

## December 1923

Better Eyesight

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

December, 1923

One Thing

BY CENTRAL FIXATION is meant the ability to see one letter or one object regarded in such a way that all other letters or objects are seen worse. Some people have been cured by practicing Central Fixation only, devoting little time to other methods of cure.

SWINGING

When the normal eye has normal sight the small letters of the Snellen Test Card are imagined to be moving from side to side, slow, continuously, not more than the width of the letter. Persons with imperfect sight have become able to imagine this illusion by alternately remembering or imagining the small letter moving from side to side continuously. With their eyes open they may be able to do it for a moment or flash it, at first occasionally, and later more continuously, until they are cured.

IMAGINATION is very efficient in improving the vision. Some persons have told me that when they knew what a letter was they could imagine they saw it. By closing their eyes they usually became able to imagine a known letter better than with their eyes open. By alternately imagining a known letter with the eyes open and with the eyes closed, the imagination of the letter often improves to normal when the letter was regarded. The patient who is able to do this is also able to demonstrate that when the imagination is improved for one known letter the vision for unknown letters is also improved. By imagining the first letter of a line perfectly the patient can tell the second letter and other letters which are not known. The imagination cure is curative when other methods of treatment have failed.

The Cadet

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

WEST POINT is full of memories. Whenever we

think of the military school at West Point most of us have a feeling of reverence. The students

there are the pick of the young men of this country. They come from prominent families throughout the United States. Their scholarship is of the best. They excel not only in the arts of war, but are prominent in other things as well. When a young man graduates from West Point he is not only an expert in military drill, but he is also trained in the arts of diplomacy, in social life and knows not only how to deal with his enemies, but is also an expert at an afternoon tea.

It is very important, very necessary that a soldier should have good eyesight. He cannot very well handle his opponents properly in a fight unless he can see them. Although the men at West Point are selected for their physical and mental efficiency, they are liable to acquire nearsightedness, apparently just as much as other young men. I believe that such cases should be treated before glasses are prescribed.

Mr. L., aged 20, had normal sight before he entered West Point. After three years his vision began to fail. An oculist prescribed glasses. For a time the glasses gave him normal vision, but after a few months they were increased in strength. The patient did not like to wear glasses. He felt depressed over the fact that his sight was imperfect. Against his physicians' orders he laid aside his glasses most of the time and only used them for emergencies. Someone told him that it was possible for him to be cured without glasses. Full of hope he wrote to me, and asked me what I could do for him. In his letter he wrote:

"My trouble is myopia, brought on, I presume, by the great amount of study I had to do."

I have frequently published that straining the eyes to see at the near point always lessens myopia; it does not cause it. Straining to see at the distance always produces myopia in the normal eye and increases it in the myopic eye.

All persons with imperfect sight are able to demonstrate that they are staring. The normal eye when it has normal sight, does not stare. It is a truth, that imperfect sight is always accompanied by a stare. It is a truth because there are no exceptions. When the stare can be corrected the vision always improves.

Mr. L. called Oct. 14, 1923. His vision without glasses was less than 20/40. By palming and practicing the swing, his vision in a half hour became normal in each eye. He was able to demonstrate that when he remembered a white cloud in the sky, dazzling white with the sun shining on it and moving slowly, blown by the wind, that he could imagine one letter of the alphabet perfectly. For example he could remember or imagine he saw, with his eyes closed, a letter O with a white center, as white as the whitest cloud he had ever seen, but it was always moving. He could remember this and other letters perfectly black. With his eyes closed he could imagine that he put a small black period with the aid of an imaginary pen, on the right edge of the O. At my suggestion he placed another period on the left edge of the O. When he looked to the right of the O, the O was to the left of where he was looking. When he looked to the left of the O, the O was to the right of where he was looking. Every time his eyes moved to the right the O moved to the left in his imagination. Every time his eyes moved to the left the O moved to the right. With his eyes closed, imagining that he was looking alternately to the right and to the left, he could imagine the O was moving a short distance from side to side, not more than its own diameter. This he did easily, regularly and continuously.

