March 1923

Better Eyesight

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

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THE MEMORY SWING

THE memory swing relieves strain and tension as well as does the long or the short swing which has been described at various times. It is done with the eyes closed while one imagines looking over first the right shoulder then over the left shoulder when the eyeballs may be seen through the closed eyelids to move from side to side. When done properly it is just as efficient as the swing which is practiced with the eyes open whether short or long. The memory swing can be shortened by remembering the swing of a small letter, a quarter of an inch or less when the eyes are closed. The memory swing has given relief in many cases of imperfect sight from myopia, astigmatism and inflammations of the outside of the eyeball as well as inflammations of the inside of the eyeball. One advantage is the fact that it can be done without attracting the attention or making one more or less conspicuous to others. It is much easier than the swing practiced with the eyes open and secures a greater amount of relaxation or rest than any other swing. It may be done wrong just as any swing may be done wrong. When done right one does not imagine things are moving necessarily. All that is important is to move the eyes from side to side as far as possible or as far as one can move them when the eyes are open.

Rest

By W. H. Bates, M. D.

THE normal eye when it has normal sight is at REST. When the normal eye has imperfect sight it is not at rest. When the diseased eye is at rest it has normal sight. When the diseased eye is not at rest the sight is imperfect. There are no exceptions to these statements. In the treatment of imperfect sight without glasses it is very important that we should understand as clearly as possible what is meant by REST. The normal eye is at REST when the sight is normal or when the individual remembers or imagines normal sight. All persons with high degrees of nearsightedness have moments when the eye is normal and when the vision is normal but these moments are so short that there is not time enough to be always conscious of the normal vision.

I have a patient with myopia of 40 D measured with the retinoscope. When the patient looks at a blank wall where there is nothing much to see and does not try to see, the retinoscope demonstrates moments of longer or shorter duration when the eye is normal but just as soon as the patient plans to read the Snellen test card or to see ordinary objects the retinoscope always demonstrates this high degree of myopia.

It can always be demonstrated that when the normal eye looks intently at one point the vision always becomes imperfect. The normal eye, with normal sight does not stare and to avoid the stare is continuously moving. When it moves from side to side the letter regarded appears to move in the opposite directions but usually the movement is so short, so slow, so easy that most people do not notice it. The eye with imperfect. sight does not usually see things moving because it is usually staring. The eye with imperfect sight can be benefited by practicing seeing things moving. This can be done properly, successfully or it can be done wrong, without benefit. When done properly the eye is at rest, when done improperly the eye is under a strain and this strain can usually be felt by the patient when his attention is called to it. It is a great help to the cure of imperfect sight to have the patient demonstrate what is wrong. When you know what is the matter with you that makes it possible to bring about relief. In my book I describe many methods for the improvement of the vision. None of them are a benefit unless the patient by practicing them obtains rest. One can practice the swing and make the sight worse; one can close the eyes and strain them terribly. Many people are unable to rest their eyes by palming, the more they palm the more they strain. It is a very difficult matter to convince some people that to have a strain is a bad thing, that perfect sight can only come when the eye is at rest. Perfect sight comes to the eye when nothing is done; therefore when you do anything you are always doing something wrong. Perfect sight is passive. We do not see, things are seen and when things are seen with maximum vision no effort whatever is made. The eye is constantly at REST. No work is being done and the longer one uses the eye with perfect sight the more continuously is the eye at REST. Not only is the eye at REST but every nerve of the body is at REST. The body is at REST. With constant use of the eyes with perfect sight no work is done, no fatigue is felt and one feels perfectly comfortable because the eyes are perfectly at REST.

The eye when it is at rest is very sensitive. It does not require much of an effort to destroy to a greater or less degree the feeling of perfect REST. If the mind remembers things perfectly the eye is at rest. When the mind remembers or imagines things imperfectly the sight is disturbed because the eye is not at REST with the memory of imperfect sight. With the eye at REST the imagination of things seen or remembered is perfect but when the imagination of things seen or remembered is imperfect the eye is not at REST and the sight is imperfect.

