Many people can imagine they see with their eyes open a known letter while looking at a blank wall as well as they can with their eyes closed; but when they regard the Snellen Test Card their ability to imagine that they see a known letter when regarding it, is not so good. Alternately imagining the known letter with the eyes open and accomplishing it better with the eyes closed, has been followed by a great benefit. I have never seen patients with considerable myopia imagine an end letter of each line of the Snellen Test Card with a little practice as well with their eyes open as with their eyes closed. Beginning with the large letters and gradually working down to the smallest letters they obtain normal vision entirely with the help of their imagination.

PREVENTION

The prevention of myopia in school children is very desirable. I recommend my published method because it always improves the vision of school children which means that automatically myopia is prevented.

The Snellen Test Card should be placed on the wall of the class room where all the children can see it from their seats. Once a day the chart should be read as well as possible with each eye, by the children from their seats. Every family interested in the good sight of their children should possess a Snellen Test Card to be read by each child at least once daily. Many adults acquire myopia. As a matter of safety and a benefit to the eyes the adults should read the card at twenty feet with each eye. They usually obtain not only benefit to the eyes but also an increased mental and physical efficiency. Some teachers have told me that palming for a few minutes occasionally during the day is followed by relaxation of the children's nerves which is of great capital value in preserving the health of the children. Each teacher should use the Snellen Test Card in her class room more or less frequently every day.

Stories from the Clinic

45: THE STORY OF ROSE

By Emily C. Lierman

ROSE, aged 13, is the sister of Lillian whose case was reported in the October issue of Better Eyesight [link]. While I was treating Lillian, Rose was present and listened attentively to everything that was said. Rose had convergent squint of the left eye and when she became excited or tried to see at the distance, her left eye would turn in so that only the sclera or white part of her left eye was visible. At the age of three, it was noticed that her left eye turned in, and when she was four years old, glasses were prescribed for her. I tested her sight with the test card and with both eyes she read 10/100. Then I told her to palm her eyes and to remember the last letter she saw on the test card. She kept her eyes closed for at least a half hour and when she again read the card her vision had improved to 10/20. Then I tested each eye separately. She read 10/20 with the right eye; and 10/40 with the left.

I thought the improvement in the vision of her eyes was wonderful and Rose was delighted with the results of her first treatment. Her sister Lillian was thrilled as she saw that left eye straighten as the vision improved. She came to me with Lillian once every week for treatment and carried out to the letter, everything I told her to do at home.

She was directed to wear a cloth patch over her good eye all day long and to do her usual duties for her mother as well as she could, with her squint eye. What a faithful child she was, and how she did hate that patch. I asked her every time she came how she got along with it. "Well, Mrs. Lierman," she said, "I don't like that black patch at all. I want to take it off many times every day. I don't like to have my good eye covered, but I know I must wear it if I want to be cured; and I do want to, so I just think of you and how much better my eye looks and then I don't mind a bit"

On her second visit her left eye improved to 10/20 and her right eye became normal, 10/10. Never did I have a more enthusiastic patient. On her third visit she gave me a package sent by her mother, who tried in her kind way to show her gratitude to me. The package contained delicious homemade sweet butter, my favorite dish. Rose continued her visits and in two months her sight became normal, and her eyes were perfectly straight continuously. She practiced faithfully and the result was that, one week before school started, she was able to remove the patch permanently, without any return of the squint.

Her first day at school was very exciting to her. She said her teacher did not recognize her, but when she smiled the teacher could not mistake her then. When Rose smiles you cannot help but know and love her. Her Aunt says a miracle was performed.

She had no trouble in reading the blackboard from the last seat of her classroom, where she asked to be placed, and she sees the book type much clearer than she ever did. Rose had been going to school for a week or so, when her teacher noticed that a pupil, aged 12, could not read the blackboard from the front seat where she was sitting. The teacher told her to have her eyes examined by an eye doctor and to be fitted for glasses. Rose heard the conversation and promptly met her school mate at the school door. Rose told her how she had been cured without glasses and that she would be willing to show her how to be cured also. The next day at recess instead of joining the class out-doors for exercise, Rose and her school mate went back to the class room and with the aid of a Snellen Test Card, which Rose had taken with her that day to school, she improved the sight of the little girl from 12/70 to 12/15, by palming, blinking and swinging. Every day the two little girls worked faithfully with great success and after less than a week, both children occupied rear seats in the back part of the room where they were able to read the writing on the blackboard without difficulty.

Seeing Without Glasses

By Caroline Guignard

THERE are doubtless many men and women who have worn glasses for twelve or fifteen years, suffering annoyance and discomfort through imperfection of the substitute for normal eyesight, who feel that it would be discouraging to become personally interested in a method employed for the improvement of the eyesight of those who have used glasses a short time only or not at all. As I was one of these, but am not one of them now, I feel that I must say a word which may cause someone to read the book, "PERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES," [link] who might not otherwise do so.