He was asked to remember an imperfect O, one which had no white center, a gray letter covered by a cloud which made it so obscure that it might be anything. He found this required a great effort, an effort which was tiresome. Every once in a while he lost the memory of the imperfect O. He demonstrated that the memory, or the imagination of the imperfect O was difficult, very difficult, while the memory of the perfect O was quite easy.

He was a good patient. Possibly it was the training that he had received in school which gave him the wonderful ability to do just exactly what he was told, easily, quickly and without any difficulty whatever. It certainly was a great pleasure to me to observe that he obtained his improved vision so easily. Nine-tenths of my patients have never been so obedient. Some people talk about soldiers and speak more or less lightly of their discipline. I say lightly, because my conception of discipline was materially modified after my experience with this patient. He gave me a demonstration of discipline which I had not previously read in any book.

At one time I taught some of the simpler arts of military drill as an officer in a militia student company. At that time my conception of discipline was a popular one. I can recall how it annoyed me to have my soldiers do a lot of other things besides what they were ordered to do. This interfered very much with their ability to drill properly. In my private practice, when trying to benefit my patients I have been exceedingly annoyed by the arguments, questions and opinions indulged in by my patients, when I was trying to secure perfect rest or relaxation of their minds.

Stories from the Clinic

46: Our Last Christmas at the Harlem Hospital

By Emily C. Lierman

AS Christmas draws near, I keep wondering if my beloved kiddies, of the Harlem Hospital Clinic, will be taken care of this year, or whether they will be neglected. I am going to miss them so much. We expect to have a tree at our new clinic this year, distribute gifts to our Clinic patients and extend our good cheer as far as it will reach; but my heart goes out to the dear ones we had to leave behind, in that other clinic.

It is about them that I want to write, and try to give our readers a mental picture of our last Christmas with them.

First, I would like to tell of one little fellow, named Patrick, whose age was ten years. He had been coming to us for eight weeks or so before Christmas. His trouble was nearsightedness, and he had great difficulty in seeing the blackboard in school. His teacher had sent him for glasses and offered to pay for them herself. This was explained to me in a note which Patrick had with him. He was such a dear little fellow, and one of the best behaved boys in her class, she said. His family was very poor, but good people, so she wanted to pay for those glasses.

On his first visit, Doctor Bates examined his eyes, and then I started to treat him with the Test Card. His vision was 15/100 with both eyes, and also with each eye separately. He did not like to palm, but he kept his eyes closed as he was told, for over half an hour. His vision improved the first day to 15/20, which was very unusual. I told him to rest his eyes by closing them often every day.

The second week in December, just eight weeks since his first visit, he read 15/10 on the test card.

When he was told the day he would receive his Christmas gift and candies, he begged for permission to bring his baby sister and three brothers also. He did not mean to beg. I believe it was an unselfish thought on his part. He could not very well accept a gift when his sister and brothers had none. He was invited to bring his family to the Christmas party, and when I saw him that day he was radiant with smiles.

Our room surely looked as though Santa Claus had left his pack there. Three dozen dolls were arranged in one corner of the room, waiting with their arms outstretched for the little girls. An operating table came in very handy and was loaded with games and toys for our boys. Large Florida oranges, enough for every one, both young and old, filled another corner of the room.

Cornucopias, decorated with tinsel, and filled with candies, were hung all about, and was a pretty sight to see. Doctor Bates himself arranged them on the windows and screens, and wherever they possibly could hang. He was very much excited about it all, and it was a great joy to see his face light up with smiles as the children and adults entered the room. He watched the faces of the little children, and his heart was filled with joy, because his clinic family was so happy.