It should be emphasized that when one practices any method in which the vision is improved that it is necessary that rest be secured to the eye and mind or else the vision is not improved. Nearsighted patients who have good vision at the near point can improve their sight for the distance very frequently by alternately reading the fine print with perfect sight close to their eyes and regard the letters on the distant Snellen test card in flashes. Reading fine print with normal sight is a rest and if one can flash the distant card without effort or strain the vision is improved as rest is maintained. However, it is possible to fail when practicing this method by doing something which prevents rest of the eyes. It is an interesting fact that when the eye is at rest one can flash letters on the Snellen test card for a short fraction of a second without interfering with the rest or relaxation of the eye.

I shall never forget the experiences that I have had with a few patients whose sight was imperfect for the distance and who were unable to read a newspaper. They were unusual in this respect that they were cured very promptly of their imperfect sight by closing their eyes and resting for a half an hour. Their vision was normal as soon as they opened their eyes and looked at the Snellen test card; they were able to read diamond type without difficulty from six to eighteen inches; the benefit was permanent. They did what very few people accomplish: they were able to obtain perfect rest by just closing their eyes.

Stories From the Clinic

By Emily C. Lierman

PROGRESSIVE MYOPIA

BEFORE I begin my story, I wish to apologize for making so many explanations throughout the article. I thought it best to do so for the benefit of those who may have the same difficulty that this poor girl had.

A girl, 23 years of age, came to us in a very pitiable state. Her trouble was progressive myopia and one of the worst cases I have ever seen. The glasses she wore were so thick that her eyes seemed like very small miniature eyes when looking at her. Our book, PERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES, has become quite popular in Philadelphia, Pa., where her home is and it was through a friend who has the book, that she heard of Dr. Bates. She is her mother's only support which made it very hard for her to leave a good position as typist and come to our big city to see Dr. Bates, whom she was sure could cure her eyes when others had failed. Being poor, she could not afford to come to his office for treatment, so she came to the Clinic. The clerk at the desk informed her that she could not have treatment there because she did not live in the district of the hospital. She was admitted that day, however, for just one treatment and to have the privilege of an examination by Dr. Bates. After Doctor had examined her eyes he asked me privately what on earth could be done with her in order that we could treat her there. When a severe case like this comes to us I long for a Bates Institute or something like that. My friends, some of whom were cured by Dr. Bates have been very liberal in their support financially but so far there is not enough funds to start an institution. I asked the girl if she could establish a residence near the Clinic so that we could treat her. She said she would try. Dr. Bates then examined her eyes and said her only trouble was progressive myopia. With her glasses off she could not count my fingers at two feet from her eyes. She could see the two hundred line letter, the largest letter on the test card at the same distance but no further. I improved her vision that day to 3-100 which was double what she had before. Her case required more time than I could give her, so she was instructed to palm her eyes for long intervals all through the day in her room and also in the evening and to come again just as soon as she could. She was told never to wear her glasses again. What a shock this was to her. How could she possibly get through the streets without them, she said. I told her I could not undertake the task of trying to improve her vision unless she did so. How well I knew the hardships she would go through and I was so sorry, but I had to be firm to succeed. As she left the room I could see how helpless she was; but before she reached the end of the corridor, on went her glasses again. She had lost her courage but I did not lose faith in her. Any girl who would leave her mother, home and position to have her eyes cured would not give up altogether, even though she was tempted to put on her glasses again. Two days later she returned and displayed her admittance card, showing that she was living in that district. She was anxious for me to know that she obtained a position as an attendant where she also had a home. Then, she also wished me to know that her glasses were broken. This was the best thing that could have happened because I knew she would try all the more to be cured.

I placed the test card three feet from her eyes and all she could see was the 200 line letter. The short swing and blinking helped her and in ten minutes her vision improved to 3-100, the same as on her first visit She comes every Clinic day and is always there ahead of time. Her progress was slow but sure and her face which looked all the world like a stone image with slits for eyes, has now a natural appearance. She now reads 4-10 with both eyes and I am working diligently with her so that she can go back to her position and to an anxious loving mother.

