November 1924

Better Eyesight

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

November, 1924

Eye-Strain During Sleep

MANY people complain that when they first wake up in the morning, they are tired, that they have headaches, and that their sight is very imperfect Later on in the day their eyes feel better, and the vision may become normal.

I have examined with the Ophthalmoscope the eyes of many people during sleep and found much to my surprise, that most people strain much more in their sleep than they ever do when they are awake. Of course, people when unconscious of their acts during sleep, are not aware of this eye-strain.

The prevention of eye-strain during sleep is usually a very difficult matter. Some cases are benefited just before retiring by palming for one-half hour or longer, or until they go to sleep while palming. Others by practicing the long swing for fifteen minutes, have found that the eye-strain becomes less. In some serious cases with imperfect sight, when the eye-strain is not prevented by palming or the swing, they are often materially benefited by shortening their hours of sleep with the help of an alarm clock. One patient had the alarm set for 3 a.m. He would then get out of bed and practice the long swing, alternating with palming for an hour or longer with the result that he slept the rest of the night very comfortably, and awoke the next morning with little or no evidence of eye-strain during sleep.

Some people have told me that they have lessened their eye-strain during sleep materially, by moderate muscular exercises for one-half hour or longer. They find that they obtain the best results when the exercise is continued sufficiently long to produce muscular fatigue.

The Cure of Myopia

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

THE problem of curing each case of Myopia or near-sightedness requires a sufficient number of facts. Each patient has to demonstrate individually those facts which help that particular patient or which suggests successful treatment

The cause of Myopia is an effort to see at the distance. Most patients can demonstrate that when they read the Snellen Test Card at fifteen feet or further, at ten feet, or beaten; starting at one point of one letter for two seconds or longer, always lowers the vision. This fact is evidence that treatment which prevents the stare improves the sight.

When a near-sighted patient reads fine print with normal sight, an effort to concentrate or stare at one letter or one part of the letter seen perfectly is very soon followed by imperfect sight at the near point. All nearsighted patients can demonstrate that with the eyes closed, the memory of one letter is easy or continuous when it is imagined to be moving, and that an effort to concentrate on one part of the letter remembered requires a strain, which is soon followed by the loss of the memory of the letter.

Near-sighted patients can always demonstrate that closing the eyes and covering them with the palms of one or both hands for one-half hour or longer, always improves the distant vision temporarily. It is good practice to have each patient prove-over and over again by various methods that imperfect sight requires an effort, requires a strain which is disagreeable, not easy, or that with imperfect sight one has to work hard and take a lot of trouble. It is usually quite a shock to them to demonstrate more or less thoroughly, that perfect sight can only be obtained easily and without effort. Eyes after the near-sighted patients demonstrate these facts for a time they usually keep on straining their eyes when they look at the distant Snellen Test Card.

All near-sighted patients are temporarily cured when their sight becomes normal at some distance, even patients with very high degrees of near-sightedness, 10 D or more, when they read with perfect sight at four inches without glasses, accommodate just the same amount as a normal eye does when it reads perfectly at four inches. They do not have an accommodation of four inches plus the amount of their Myopia.

I discovered that under favorable conditions, when a near-sighted patient had a perfect memory, the Myopia disappeared and the eye became normal.

I also discovered that when a near-sighted patient had a perfect imagination of a mental picture of some letter or some object, the Myopia disappeared and the eye became normal.

It is a fact that we remember only what we see.

We imagine only what we remember.

We see only what we imagine.

A near-sighted patient who reads perfectly at the near point, may obtain a perfect memory by regarding one letter at the near point with perfect sight, closing the eyes and remembering it as well as he can. By alternating, the sight and the memory improve until the patient becomes able to see and remember equally well.

After this is accomplished the patient becomes able to regard a letter with normal sight at a near point and then when looking at a distant blank wall, to remember it. By practicing, the patient becomes able to remember with the eyes open as well as he can see.