For several years it had been our pleasure to greet Dr. Neuer, in our room at the Christmas party. It was his delight to take one of the dollies and go from room to room, displaying that doll with all the joy of giving. Children suffering with tuberculosis, of whom many were cured by him, were never forgotten at Christmas time. When his eyes began to trouble him he came to Doctor Bates, and was cured without glasses. He did not mind in the least standing with the rest of our clinic patients, and when Dr. Bates invited him to his office, he said the dispensary was good enough for him. Shortly after our last Christmas party he was taken seriously ill with pneumonia, and died. He was loved so much by the poor of the clinic, that we know they will miss him, as our family will miss us.

Discarding Glasses at 60  
By Dr. Adolph Selige

ABOUT a year ago a friend of mine wanted to know what I could do for one of his employees, an old colored man, 72 years of age, who had gone nearly stone blind, and was unable to work. I had the book and magazines of Dr. Bates, and was overjoyed to put his theories to a good test, and so I told them to send the old man over.

I am happy to say that old "uncle" went back to work after the most strenuous treatment he ever had gone through in his life, and which he would never had done, if it hadn't been for his niece, a colored woman of fair intelligence, and so trained that she knew how to carry out orders. She made the old man walk the "chalk line," in regards to all the rules and regulations I laid down in regards to palming and reading the test card, and all the other stunts.

But, as I am a Naturopath, and believe that diet plays a most important role in creating causes of abnormal physical conditions of all kinds, he had to live on a very strict diet too, but I had the satisfaction to see some very noticeable improvement after a few days, and was able to send him back to his employer ready to work, in less than a month's time.

I had been a victim of "Glass-o-Phobia," for something like 25 years, possibly more, for the beginning has escaped my memory entirely. My glasses were such a nuisance, my eyes smarted and pained and became sore in spite of them, and every once in a while I had to have my eyes refitted.

I was delighted with the new ray of light that filtered into the thick fog, permeating my brain in the region which is supposed to contain "good common sense in regards to eyesight," and I began to see more clearly, after I had studied the book of Dr. Bates.

I resolved to apply this new knowledge to myself, and hoped to be able to get such fine success with the old negro uncle. There was an obstacle however, I was a busy man, and when I was not busy with my patients, I was either reading or writing, or using my eyes in some strenuous way, and of course, I could not possibly afford the time to put my glasses away and forego the pleasure of continuing the studies I was so interested in. So I kept on postponing the event and I promised myself to do it at the very first opportunity, until one Saturday night I found myself minus glasses, had forgotten to bring them, and instead of going back to the office, I just took the bull by the horn and decided to start "right now."

I sat and palmed and did the swing, and imagined and did all sorts of stunts and continued to do so on Sunday, nearly all day.

On Monday I just refused to be tempted to use my glasses, and put them on only in cases of the extremest emergency, such as when I had to sign my name to a letter, or when making an "Eye Diagnosis," which required effort more than a magnifying glass alone could afford me.

It was a torture for me to spend my leisure time between treatments, and my evenings and Sundays, without being able to pursue my studies, but I had resolved to stick it out and I did.

I found after a little while, that my sight began to get clearer, and sharper, and I did not miss my glasses so very much. I had carried them with me for emergency purposes, but used them only in very rare cases, finally I laid them away for good, when I went away on a four weeks' vacation.

During this time I took several Post Graduate Courses, made a lot of notes, and wrote under all sorts of conditions, and finally, got where I did not miss them at all.

I returned to my desk three weeks ago, and have not even looked for my glasses, and don't ever expect to.

It is now about three months since I began, I can read the smallest type of ill-printed newspapers at night, when I have a good light to see by, but have no difficulty at all during the day time.

I can feel my sight getting better and clearer right along, and feel that eventually my eyes will see without glasses better than they ever did see with glasses on, even though I am nearing my 60th birthday.

One of the reasons why I have not many cures of eye troubles to my credit is, because people are too comfortable, and do not care to make any effort to regain their normal sight—they would rather wear glasses, because it is less of a personal sacrifice.