After reading the book, I put aside my distance glasses and began palming. At the end of three days I could look at an unshaded lamp without pain, and at my fingers at a distance of six inches without pain or nausea, although I saw them very badly. I could see the hands of a watch and approximate the time without glasses. I then put away all glasses, including those I wore all the time for distance; those for reading, bi-focals; for painting, and the hand glass.

I think that I began reading a little at the end of three months familiar things in clear type, "Alice Through the Looking-Glass," "Æsop's Fables" and Kipling's verse, palming before each paragraph or often with each one.

Now at the end of eight months I read anything within reason in a good light, even a little diamond type, two or three chapters at a time of a Bible in pearl, which would be pleasanter if it were not yellowed with age. I can thread a fine needle with 150 thread in a good light. Instead of pain my eyes feel better after using them.

For a time I think it is necessary to carry around with one the improvement of one's eyesight as an inveterate knitter carries her knitting, and a little of it always could only be a pleasure, to remind one of one's good fortune.

I palm six half-hours or longer daily. I did not at first discover that a half hour of palming the last thing at night left the vision clear the following morning.

The gesture with eyes closed of looking over one shoulder as far as possible, then over the other shoulder as far as possible, can be done for an instant or longer at almost any time.

I find a watch very useful. The one I am using has a white face one inch in diameter and the hands and figures are black. The diameter of the circle of the second hand is three-sixteenths of an inch. I glanced at the watch a great many times through the day and night as well as whenever I was awake. Almost immediately I could see which was the hour and which the minute hand and gradually began to read the figures, which slowly changed from gray to black. Now I read clearly the figures within the circle of the second hand.

Dealing cards rapidly and arranging the hands without trying to see the different cards helped me. Also reading at a glance the black and white numbers on automobiles and the black and white sign boards of filling stations and wholesale districts.

Recently I was ten days in an automobile seeing the mountains of North Carolina. Not having the "Snellen Test Card" with me, I found that reading it in my imagination at night, persisting until the figures became quite black and the card white, relaxed my eyes, as also did the swinging of the small o and period, recommended by Charlotte Robinson in the May magazine. After ten days of rapidly moving trees by the roadside my eyes were improved.

My eyes are not yet perfect, but they are infinitely more satisfactory than they were with glasses.

A Doctor's Story
By H. W. Woodward, M.D.

ABOUT two years ago I visited New York for the purpose of investigating the claims made by Dr. Bates relative to the cure of refractive errors and the restoration of diseased eyes without the use of glasses.

I visited his clinic at Harlem Hospital. Here I found most unusual methods practiced by the doctor and Mrs. Lierman in the treatment of disorders of the eye. I was surprised at the cheerfulness of the patients, particularly the children.

The doctor invited me to call at his office. I did so, and again I found his methods so different from the usual oculist that I was interested at once in finding out how he did his work. The first thing that impressed me was seeing so many patients working in his waiting room. They seemed to be engaged in steadfastly regarding the letters of test cards placed upon the wall.

After I had seen the doctor treat several patients he turned to me and inquired about the condition of my own eyes. I replied that I had reached the age where most people require glasses for reading, but was just beginning to be annoyed by a blurring of vision when I consulted a telephone directory in a dimly lighted room. I knew that this symptom means in the almost universal experience of mankind, glasses, and more glasses, until one becomes dependent upon them. While I was contemplating this prospect. Dr. Bates explained to me that he had been through this experience, having had to wear quite strong lens for reading and that he had cured himself.

He handed me one of his professional cards. On the back of this card was printed in small diamond type seven paragraphs stating seven fundamentals of perfect sight. He requested me to hold this card about six inches from my eyes, then close my eyes and form in my imagination or memory a small letter "o" and to see it in my mind, very black with a white center. After doing this for a few seconds I was to open my eyes and look at the letters on the card. I did this, and to my surprise upon opening my eyes, the letters were jet black and remarkably distinct; but for only a moment did this clear vision last. The letters soon faded away into a blur.

This experience of getting a flash of clear vision, though evanescent in character, was encouraging to me, because it suggested the possibility of conquering this tendency to blurring. In other words, if I could learn to sustain this primary normal position that my eyes relaxed into just before opening them, I would certainly achieve perfect vision. Dr. Bates instructed me to practice what I had just done twice a day. I did as he advised. At first I could not hold this flash of clear vision more than a second or two. It was too subtle. I could not get a hold on it. I continued, however, practicing night and morning for several weeks with but slight improvement. At last, however, I became able to sustain the clear vision for about thirty seconds; but if I would wink my eyes while seeing clearly, my vision would fade into a blur. In time my patience was rewarded by more improvement, for now I am often able to read the whole card without a blur.

Dr. Bates deserves much credit for the pioneer work which he is doing and for the way he keeps on doing it in spite of the hostile criticism continually directed toward him. To know him is a privilege and I am thankful to have had this experience.