The next step is to help the patient to remember a mental picture of some letter seen perfectly at the near point just as well as when regarding the Snellen Test Card. The time it takes to improve the memory of mental pictures, varies much with different patients. Some cases with a high degree of near-sightedness I cure in a reasonable length of time, while others with a moderate amount may require a much longer time.

The imagination is also improved by alternating with the memory. Many patients find that they can remember a letter fairly well, but when they regard it, they do not imagine they see it, then again practice helps at the near point. When a near-sighted patient regards a letter, "O" for example, the white center may appear to be whiter than it really is, or whiter than the rest of the card. To prove that this is an illusion may require some trouble. It helps to cover the black part of the letter, exposing only the center which then appears to have the same shade of white as the rest of the card. When the screen is removed, exposing the black part of the letter, the white center flashes whiter. The patient, after a few trials, may become able to imagine the white center whiter than it really is.

One needs to convince the patient that this is an illusion, just as a ghost is an illusion. You never see a ghost, you only imagine you see it. The white center of the letter "O" is never seen whiter than thi(y rest of the card, it is only imagined.

After this is accomplished the near point, it becomes possible for the near-sighted patient to imagine this illusion at a greater distance. Those patients who are thoroughly convinced that they do not see the white center of the "O" whiter than the rest of the card, but only imagine it are soon cured, because while they find it difficult to see the letter O at a distance, it is easier to imagine it.

Acute Myopia is usually cured by very simple treatment Children under twelve years of age who have never worn glasses are usually temporarily cured by alternately reading the Snellen Test Card and resting their eyes by closing them and covering them with the palms of their hands for a few minutes. Many teachers in the public schools have placed the Snellen Test Card permanently on one wall of the class-room in a place where all the children could see it from their seats. When the children read this card as well as they could every day, the vision usually improved without any other treatment. All the children become able to remember perfectly each letter of the Snellen Test Card. They not only remember what the letter is, but they also remember its blackness, the white-spaces, its form, its size and its location; furthermore, they become able to imagine that they see perfectly the letters that they remember perfectly. They also discover sooner or later that a perfect imagination of one or more of the letters of the Snellen Test Card helps them to read the writing on the black board which is unfamiliar. In other words, they demonstrate that a perfect imagination of a known letter helps them to see perfectly, letters or objects that are not known. They also become convinced that a state or strain to see the writing on the black board lowers the vision just as it lowers the vision for the letters of the Snellen Test Card with which they are perfectly familiar. This is a fact of the greatest value in the cure and prevention of imperfect sight in school children. Every teacher should know this.

The Snellen Test Card, while it is of value as a test for the ability of the children to see, is of far greater usefulness as a means for improving the sight.

I have found that in schools where the Snellen Test Card is visible continuously, the vision of the pupils is always improved and that the children in the higher grades acquire a more perfect sight than they had when they first entered school. Most children demonstrate that the Snellen Test Card, while it improves the vision is also a benefit to their nervous system. It prevents and cures headaches, lessens fatigue, encourages the children to study, and increases the mental efficiency.

Stories from the Clinic
NO. 57: CASES OF MYOPIA

By Emily C. Lierman

I HAVE been asked to write about Myopia cases now under treatment in the Clinic. Within the last year we have had quite a number of patients who were cured of Myopia in one or two visits. Some of them were not bad cases, therefore it did not take very long to cure them.

A woman of middle age, who had worn glasses about two years, told me something of interest which I think our readers would like to know about. She had very little to do at the time, so to amuse herself she would stare at an object until it became distorted. She stared so wonderfully well that the object became two instead of one. Later she became able to see the object triple and she boasted about her ability to do this, to anyone who would listen to her. Then one morning, after she wakened from a sound sleep, she could not see the hands of her clock. The figures were blurred. Everything in the room seemed to be covered with a veil. She tried her old stunt and stared just as hard as she could, thinking that it would help her to see things clearly. Instead, her vision became worse, so she called on an oculist. He told her that she would probably have to wear glasses for the rest of her life. He fitted her with glasses and told her never to be without them. Six months later she had to have stronger lenses. When I first saw her I thought her eyeballs were stationary. I looked at her for fully three minutes without seeing her blink once. Then she told me what I have already written. I said I believed or was sure that she had brought on all this trouble herself. And she surprised me by saying: "Well, if I could make so much trouble with my eyes, surely I can undo it with your help."