She is now enjoying the movies for the first time in her life. Her sight was failing her with glasses on so she never attempted to indulge in such luxuries. She has now been under treatment two months, which seems a long time to her. She is happy because she can go along the streets and other places without fear of an accident. At a recent visit she flashed letters on the 10 line of the test card at 10 feet.

A short time ago she asked me if I go to church. The question was so unexpected. I told her I did go to church and that I was proud of the fact. I consider the Clinic my church also. Hundreds of poor souls enter our room them, just crieving for a kind word or two. The Jews stand alongside of the colored folks, the Germans with the Irish. We also meet the Spanish and Italians in small numbers. Some are Catholic, others are Protestant and many other kinds of religions, but the one God is worshipped by them all. A kind word and a smile is necessary for us all and so we give it to them in abundance. The Jewish girl apologized for asking me that question. She had noticed that the kindly feeling which existed in most churches also prevailed in our Clinic.

A New Outlook

By Mildred Shephard

IF ONLY I had known of Dr. Bates' work while I was still in school! If only I had known how to use my eyes better without glasses than with them; how to go to sleep on my back, swinging the little black "9" on my thumb nail; how to read fine print so that it would be a rest and not a strain; and how to enjoy life generally.

Looking back over the last eight or nine years, I find the remembrance of a headache, long continued days and weeks. All this time I was wearing glasses and receiving treatment from the best oculists I knew, but with no help to the headaches or to my sight, which became worse and worse. There seemed to be no cause for the headaches, and no relief except for part of a day following several consecutive nights of from ten to twelve hours' sleep. Shopping or trips to town were concluded by the always-to-be-expected extra heavy headache.

But now everything is different. One year ago last September Doctor Bates told me to take off the glasses that I had worn for fifteen years. It was hard for the first month or two,—dreadfully hard. But the glasses were never put on again.. Instead, I have been palming and swinging and shifting and flashing and imagining and remembering until now I have learned, in part, how to get better use of my eyes without glasses than I could with them. Now I am looking forward, and in fact, have begun to rerefully read all those books that were put aside as being a "strain on my eyes," before I knew how.

Little by little the old "weste feeling" in my head melted away, and now a headache is a rare thing. A few hours of restful sleep now take the place of the long hours required before I know how to go off to sleep on my back, swinging the little black "9" on my thumb nail—a trick which I wouldn't part with. My sight has improved from 10-70 to 10-15, while I see 10-10 temporarily, which means that I will be able to keep it (normal sight) before long, I hope.

That is my one great ambition now, to be "plumb cured," so that I may go on helping other people to cure themselves. One of my friends cured herself with my help, and several, others are on the way.

I say, "If only I had known of Doctor Bates and his work while I was still in school"; I might better say, "How glad I am that I know about them now!"

MILDRED SHEPHARD.

Crumbs for Bates

By James Hopper

MY trouble is eye strain. When I first went to Doctor Bates he told me that eye strain came nearly always of mind strain. I did not believe him. The theory seemed mystic to me, and displeasing to one asking for very tangible, physical causes.

A short time later, though, I discovered that the Doctor was right. I discovered this in a way which some will find amusing and others tragic.

In those days, every afternoon I took a walk up Fifth Avenue, and walking Fifth Avenue would practice some of the doctor's diabolisms—such as swinging the signs and conjuting black points, I soon found that, on some days these queer exercises worked perfectly—and that on other days, they wouldn't. There were days when to the exercises my eyes relaxed deliciously and lost all strain, and then I walked on air. But there were days when, to the best of my efforts the eye strain remained stubborn.

After a long search I finally found the reason for these discrepancies.

I discovered that the days when my eye strain was stubborn and refused to yield were exactly the same days on which, in the morning mail, I had found several big bills. And the days when the swing and the black dot so easily got the best of the eye strain were the days when, in the mail, no bills whatsoever had come.

