

February 1925

Better Eyesight

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

February, 1925

The Baby Swing

YOUNG babies suffer very much from eyestrain. The tension of the eye muscles is always associated with the tension of all the other muscles of the body. Their restlessness can be explained by this tension. I was talking with an Italian mother in the clinic one day about restless children, and asked her why it was that her baby was always so quiet and comfortable when she came to the clinic, while many other babies at the same time were very restless and unhappy.

"Oh," she said, "I love my baby. I like to hold her in my arms and rock her until she smiles."

"Yes, I know," I said, "but that mother over there is rocking her baby in her arms, and the child is screaming its head off."

"Yes," exclaimed the Italian mother, "but see how she rocks it."

Then I noticed that the other mother threw the child from side to side in a horizontal direction with a rapid, jerky, irregular motion, and the more she jerked the child from side to side, the more restless did it become.

"Now, doctor," said the Italian mother, "you watch me."

I did watch her. Instead of throwing the child rapidly, irregularly, intermittently from side to side, she handled her baby as though it had much value in her eyes, and moved her not in straight lines from side to side, but continuously in slow, short, easy curves. The Italian mother picked up the other mother's child, and soon quieted it by the same swing.

I learned something that day.

Cataract

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

CATARACT is a form of imperfect sight in which the lens of the eye becomes opaque. It usually begins after the age of fifty, and may progress in the course of a year or longer to complete blindness. In most cases perception of light can be demonstrated in all parts of the field. In many cases, cataract in one or both eyes is found at birth. There are also a smaller number of cataracts which appear after an injury to the eyes. Diabetes and other general diseases are believed to be a cause of cataract. As a rule cataract is progressive.

In 1895, a well-known ophthalmologist asked me, one of his assistants, to collect the histories of all cases of cataract which recovered without treatment. There were many such cases. It seemed to me that since recovery of cataract occurred without treatment, although the majority needed an operation for the removal of the lens before they were able to see; some form of treatment might help more of these cases. I sent some of my private patients to general practitioners who at that time by various methods did benefit these patients in quite a number of instances.

Not long afterwards I attended a meeting of the Ophthalmological Section of the American Medical Association, and listened to a paper on the treatment of cataract in which the writer declared that any doctor who claimed to cure cataract without an operation was a quack or something worse. I did not think he was right, and gave a talk on my experience, which produced something of a sensation.

More than forty years ago, when I was a student in a medical college, one of the professors gave a lecture on the eye. He had a number of nucleated eyeballs from the cow. He demonstrated that when the eyeball was squeezed with the aid of his fingers, an opacity or cataract of the lens at once appeared. I could see this more than twenty feet away. When the squeeze was relieved, the lens at once became apparently perfectly clear. I have repeated this experiment on the eyes of other animals without failure.

One day I was studying the eye of a patient with partial cataract. While the patient was talking of various things of no special consequence, I could see through several openings in the cataract, areas of a red reflex, which was evidence that the lens was not completely opaque. I asked the patient how much she could see, and while she told me the letters on the Snellen test card that she could read, the opacity of the lens was incomplete. She then made an unsuccessful effort to re-member some of the smaller letters, when much to my surprise, the whole lens became opaque. I repeated the observation as follows:

I asked her: "Can you remember that you saw the big C?"

"Yes," she answered, and then at once the lens cleared in part, and I could see the red reflex through the open spaces.

Then I asked her: "Can you remember having seen any of the smaller letters on the bottom line?" I could see that she was making a considerable effort when the lens became completely opaque. I was so interested that I had a number of friends of mine repeat the experiment, and they were just as much astonished as I was when they obtained the same result.