As I mentioned before, I am a Naturopath, and believe in the unity of disease and the unity of treatment. I should like to go into this a little deeper, as it is fundamental to health and also applies to cases of abnormal eyesight, but lack of space forbids.

I may say however, that I believe quicker and more permanent results can be secured for relieving eyestrain, and its results, when the entire body gets on a normal basis, in fact I have often found my patients to experience quite a relief for their eyes, even though I was not giving their eyes any special attention, but had merely worked towards a general adjustment of their entire physical and mental being, through diet, rest, exercise, neuropathic and other treatments, and a better mental attitude.

Minutes of the Better Eyesight League

It is our desire to publish the minutes of the Better Eyesight League in each issue of the Magazine. With this thought in mind we printed the September and October minutes in the November issue. We would also like to place the November report in the December Magazine, but, owing to the League meeting late, we are unable to withhold the manuscript from the press until that time. The December meeting will be held on December 11th, at 383 Madison Avenue, at eight P.M.

The League of Orange, N. J.

AT the opening Fall meeting of the Better Eyesight League of the Oranges, held October 3, 1923, it was voted to hold open monthly meetings through the coming season, and the day decided on was the first Thursday of each month. At the suggestion of the President it was decided to hold clinics twice a week, so as to relieve the eye troubles of everyone possible. Dr. Browne kindly offered the use of her office on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and all were invited to come and help.

The Homemakers' Association also invited everyone to a meeting on the eighth, at which Mrs. Lierman was to demonstrate with children, how teachers and parents could prevent and cure eye troubles of children. Dr. Gore then suggested that the league be not only a "Better Eyesight League," but a "Better Health League of the Oranges," and cooperate with other organizations by inviting them to our meetings and having interesting speakers. He suggested several who would give talks, if invitee. So the first step toward a sort of federation was a plan that most of our meetings this year, give attention to eyes the first part and then to other organs or general health, for the rest of the time, and also a motion that for the November meeting we have Dr. Philip Rice give a talk on "Normal Unfolding or Growing into Health," and invite federation members. There was a rising vote of appreciation, of the work done by Dr. Gore, and the Secretary was instructed to send him a testimonial letter. Several informal talks were given by members, who told how wonderfully their eyes had improved during the Summer, and the enthusiasm of each was very marked. The meeting closed with a social hour and refreshments. There were thirty-five present.

LEULA BURTON,  
Recording Secretary.

The Passing of My Glasses  
By Mildred Shepard

[EDITOR'S NOTE]—It was at my earnest solicitation that Miss Shepard consented, after some time, to write a brief account of the mock ceremonies which took place when she formally discarded her glasses.

A SMALL, but impressive ceremony, was held a short time ago, along the shore of a certain lake in Massachusetts. The occasion was the internment or "Near" and "Far," the two pairs of spectacles once worn by one, now through with all glasses forever. This happy figure, posing in black robes, as the bereaved, was preceded in solemn procession by similarly black-gowned attendants. Four pall bearers bore the coffin, upon which rested the remains of "Near" and "Far," now passed all use in this life—God rest their tortoise shells. Sad, slow strains of the Funeral March, painfully drawn from a tissue-paper covered comb, mingled with those of "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Sheehan."

With measured strides the little, company moved along the lake shore, to the famous memorial boat-landing. There were gathered the chief mourners and friends, attracted thither from the turmoil of final examinations and arriving families, not so much out of sympathy for the bereaved, we fear, as by the promise of a funeral feast of ice-cream cones.

Already the Dumb-Boatman could be seen gliding toward the stone steps. Upon his arrival the coffin was lowered upon the pillows carefully, and in great determination the bereaved climbed into the gondola and dropped upon her knees. With bated breath, the onlookers waited while the tongue-tied man swung the boat out into deep water. A great, glad smile spread over the face of the Bereaved, as she laid to rest "Near" and "Far," her two steady, but now unnecessary companions of fifteen years. Closing words were pronounced by the Dumb Boatman.