I have not as yet discovered any absolute remedy for this state of affairs. But I will now go on to another example of mind strain causing eye strain; one which is more pleasing is that I have in this case discovered an efficient and simple remedy, which I can recommend to all.

At the same period of my life when I walked every afternoon up Fifth Avenue, I dined every night in a certain restaurant, in Greenwich Village. This restaurant had no small individual tables, but only long tables. So you eat with friends, or acquaintances, or with people who were neither.

I soon found that, dining at this restaurant, some nights my eyes were altogether relaxed and free from strain while on other nights, they strained badly, spite of all I could do. For some time I thought this was a matter of the lights.

But long and close observation finally convinced me that the lighting had nothing to do with it. And finally I discovered the real reason.

It was this. When I sat with people whom I liked, and who amused me—who listened to my stories and laughed at them and did not tell too many of their own—my eyes remained nicely relaxed; I had no strain. But when I sat with bores—with people who insisted in doing all the talking and never giving me a chance,—then my eyes began to strain and continued to strain.

But I found a remedy. It's crumbs.

Almost at any table where you eat, if you will look close enough you will find on the cloth—or the linoleum—a crumb. It may be a small one—but the smaller the better.

I find such a crumb. I look at the right of it and see it better than the other side; I look at the left side of it and see it better than the right side. I practice on the crumb central fixation. I get it a-swinging—a short, slow swing. And feel my eyes relax, the strain leaving as if by magic.

Meanwhile the bores talk on; I let them talk. I sit there happy and at ease; I seem to be listening profoundly; they are tickled to death with themselves. But I am not listening; I am swinging my crumb. Swinging it, swinging it, and feeling my eyes, my whole being, deliciously distend.

I use this now not only at that restaurant but everywhere I go. And I go to many places now, for I have become extremely popular as a dinner guest. I am such a good listener, you see. I listen so quietly, with such profound and flattering attention.

Well, I don't. I swing crumbs.

Minutes of The Better Eyesight League

Minnie E. Marvin

OUR meetings of the Better Eyesight Leave become more instructive and interesting every month. There was a gathering of about 50 members on Tuesday evening, February 13, and I know it was a very enjoyable evening to all.

The meeting was called to order by Miss Hurty who acted as Chairman in the absence of Mr. Varney.

Some of those present came to learn about the work Dr. Bates is doing. Others came burning with enthusiasm to make known some of the wonderful things that had been done for friends under their supervision during the past month.

One lady present told of having cured a family of five, mother, father and three children, who had worn glasses for years. It is a peculiar fact that, this lady, able to help so many, as she has done, is still unable to leave off her own glasses. Dr. Bates analyzed her condition and found that though she was preaching Central Fixation she was not practicing it. This was the secret of her failure in her own case. She was not able to "visualize." Dr. Bates told her how to improve her memory, and we know that she is going to give us a favorable report of herself at the next meeting, as she did of her friends this time.

Another interesting topic was the case of a gentleman teacher in Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn. He told of having an "Undergraded" class, of thirty-three boys and girls. These children are "sub-normal," and of course, defective sight always follows in the wake of ill-health, etc. This gentleman has cured himself and is very interested in trying to help his class. We shall be pleased to hear of his progress at our next meeting in March.

One of the "boosters" of the Better Eyesight League is a lady of about 70 years old. She has worn glasses for a great many years, and through following Doctor Bates' book, "Perfect Sight Without Glasses," is now able to read the diamond type cards at about eight inches. She has done good work in introducing the method among her friends, and reported that they are getting fine results.

If all of our League Members would pledge themselves to talk to at least one person with defective sight a week, they would have some real business to report at the next meeting. You all know what a relief you found in being able to dispense with glasses, don't you realize how much good you will accomplish by making this relief known to them? Every day we hear some one say, "Oh! If only I had learned of this work before I became such a slave to glasses!" There are millions waiting to be told the same thing you were. We are doing our share, we trust you will all do yours.

Previous Issue
THUMBNAILS of Past Issue
THUMBNAILS of Cover To Contents Page