So many patients are depressed, or become very unhappy, when they learn that they have cataract. The prospect of an operation, with its dangers and uncertainties, is too often a punishment. When an elderly patient with loss of vision is brought to me for treatment, the friends or relatives usually request me not to tell him that he may have cataract. For many years I followed this practice, gave the patient glasses, and deceived him as well as I knew. How I felt a great responsibility which I was always anxious to be rid of. I was ashamed of my cowardice. It was a great relief to have such patients consult some other physician. At the present time this has all been changed. I welcome cataract patients now, and rejoice in the fact that they have cataract because I am always able to improve the vision at the first visit, and ultimately cure them if they continue some months, or longer, under my supervision. Cataract is more readily cured than diseases of the optic nerve or retina. I believe that I am justified in telling the patients that the cause of the imperfect sight is due to cataract, because when they know what is wrong with them, they are more likely to continue to practice methods of treatment which are helpful.

The vision of every case of cataract always improves after palming, when the patient learns how to do it right. I have seen many serious cases obtain normal vision with the disappearance of the cataract, by practicing the palming and nothing else.

It was a shock to me to see a case of traumatic cataract recover with the aid of palming. Cataract, occurring in patients with diabetes, has also disappeared without treatment or cure of the diabetes.

Treatment which is a benefit to cataract has for its object relaxation of the eyes and mind.

The quickest cure of cataract is obtained by the memory or imagination of perfect sight. It can be demonstrated that when the patient remembers some letter as well with the eyes open as with the eyes closed, that the vision is improved, and when the memory is perfect with the eyes open, perfect vision is obtained at once and the cataract disappears. This startling fact has been ridiculed by people who did not test the matter properly. When the patient stares, concentrates, or makes an effort to see, the memory, imagination, the vision, always become worse. The patient and others can feel, with the tips of the fingers lightly touching the closed upper eyelid, that the eyeball becomes harder when imperfect sight is remembered or imagined. But when perfect sight is remembered or imagined, it can always be demonstrated that the eyeball becomes as soft as is the case in the normal eye. When the patient practices the swing successfully, or practices other methods which bring about relaxation of the muscles on the outside of the eyeball, it becomes soft, and the cataract is lessened.

After an operation for the removal of cataract, a thin membrane usually forms over the pupil of the eye, which impairs the vision. This membrane is called a secondary cataract. Sometimes another operation, a puncture through this membrane, is beneficial. In a recent case, a man, after the removal of the lens for congenital cataract, came to me for treatment. Without glasses his vision was 15/200; with convex 15.00 D. S., the vision was improved to 15/70+.

The patient hesitated about taking treatment at this time because he had heard that I always removed the glasses. He felt that on account of his work, he had better defer the treatment until such time as it was convenient to go without his glasses. I asked him if he would go without his glasses if I improved his vision so that he could see as well, or better, without them, as he was now able to see with them. He answered that he would do as I recommended. With the aid of palming, swinging, and perfect memory and imagination, the vision very promptly improved to 15/15.

Stories from the Clinic

No. 60. Two Cases of Cataract

By Emily C. Liernan

SO many times I have been asked, "Is it really possible to cure cataract by Dr. Bates' Method?" I can prove that it is. In the March, 1920, number of "Better Eyesight," I wrote about a case of cataract under treatment at the Harlem Hospital Clinic [link]. This case was a woman seventy-three years old who was determined to be cured without an operation. In October, 1916, she had visited another dispensary where an operation was advised. The doctors there told her however, that she must wait until the Cataract was ripe before the operation could be performed. Later she heard about Dr. Bates curing cataract without an operation, and tried out the method as well as she could all by herself. In March, 1919, she visited Dr. Bates in his office, and he helped her.

This woman made her living by mending clothes in an orphanage, so we were glad to treat her in the Clinic where she did not have to pay. Three days a week she came, no matter how bad the weather was.

On her first visit she read the forty line at four feet from the tact card, then her vision blurred. She knew just what to do, and I did not have to tell her to pubn. just once she peeped at me through her forgers and said, "I'll fool the other doctors yet. My eyes won't have any cataract if I keep this up." She had a way of smiling out loud, and she still has. Her disposition has not changed a bit in all the time I have known her.