"Unseeing Eyes"  
By Emily A. Meder

WE mortals have been heaped with blessings by the Divine power, and, as wonderful and great as some of them are, the act of seeing is most wonderful. Sight is like a great river, with hundreds of small tributaries, and streams branching from it. One of the streams runs to the mind, another to the heart, and so on. We see something new and interesting, and immediately our mind registers this fact, and causes us to speculate, surmise, and investigate. Then, if it might be a sad sight, the heart is instantly awake. There is no doubt, however, that while the sight is the greatest of God's gifts, it is also the most abused.

When one is interested in seeing glasses removed, and perfect sight prevailing everywhere, incidents relative to the subject are more readily noted. Just as a person going to buy a new hat, glances at all the head-gear which comes to view. The same can be said of shoes, and other articles of apparel. We are at that time, more interested in that article, therefore more note is taken of it. This puts me in mind of a story my teacher used to tell us.

A professor desired to impress upon his young charges the value of observation, regardless of the fact that at that particular time they were not interested in the subject. He sent one half of his class looking for a certain herb, and the other half for a particular specimen of stone. When the first half returned they had gathered quite a bunch of the desired herb, and the second half had some of the quartz, for which they were sent. The professor asked some of the members of his "herb class," if they had noticed any of the quartz while looking for the herb. They replied that they saw none at all. The same answer was given by the second half of the class, when requested if they had seen any of the herbs. If the whole class had been sent for the stone and herbs together, they would probably have had good success, but not being sent for it, they did not look for it or notice it.

This brings me back to the fact that being intensely interested in people with imperfect sight, who wear glasses, many unusual, and in some cases, humorous incidents are seen. One that was comical, if it had not been almost tragic, happened at Forty-Second street and Fifth avenue, just a few days back. A party of motorists was going west, but as the car neared Fifth avenue, the lights on the signal tower changed. The driver stopped, and screwed his face into a knot to try to see the colors. I immediately saw that the man was straining dreadfully, especially as he thought he was holding traffic up, not being able to see the signals. He moved his car nearer and nearer the curb to get a better look, until he was almost on top of the light. When he finally arrived at a point of vantage, where everything was visible to him, he discovered that the lights were yellow. He should have stayed where he was, as traffic was going north and south. In addition to extricating himself with difficulty, he was given a forceful opinion of himself by the angry traffic policeman.

Forty-second street also abounds in large optical stores. The pictures displayed in them are truly wonderful works of art. Some of them afford me great amusement, although they are worthy to be placed in an art gallery to be reviewed by the admiring public. How the artist must hate to spoil these by placing glasses on everyone of them. The most recent was a beautiful girl playing tennis. She had rosy cheeks, and a happy restful expression. In the first place, no one has that look of relaxation and happiness while wearing glasses. Secondly it must have been a dreadful strain to look happy, and balance them while running after the ball. Somewhat like a juggler balancing a feather on his nose.

Has it ever occurred to you that children are always in danger of being run over, by cars driven by people with defective vision? Just take note of the questions the traffic policeman fires at a careless chauffeur, and draw your own conclusions. When they have been remonstrated with for doing something wrong, the officer doesn't ask for a sample of his driving ability. The first order is "Can't you see where you're going? Are you blind?" Another question might be, "Do you see those signals? Why did you go ahead?" While the driver looks sheepish, he is politely told, "better have your eyes examined."

The following incident is a peculiar one, and rather embarrassing to the young lady concerned. She is the office assistant of an optometrist, and helps him fit glasses, and take care of his patients. One of our circulars advertising Perfect Sight Without Glasses [\[link\]](#) was sent to this doctor, who immediately threw it in the waste paper basket. The girl, having heard of Doctor Bates' work before, retrieved it, and sent for the book.