Minutes of the Better Eyesight League
SEPTEMBER MEETING

ON the evening of the eleventh Dr. J. M. Watters, an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist from Newark, addressed the meeting. It was an extremely impressive talk, for Dr. Watters brought with him a long and interesting list of cases for whom he had effected cures by Dr. Bates' method. He stated that when he first started this work the results actually astonished him. Eyes responded to the new treatment better than he had anticipated or dared to hope.

The histories included both old and young, men and women, with apparently all the different kinds of eye maladies. Myopia, hypermetropia, astigmatism, presbyopia and glaucoma all yielded to the eye exercises. A gentleman of 74 with cataract in both eyes, a young man who was hit in the eye with a golf ball who developed a detached retina, a patient with ruptured iris—these likewise were cured by learning and practicing the method.

Dr. Watters said that he believes best results are obtained if people practice when they feel like it. If they can enjoy it and if the exercises produce no feeling of nervousness, then the work is progressing along the right lines. There is no way of hurrying a cure and a patient must be willing to accept gradual improvement if it seems to come that way.

Dr. Bates himself gave a most valuable demonstration of the long swing. He recommended it as a help in other troubles besides eye ailments, since if done properly it produces relaxation and lack of tension throughout the whole body.

Dr. Watters announced his eye clinic at 2 Lombardy Street, Newark, on Monday and Friday evenings from 7 to 8. He invited the members of the League to send anyone in need of help.

OCTOBER MEETING

PERHAPS no speaker has brought greater encouragement to those endeavoring to gain better eyesight than Miss Florian Shepard, of Orange, N. J. who spoke to our League on October ninth. The special significance of her cure lies in the fact that it has been one of the unusually slow ones. Miss Shepard told the history of her case and related the gradual steps in her progress. At first nothing seemed to work. Palming, swinging, everything produced strain instead of relaxation. It was only by long perseverance that she was able to arrive at any real success. Again and again Miss Shepard spoke of the marvelous patience and understanding with which Dr. Bates helped her find a way out of all her difficulties. Her testimony proves that Dr. Bates can succeed not only with easy cases but also with hard and unresponsive ones.

Miss Shepard spoke of the trick of timing the swing with the thumb and finger, and Dr. Bates later discussed this point. Attention was called to the fact that the September magazine had an article on the subject.

At Dr. Bates' request Miss Mildred Shepard gave a short account of her cure. The most interesting part of all was perhaps the fact that since her eyes have become normal she is much less tense and consequently less nervous in all phases of her life. She spoke of herself as having become "happy-go-lucky."

LEAGUE BUSINESS

Miss May Secor, of 521 West 122nd Street, has been elected corresponding secretary.

The League has voted to amend the constitution to make the dues \$1 a year instead of \$3. The subscription to the magazine will not be included. Anyone wishing to join the League now will have paid up to January, 1925.

Of Special Interest
Throw Away Your Glasses

DOCTOR BATES' article in the September issue of Hearst's International Magazine [link] awakened more interest in his method of treatment than any previous writings. Hundreds of letters were relayed from Norman Hapgood, Editor, to Dr. Bates and contained congratulations, inquiries and appointments for treatment. A special notice of this article was placed in the New York Times by the editor of Hearst's.

In view of this fact we have had reprints made of the article and will fill orders immediately upon receipt.

The title is THROW AWAY YOUR GLASSES, and it explains how this can be accomplished. Everyone interested in curing their own sight will be enlightened on many points by reading this reprint.

Don't wait until the initial supply is exhausted before placing your order. Price 35c.

Are You Nearsighted—Farsighted—Astigmatic?
Have You Cataract—Glaucoma?

Then send for the number of the BETTER EYESIGHT MAGAZINE which deals with each of these defects individually. Dr. Bates explains the cause of each and how it can be cured by his treatment. These instructions can be followed by the layman.

ALL BACK NUMBERS 30c.

Bound Better Eyesight July, 1922—June, 1923—Price \$4.25

Bound in leather the same color as the book, and both together make an attractive set. This volume contains many helpful suggestions and instructions for the use of the various swings, shifting and palming. Progressive myopia, astigmatism and other defects are treated and their cause and cure explained. The cure of eye defects in children is described in various parts of the book.

The Question Mark
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question—What is the cause of cataract?
Answer—Eyestrain is the cause of cataract, but some times cataract is produced from an injury such as a blow of some kind.
Question—Is a hemorrhage on the outside of the eyeball fatal?
Answer—Rarely.
Question—Can insomnia be cured by the method of palming ?
Answer—Yes.
Question—Can a patient while under treatment wear eye glasses?
Answer—No, this prevents a cure.
Question—Can I overdo the swing?
Answer—No, not if it is done in the right way.
Question—Does sunlight injure the eyes of children?
Answer—No.
Question—Does wearing dark glasses injure the eyes?
Answer—Yes.

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