Recently she came to the Clinic to see me. In the room were two school nurses, and a young man who were there to observe the cases under treatment I was not so sure that my dear old lady had retained her improved vision, because I had not seen her for a year or more. I placed the test-card eight feet from her eyes and she read every letter correctly up to the fifteen line without the aid of palming. At times she read 10/10 after resting her eyes with the aid of palming and blinking.

The test I made this day was the best yet, because she read a strange card which she had never seen before. Then I placed her in the sun and gave her the doctors fine print card, which she held six inches from her eyes. She looked at me in a funny way, and said, "Oh, I can read that easily." Then she proceeded to read the dia-mond type to the amazement of the others in the moot.

Some day I am afraid the little lady win get into trouble. Whenever she sees a chill in the street wearing glasses, she gets very much excited.

Recently she stopped two women with a child on the street and found fault with them because the little girl, three years of age, was wearing glasses. "Why don't you take that child to my doctor; he can cure her without glasses!"

Those who know our dear old lady can very well understand her good intentions, but how about the mother and friend of this little girl? They must have thought at first that she was of unsound mind. The women treated her kindly and accepted the "Better Eyesight Magazine" which she offered them.

We had another case of cataract under treatment at the Clinic, a man sixty-three years old. He had to have someone to lead him when he fast came, which was less than a year ago. After his fourth visit to the Clinic he was able to travel by himself.

When Dr. Bates examined him with the retinoscope on the first day, he could see no red reflex in either eye. I gave him a test card which he held very close to his eyes, and after he had palmed for a little while and imagined he saw the test card moving opposite to the movement of his body, he could make out the big C of the card at two inches from his eyes, but it looked very much blurred to him. Before he left the Clinic that day he became able to read several lines of the test card, and the letters cleared up which, of course, gave him a great deal of encouragement. What helped him so quickly was that he was quite sure we could improve his sight. He did exactly as he was told. Keeping up that steady swing of his body while standing, slow and easy, with-out any effort, stopped the ataring, or prevented it. Palming and imagining his body was moving were a rest and relaxation to him also.

After he had been coming for a month or more, he became able to read all the letters of the test card, as he held the card very close to his eyes. Three months later he was able to read the large letters of the card two feet away, and the ten-line letters of the bottom line at three inches from his eyes. Always when he came, which was every Saturday morning, he had something encour-aging to tell us about his eyes. The signs in the sub-way on his way from Brooklyn became more clear and distinct. He was able to dodge people in a crowd. At the present time, even people with normal vision have to be mighty careful to avoid injury both in the street and in the subway.

It is now about ten months since this patient first came for treatment, and on his last visit he read very fine print at three inches from his eyes, and saw the fifty-line letters more than a foot away. His vision improves by practicing with print much finer than diamond type, and his jolly disposition is also a great help.

It is a great relief to be able to say to a Clinic patient when he first comes to us: "You are welcome here for treatment, no matter where you live." At the Harlem Hospital Clinic, the authorities there turned away many poor souls who needed treatment of their eyes. Each district has a free hospital, and those who lived in another district were not admitted. While it was pitiful, it had to be so, because we could not take care of them all.

Here in our office also, we have to limit the number of patients treated in the Clinic, so we can only take care of patients who have no source of income, or who are sent to us by physicians.

Strain

By Emily A. Meder

WE are often awed by the almost uncanny wisdom of the philosophers and teachers who lived centuries ago. After extensive experiments and research work, our scientists discovered certain properties in a drug, which proved invaluable during the War. It was later found out that this property had been used as an every-day remedy in Japan for centuries. It is well-known that India possesses the secret of cures for various diseases, which our scientists would be glad to know of.

Dr. Bates has made the important discovery that all cases of defective sight are caused by strain, tension or rigidity of the eye and mind. There are a great many people who refuse to accept this fact, although their imperfect sight, and perhaps other troubles are due to this cause.

Read what one Chinese Sage wrote about strain many, many years ago:

"In love or in hate, rigidity is final; in art fatal. Elasticity means life in the plants and flowers and trees and in the wings of a bird, as in the mind. When the sap goes from the branches, they become rigid, and the storms break them down. When the artist's mind closes against the new ideas that are the mind's strength, as the sap is the trees, the brain becomes rigid, and arid, and neither philosophy, poetry nor painting can be produced thereby.