She did exactly what I told her to do, and more. She practiced more often than I said, and she never talked about her eyes to anyone until she was cured. She practiced palming for an hour every morning, from six until seven o'clock. She traveled every morning and night for one hour on a railroad train and never opened her eyes the whole-time she was on the train. Her friends never troubled her after she asked them not to speak about her eyes. She never used a test card but practiced whenever she had time, with a newspaper or book type. She worked with a typewriter every day, and she found that her memory helped in her work.

Sometimes she remembered a large white imitation pearl of her earring or she would remember the sparkle of a little diamond in her ring. A black period was out of the question entirely. If I just mentioned a period to her she would begin to stare.

She said it reminded her of the blurry things she saw, when her eyes first troubled her. She surely demonstrated that to remember an error is a strain.

Just six weeks after I first treated her, she was cured without glasses. She now sees things clearly at the distance, but, only when she blinks, which is just what the normal eye must do to keep the vision normal. Her friends have a good time with her, when she is in the mood, for she is constantly reminding them to blink.

A young man age 23 had worn glasses steadily for ten years. With his glasses on he read 10/15 and without them 10/30. His face became a mass of wrinkles as he tried to read the letters of the test card. He complained that the white of the cord was a dazzling white and gave him great pain as he tried to read the letters.

After palming for a few minutes, the wrinkles temporarily disappeared. I placed him in the sun, and as he looked down, I raised his upper eyelid. I then focused the bright rays of the sun on the white part of each eye with the sun-glass. This did not take but a minute. We returned to the test card, and without a mistake, he read every letter. I told him to sit in the sun as much as possible, and let it shine on his closed eyelids, and to palm every day for at least an hour altogether.

He never came back for another test, and I am still wondering if he was cured.

At the present time we are treating a little girl, nine years old, who was quite near-sighted, and had very poor sight even with her glasses on. I was told that while her vision was poor before she had put on glasses, her eyes became much worse during the last year. She has worn them only one year, and I believe that they made her worse. The first day her vision without glasses was 7/200 with both eyes, and with each eye separately. I told her she would have to stop wearing glasses if she wanted to be cured.

The little girl was afraid to do that because her school teacher told her she should always wear them. Of course I became less enthusiastic about the cure of her eyes.

I gave her a treatment that day and improved her vision to 7/74 by having her palm for ten minutes or so, and then look at a letter on the test card that I was pointing at I did not expect to see her again at the clinic, because she was going against my wishes by wearing her glasses, but she was there the next Clinic Day, holding her glasses in her hand. She said she had worn them every day only during school hours. At other times, after her home-work was finished, she practiced with the test card and palmed her eyes as much as possible.

I was very much surprised to find that her vision had improved even though she wore her glasses. Dr. Bates and I have been surprised more than once to find a patient get well although they had worn their glasses at times.

This little girl has been to us four times and she now reads 8/40.

I would like to make another report of her case when she is cured.

Unless she has the courage to leave off her glasses entirely, I fear it will take a long time to cure her.

Thanksgiving Fairies

By George Guild

WE have fairies in the Spring Time, fairies in the Summer, fairies at Christmas and New Year, and also fairies at Thanksgiving.

The table was all set for a large dinner party which included not only the grandmother, the grandfather, the loving mother and the proud father, but many friends.