A few weeks later, the young lady wrote me, advising us that she not only discarded her glasses, but her eyes are feeling better than ever. Her enthusiasm, however, placed her in a difficult position. While the doctor was away for a few days' vacation, she was left in charge of the office. A middle aged woman came in, and wanted her glasses repaired. She said her eyes pained her terribly, and the glasses were absolutely necessary. The girl explained that the optometrist was out of town and would not return for a few days. The lady went away, but returned the next day, asking for the name of another doctor who could relieve her of her headaches. She was in a great deal of misery. Our enthusiast felt sorry for her, and showed her how to palm, swing, and remember black. Now this is the trouble—the doctor mended the glasses, but the lady never came back for them.

The Use of the Burning Glass  
By W. H. Bates, M.D.

THE normal eye needs light in order to maintain normal health and normal sight. People who do not see the sun always have eye trouble. Miners working in the dark all day long, and never seeing the sun, all have trouble with their eyes. Children living in dark tenement houses acquire a great sensitiveness to the light, and spend most of their time holding a cloth up to their eyes, or they bury their heads in a pillow, shutting out all light. They acquire many kinds of inflammation of the eyelids, and of the eyeball.

The burning glass has a very wonderful effect on some of these cases. I remember one man who had not been able to do any work because of the sensitiveness of his eyes to the light. He was very promptly cured by a few minutes exposure of the eyeball to the strong light of the burning glass.

In using the burning glass, it is well to prepare the eyes of the patient by having him sit in the sun with his eyes closed. Enough light shines through the eyelid to cause some people a great deal of discomfort at first, but after a few hours' exposure in this way, they become able to gradually open their eyes to some extent without squeezing the lids. When this stage is reached, one can focus with the burning glass, the light on the outside of the eyeballs, which at first is very disagreeable! When the patient becomes able to open the eyes, he is directed to look as far down as possible, and this can be done in such a way that the pupil is protected by the lower lid. It is not well to use the burning glass when the patient squeezes the eyelids shut. As long as the light is focused on the white of the eye, and is done quickly, all heat is avoided. The length of time devoted to focusing the light on the white part of the eye, is never longer than a few seconds, moving the light from side to side, up and down, or in various directions.

Announcements

REMOVAL NOTICE  
DOCTOR BATES' has removed his office to 383 Madison Avenue.  
The hours are from 9 to 6 by appointment.

BETTER EYESIGHT LEAGUE

The program committee is anxious for suggestions regarding meetings. If anyone has a helpful idea, please communicate with the chairman of the program committee, Miss Lillian Reicher, 108 West 115th Street.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It will help us considerably, and insure the prompt delivery of the Magazine, if our subscribers will inform us of their change of address.  
If for any reason the Magazine is returned to us, we will not ship it again, until we are notified of its nondelivery, and receive correct address from the subscriber.

REPRINTS

Among the reprints that appeared in medical journals from time to time, are the following, which are very instructive :

SHIFTING [\[link\]](#)  
THE CAUSE OF MYOPIA [\[link\]](#)  
MYOPIA PREVENTION BY TEACHERS [\[link\]](#)  
PREVENTION OF MYOPIA IN SCHOOL CHILDREN [\[link\]](#)

The Question Mark

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question—Can people over fifty be cured without glasses?

Answer—Yes.

Question—Is the treatment good for nervousness?

Answer—Yes. As a general rule the long swing is the most efficient.

Question—Is Central Choroiditis curable and does it require much treatment?

Answer—Yes, Choroiditis is curable and requires a great deal of treatment in some cases.

Question—Is conical cornea curable?

Answer—Yes, the variable swing has been a great benefit. This is described in "Better Eyesight," November, 1922.

Question—Why do I squint when I am out in the sun?

Answer—You are not accustomed to the strong light. Read chapter on sun-gazing.

Question—Why do my eyes water?

Answer—Strain.

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