"Rigidity and death are synonymous."

The eyes have perfect sight when they are relaxed. It is not difficult; when there is an absence of strain, the eyes do nothing. They don't squint, or stare or try to see. When the eyes are relaxed, the body is relaxed, strain disappears, and the truth of Dr. Bates' discovery is proven.
Remember—Rigidity, strain and death are synonymous. Be relaxed!

Clinic Reports from London

We have heard from several of our English correspondents praising the work done by the "Better Eyesight League of Great Britain and Ireland." We are pleased to publish a few of Mr. Price's reports. Notice that all cases are accepted, including those with little perception of light, which have to be led into the office. A history of the progress of these severe cases proves the usefulness and need of this work.

A MAN BLIND IN ONE EYE FOR MANY YEARS

THIS is the case of a man who has endeared himself to all of us. He is a match seller in the gutter of one of our streets and partly because of his curly hair and partly because of his sunny smile (he is an Irishman) we have christened him Curly. There are occasions when his cheeriness is of great assistance to the, other patients.

His vision when first tested was 10/60 with the right eye and nothing whatever with the left. He had no perception of light in the left and said that he had not had for many years, and was told at the hospital that it was quite gone and nothing could be done.

His vision has improved to 10/50 and the left eye is much better and has quite a good perception of light. His near eight has improved more than his distant.

(We are in hopes that Capt. Price can send us a further report of Curly's progress.)

BLIND FOR FIVE YEARS

(This case should encourage those who have only slight perception of light.)

A few weeks ago there was lead into the Clinic a man of 65 who told us he had been blind for five years and the doctors at the hospital had told him nothing more could be done for him, as his case was hopeless.

On testing his sight we found the right vision 3/80 and the left vision only just perception of light.

He was eager to know if we thought he could be helped and listened attentively while he was being told how to palm and how to strengthen his eyes by splashing them with cold water. He started right away palming and was left to amuse himself in this way, while other patients were attended to, and afterwards he said his eyes felt rested and much easier. He was asked what he was to do at home during the week to see if he had remembered the directions given to him, and then went home in a very hopeful frame of mind.

The following week he came along and looked rather more cheerful and was very excited to tell us that he thought he could see a little with the blind eye. Both eyes were tested, the right one was now 3/60, and with the blind eye he could see the big C, the 200 line when the Chart was held close.

Two weeks later we held the Clinic in another room and we were amazed to see him walk boldly in alone. He was looking much better and very proud of himself. He had been under the doctor's care for the last two or three months as he was generally run down, and this week he was delighted to tell us that he had caught his doctor napping. His doctor had greeted him one morning by saying how much better his eyes were looking, how much brighter and more alive. "Yes, because I am having treatment for them," said our friend. He told the doctor of the treatment, whose reply was that it was rubbish and could not possibly do any good. "Well, you said yourself how much better they were looking, and they must look very different for you to notice them and remark on them, and besides I can see more than I did."

He continues to be very much in earnest and is now able to see 3/30 with the right eye, and can read the 40 line quite easily close up to the other eye which previously had only perception of light.

A MAN WHO HAS WORN GLASSES FOR 60 YEARS

This man without his glasses was very helpless. He had no vision at all with the right eye, just perception of light, but very slight. The left eye was such that he could read with difficulty the 60 line at 6 inches. In three weeks the vision with both eyes was improved, so that at 6 inches he could read the 20 line comfortably and the 15 line with difficulty. The right eye is better but the improvement is not so marked as that of the left. If it is a great joy to help this man, he is so grateful for the smallest thing that one does, and his childlike faith and obedience is something rarely seen. The reason he has made so much progress in so short a time is due to the fact that he cooperates willingly and with pleasure and is really interested in getting his sight.