The Little Boy was wearing eye glasses which were so conspicuous that they quite concealed very much of his face. He was only ten years old, but he had an appetite for everything that was good, more so than any person present. His father filled up his plate with all the good things that it would hold and without a word to anyone, he started in to eat as he had never eaten before. Before he was half way through, he was suddenly attacked with acute indigestion which caused him such intense pain that he began to cry. His mother started to take him from the table, but he could not stand it to leave all that food behind. When he saw his mother coming, he stopped crying and begged her to leave him alone for a few minutes. All eyes were watching him, wondering what he was going to do next. After a few moments' thought, he suddenly removed his glasses, closed his eyes and covered them with his two chubby hands, with his elbows resting on the table. The color soon came back to his face, the pain left him, and in a few minutes he began to smile and was soon all right.

He started in to eat again with increased energy. His father who had been watching him with a worried look on his face was very much astonished.

"What do you think of that," he said, "Where did the child find out about resting his eyes to cure his stomach-ache?"

Everybody at the table seemed dazed but had very little to say. In a little while however, things got back to their normal state just as they were before the Little Boy became ill. He passed his plate back for more, which his father reluctantly filled again. The Little Boy began to talk, but the only words anybody could hear him say with his mouth continually stuffed with food were, "fairy," and "palming," and "teacher," and the "Snellen Test Card." His mother could not stand it any longer. She got up, took the Little Boy in her arms and carried him to another room, held him in her lap while she asked him questions to find out what it was all about. "Oh, mother, that was a nice turkey and all the other things were awfully good, and the little Thanksgiving fairy with many other fairies are dancing around on the table and they are bowing to me, they are bowing to grandpa, to grandma, and to everybody else, but principally, they seem to be paying more attention to me. The Thanksgiving fairy all dressed in green is holding out her arms to me and she says:

"Little Boy, don't grow up to be a four-eyed man. Take off those terrible glasses and you will have perfect sight without them, if you will only love me and never forget me. Whenever you are ill, think of me, and you can think of me best when you close your eyes and cover them with the palms of your hands."

There was a ring at the door bell, the Little Boy's father answered it, and ushered in the Little Boy's teacher, who had come to make a short call.

When the teacher was told about the little boy with the attack of indigestion, and how he discarded his glasses, closed his eyes and covered them with the palms of his hands, which was followed by a very prompt and complete cure, the teacher said:

"I have called to ask you to try for a time having the little boy do without his glasses. A great many other children have been cured of near-sightedness in a short time, and I feel that the little boy will also be cured, so that he will get along much better without his glasses, than he ever did with them."

The father's face brightened and he said to the teacher with a grateful smile, "It is so ordered."

El Uso Natural de La Vision
(The Natural Use of Vision)

By R. Ruiz Arnau, M.D.

THIS book should appeal to Spanish-speaking people, because it contains numerous demonstrations of the truth which make it possible to cure imperfect sight by treatment without glasses. In the magazine, "Better Eyesight," of May, 1920, is an article by Dr. Arnau with the title "My Headaches" in which he describes at length how he was cured of chronic headaches and imperfect sight by treatment without glasses. As a result of his cure he has become able to give relief to his patients.

The author's most important contribution is his claim that the true use of the ciliary muscle is not to increase the curvature of the lens when the eye is focused for reading at the near point, but just the opposite: The ciliary muscle prevents any change of form in the curvature of the crystalline lens.

He has written a great deal about mind strain as the real and only cause of defective eye-sight. He discusses the unconscious movements of the vegetative functions of the body, circulation, respiration and the constant mental shifting as entirely in accord with the new ideas of Einstein, Korbzybski and others.

The Tachorthoscope was discovered by Dr. Arnau. It is an apparatus for the treatment of patients who are not benefited promptly by other methods.

He has also investigated the use of music by which some patients find an easy way to obtain a short swing through the auditory memory.

The Acrobatic "F"

By Emily A. Meder

AS I look out the window the crisp air is blowing the colored leaves about like little fairy carpets. Autumn is here, with weather that delights the hiker's soul. No one but a true hiker can realize the joy of tramping in the woods or along a road, with arms swinging, eyes shifting from object to object, and the ground and trees seeming to glide slowly by as the walker passes.

This form of exercise and recreation has become very popular along with other outdoor sports. It is a good thing to call to your attention the fact that no matter what kind of sport, recreation or work you indulge in, you can rest the eyes and improve the sight while doing it. Recently while ice-skating in an indoor rink, I became dizzy gazing around and watching the white ice moving under my feet. I stopped for a few minutes, rested my eyes, and went on again. Instead of looking at the ice, I swung my body slowly from side to side, shifting my eyes from one skater to another. I just forgot the dizziness, and don't know whether it disappeared immediately after I palmed, or when I began to swing.

I wonder how many people find palming monotonous? One subscriber told me that he tried to palm, but found it so dull and boring, that he dropped it entirely. I asked him what he did when he palmed, what he thought of. He replied that he tried to think of black, and nothing else. Usually he saw all colors, from light gray to startling green, and he gave it up. He could not get black, so his mind returned to his business problems and other worries.

I was in sympathy with this man's state of mind, because I tried to see black, with the same results. If I let my mind drift, without charting its course, it would inevitably go over the unpleasant happenings of the day, or the work unfinished, or worse still, I would become drowsy I I was always more relaxed if I could imagine black objects, so here's the scheme I used to good advantage:

The little black "F" in the corner of the test card is a good friend of mine. I can think of it and remember it more easily than any other letter. The trouble is that it is too active and as soon as I experience benefit from its company, it leaps all over the place. When I try to hold it stationary, the better to look at it, it disappears entirely. I decided to put this surplus energy to work and planned a daily dozen for Mr. "F" to do. When I palm, I summon him and he stands at attention like a soldier while I inspect him, from head to foot. If he passes, he is a perfect black. Then he starts his drill. His two arms are pointed to the right when he begins. I imagine them moving to the left, and back. Then one arm is pointed to the left and one to the right and my "F" is a "I." Both arms are then stretched up, forming a "X" He is very versatile, and never drills twice in the same way. At one time he tried to change his straight lines to form a "C," but this was too much for even his acrobatic powers, and was painful for me to watch. He now confines himself to straight letters only, with a variation of the figures, four and seven.

These athletic exhibitions can last fifteen minutes or longer, at a time, without my becoming drowsy or bored. Try it with a letter "L" or an "O." Perhaps with training and close association it will become as dear to you as my little "F."

Fine Print

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

MANY near-sighted patients can read fine print or diamond type at less than ten inches from their eyes, easily, perfectly, and quickly by alternately regarding the Snellen Test Card at different distances, from three feet up to fifteen feet or further. The vision may be improved, at first temporarily, and later by repetition, a permanent gain usually follows.

It is a valuable fact to know that when fine print is read perfectly, the near-sightedness disappears during this period. It can only be maintained at first for a fraction of a second, and later more continuously.

Near-sighted patients and others, with the help of the fine print can usually demonstrate that staring at a small letter always lowers the vision and that the same fact is true when regarding distant letters or objects.

With the help of the, fine print, the near-sighted patient can also demonstrate that one can remember perfectly only what has been seen perfectly: that one imagines perfectly only what is remembered perfectly: and that perfect sight is only a perfect imagination.

A great many people are very suspicious of the imagination and feel or believe that things imagined are never true. The more ignorant the patient, the less respect do they have for their imagination or the imagination of other people. It comes to them as a great shock, with a feeling of discomfort and annoyance that the perfect imagination of a known letter improves the sight for unknown letters of the Snellen Test Card.

It is a fact that one can read fine print perfectly with a perfect relaxation, with great relief to eye-strain, pain, fatigue and discomfort, not only of the eyes, but of all other nerves of the body.

Regarding fine print, even when not read, is also of use in improving the distant vision of the Snellen Test Card, and the ability to read at a near point in patients whose imperfect sight is caused by Astigmatism, Hypermetropia (far sight), Presbyopia and others.