One notices that on the whole people with slightly imperfect, sight are not sufficiently interested in getting their sight normal to take much trouble. If it could be done for them they would not mind; but they do not like to bring it about themselves. The continuous relaxation practiced by those with imperfect sight is a joy to see and they are well paid for it.

The Elephant and the Fairies

By George Guild

IT is a fact that few of us realize that we have never seen a fairy wearing glasses. Why shouldn't they wear glasses? Little boys and girls wear glasses. Little boys and girls like fairies, yet it is unheard of for fairies to imitate what other people do, and wear those dreadful goggles which spoil the eyes and faces of beautiful young children. Many a fairy has whispered in the ears of children that glasses are bad. Many a fairy has whispered into the ears of a mother that glasses were an injury to the eyes, with the result that mothers who enjoy the society of their children are troubled about the glasses.

One evening after everybody had gone to bed, the father of a family sat in his chair dozing, after he had read the evening paper. Many fairies came and whispered in his ears that glasses were bad for his children. He tried to argue the matter with them.

"Why shouldn't they wear glasses? The doctor says it does them good. They cost a lot of money, and my children are all the time breaking them. But if it does them good, why shouldn't they wear them?"

The fairies remonstrated with him and told him that he could not see with his eyes, he could not see with his mind, and that he was just as blind as the five men were who tried to describe an elephant which they had never seen.

"Well, tell me all about it," said he.

So one of the fairies perched herself on his right shoulder, and told him the story which illustrated how wrong some people can be.

Once upon a time many centuries ago, an elephant came to a small village where no person had ever seen such a creature before. Five blind men were coated with some flattery to give their opinion of the elephant.

One grasped the tail and declared: "The elephant is very much like a snake." The roar of laughter from the spectators upset him very much.

The second blind man leaned against the side of the elephant and said: "The elephant is very much like a high wall." The applause of the mob was tremendous. The third handled one of the elephant's legs. "Yes," he said, "The elephant is very much like a pillar." The applause which followed bothered him.

The fourth grasped one of the elephant's ears, and very solemnly asserted: "The elephant is similar to a fan." More applause and laughter greeted this opinion which also disturbed the blind man.

The fifth felt of the sharp pointed tusks, and said: "The elephant is very much like a spear." As an encore to the applause, he corrected himself and announced: "The elephant is like two spears."

The five blind men gathered together. The vigorous arguments of each blind man to prove that he was right and that all the others were wrong, amused the populace for some hours.

The world is full of blind people who have eyes and minds which do not see. The world is full of Good Fairies who teach us how to see with our eyes and minds. The next morning the father told his wife all about his experience with the fairies, and when the children appeared for breakfast wearing their large rimmed spectacles, he saw how their eyes and faces were injured by them. His wife saw the same thing, and they both exclaimed in one breath: "Take off those horrid glasses, and never wear them again."

Then the little girl took off her glasses and dropped them in the waste-basket with a smile. The little boy dropped his on the floor and, with the heel of his heavy shoe, he smashed them into little bits, and laughed.

The father was astonished, and asked: "Why did you do that?"

The little boy laughed loudly, and cried: "Because I have got the best of the horrid things. They never did me any good. They hurt my eyes and kept me off the baseball team. I cannot tell you how glad I am to be rid of them."

The little girl also was smiling, and they soon were all smiling, and they have been smiling pretty much all the time ever since.

Report of the League Meeting

By DOROTHY MATTLAND

THE annual business meeting of the Better Eyesight League was held Tuesday evening, January 13th, at 383 Madison Avenue. We noted with regret the absence of the secretary, Miss Secor, who was ill. Miss Hurty conducted the meeting.

The treasurer's yearly report was made and accepted.

For the benefit of the visitors, Miss Hurty briefly outlined the work of the League and the part each loyal member takes in it. This is to improve his own vision and help others to improve theirs. The work with children was emphasized as being the most essential point in the League's work. Those in charge of children were asked to cooperate with the League in order to reach those children whose defective vision can be corrected at the start.