Report of the October Meeting

By Miss May Secor, Secretary

A REGULAR meeting of the Better Eyesight League was held on October 14th at 383 Madison Avenue. Miss Kathleen Hurty, President, presided. A number of visitors were present, and for this reason the Secretary was requested to explain the Bates Method.

Among important facts presented were the following: The prevalence of visual defects and eye-strain is evident to anyone who gives the matter his attention. Formerly, but one course of action was open to the sufferer—to visit an oculist, have his eyes tested, receive a prescription for artificial lenses, procure them, and then endeavor to become accustomed to wearing these optical crutches. The efficiency of the eye is variable. During an eye-test the patient is able to read smaller letters on the chart at one of myopia, hypermetropia, squint, or cataract, Dr. astigmatism-producing clock dial the patient can see certain lines more clearly at one time, and others more clearly at another time. The lenses prescribed are such as "fit" the patient when his eyes register a certain number of degrees of astigmatism and myopia, for example. In order that the patient may see with the prescribed lenses it is essential that he produce the said number of degrees of astigmatism and myopia; this produces eyestrain. The need for a more efficient method for correcting visual defects is obvious.

It is here that the Bates Method functions. This method is based upon the fact that visual defects are caused by eye-strain; it therefore offers methods for the relief of eye-strain. Inasmuch as the method corrects visual defects, it proves the fact to be true. Be the case one of myopia, hypermetropia, squint, or cataract, Dr. Bates removes the glasses, and assists the patient to use his eyes with relaxation. This is accomplished by means of various methods: palming, reading the Snellen card, shifting, swaying, swinging, sun treatment, and other methods involving the use of memory and imagination. These methods are described in Dr. Bates' book entitled "Perfect Sight Without Glasses." [link]

Dr. E. G. Keesler (M.D.), expressed his gratitude for his son's cure. Dr. Keesler then discussed the importance of relaxation in securing mental rest. In this connection the doctor spoke of the use of the rocking-chair, and quoted authorities who decried the "rocking habit." Dr. Bates expressed his belief that a moderate use of the rocking chair facilitates relaxation, if one "sees things moving" as he rocks; a moderate use of cradle-rocking and "swaying" was advocated for infants.

Dr. Bates demonstrated the long swing, and spoke of its helpfulness in securing relaxation. The long swing relieves eye-strain and other types of physical distress. When pain is very acute, visualization of the letters of the Snellen card is advised also. Miss Hurty discussed the work of A. Rollier, M.D., at his sanitorium at Leysin, Switzerland. Dr. Rollier uses sun treatment in curing tuberculosis; he finds, however, that additional results accrue, visual defects are corrected, and eye-strain relieved. This confirms Dr. Bates' claim that sunlight is effective as a cure for visual defects.

Mr. Nicholas Weiss reported several cases in which he secured relaxation by describing a horse race or a baseball inning while the patient palmed. Dr. Achorn emphasized the important role which memory plays in the Bates Method. He advised the prospective followers of the method, to begin at once to practice the various methods, investigating their physiological and psychological significance, as a parallel line of work. Correct use of the method will improve the vision immediately in most cases. At the close of Dr. Achorn's discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Questions and Answers

Question—If sun and light are beneficial, why do you advocate the shutting out of these two by palming?

Answer—To obtain relaxation. The sun strengthens the eyes and palming relaxes them.

Question—My left eye turned in and was corrected by operation. Now it turns out. What method will cure this?

Answer—You need more than one method. Complete relaxation will relieve the strain and correct the squint.

Question—After palming for ten minutes or longer, my eyes are rested, but I feel sleepy.

Answer—The palming is not perfect. Try imagining stationary objects to be moving when you palm.

Question—I was given glasses for headaches. Discarded them by your method; headaches have gone, but I strain while I sleep and my lids are swollen in the morning.

Answer—See page 2 of this issue.

Question—Is a great amount of floating specks indicative of cataract? When I am weary these look like a flock of bees crossing my eyeballs.

Answer—No. Your particular strain produces floating specks. A different strain produces cataract.

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