The nominating committee submitted the following list of officers for the ensuing year. The acting secretary cast a unanimous vote in their favor. The new officers are:

Miss May Secor, President.

Mr. N. A. Weiss, Vice-President.

Miss Mabel Young, Secretary.

Mrs. Wm. R. Marsden, Treasurer.

In view of Miss Secor's absence, Miss Hurty continued as chairman for the evening.

Miss Hurty cited a case of a boy in her class last year who suffered with severe headaches. He received no special treatment but worked out suggestions with good results. He now claims Miss Hurty cured his eyes and relieved his headaches entirely.

Dr. Bates gave us an interesting talk on cataracts. He explained that although all imperfect sight is due to strain, each defect is caused by a different kind of strain. When one has cataracts the eyeballs become hard. Relaxation through swinging, a perfect memory or a perfect imagination softens the eyeball and the cataract disappears. Dr. Bates claims that nearly all cases of cataract are materially benefited at the first visit. Babies with cataracts have been cured when the mothers swayed them in their arms.

Have you learned to swing by means of your thumb? If not, try it now. Place your thumb and forefinger together and rub them lightly in a circular movement. When done correctly you will feel your whole body move and everything about you will seem to move. You know the value of this form of relaxation.

An instance was cited of a movie director who carried a large diamond in his vest pocket and unless he kept moving that diamond between his thumb and forefinger he could not direct his cast. The gentleman who related the case realized the significance of it as soon as the thumb movement was explained to him, and he was very glad to tell us about it.

Perfect sight is natural and a normal condition, and those who have bad vision sometimes instinctively do those things which help them and improve' their sight. The meetings are proving so helpful and officers so enthusiastic that we extend a warm invitation to all those who are interested in this work.

Helpful Hints from Correspondents

Then are extracts from letters received from book readers and others. They might suggest new ways of improving your vision.

"I AM proud of my ability to eliminate headaches, fatigue and even nausea resulting from eyestrain. I formerly retired to my room when one of my severe headaches came on, and required the entire household to be absolutely quiet. Now, if my head or eyes pain, I go to my room, palm for a few minutes, swing the card, and feel rested. The headaches usually disappear when I am relaxed. Another discovery! The headaches only come when I do something wrong. The last one was caused by late shopping, rushing to put the house in order, and cooking the whole dinner myself. When I slowly did the long swing (with the broom in one hand and a duster in the other), I grew calm enough to greet my guests pleasantly."

"I was shocked to discover that I was a starrer. I knew that Dr. Bates advocated blinking to prevent the stare, and thought that I blinked and shifted constantly. Upon watching myself, however, I found that I only blinked when I remembered to do it consciously. I have made it a rule now to blink my eyes at the end of each line. This compulsory rule is becoming easier, and I believe that it will become a good habit real soon."

Questions and Answers

Question—What is most helpful when one is dreadfully nearsighted and finds it almost impossible to see without glasses?

Answer—Practice palming as frequently as possible every day. Keeping the eyes closed whenever convenient for five minutes ten times a day is also helpful.

Question—I notice that my squint eye does straighten after palming, but reverts when I stop. How can I tell when and how I strain?

Answer—Avoid staring after palming and blink all the time. You can demonstrate that staring is a strain by consciously doing it for a few seconds.

Question—If glasses are harmful, how do you account for the benefit the wearer receives; also relief from head-aches?

Answer—(a) Eye glasses are harmful because the benefit received is not permanent. (b) The mental effect of glasses helps some people, but the headaches are not relieved permanently and the vision is usually made worse.

Question—Why is fine print beneficial?

Answer—Fine print is beneficial because it cannot be read by a strain or effort. The eyes must be relaxed.

Question—How can I correct the vision of my three-year-old son, who won't palm and doesn't understand it? He is far-sighted.

ANSWER—Make a test card with black letters on white paper. The letters to be composed of E's pointing in various directions. These are to be graduated in size, from about 3½ inches to a quarter of an inch. Have the child read them from 10 to 20 feet away. Have him blink constantly while telling in which direction the E's are pointing.

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