March 1925

Better Eyesight

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

March, 1925

The Elliptical Swing

THE normal eye when it has normal sight is always able to imagine stationary objects to be moving from side to side about one quarter of an inch, slowly and without effort. This is called the swing. In order that the swing may be continuous, the movement of the head and eyes should be in the orbit of an ellipse, or in an elongated circular direction.

A patient, aged twenty-seven, with beginning cataract in both eyes had a vision of 3/200 when she looked to one side of the card. When she looked directly at the card or the letters, she complained that she could not see them so well, or at all. She was recommended to practice swaying the body from side to side. Every time she moved to the right or to the left, she stopped at the end of the movement and stared, and that prevented relaxation. With the help of the Elliptical Swing, she obtained at once very marked benefit. Her vision was improved almost immediately when she looked directly at the letters, and her vision became worse when she looked to one side of the card.

A young man, aged sixteen, was treated for progressive myopia for a year or longer. His vision improved for a time, then improvement stopped. Some months later his vision had not become permanently improved. Palming and swinging no longer helped him. I noticed that when he would move his head from side to side, he stopped at the end of the swing and stared. When he practiced the Elliptical Swing, his head and eyes moved continuously, and the staring was prevented. At once there was a decided improvement in his vision, and this improvement continued without any relapse.

Limits of Vision

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

THE text books on the eye which have been published during the past hundred years or more, state that normal vision is limited by the anatomi cal structure of the retina. They describe the size of the center of sight to be so small that it is not possible for the normal eye to see the line marked 20 on the Snellen test card at a greater distance than twenty or thirty feet.

It is well-known that persons can read smaller letters, or letters one-half that size, at the same distance. It can be demonstrated that the small letter O with a white center, which can be imagined to be whiter than the margin of the card, can be seen perfectly at any distance when one cart imagine the white center perfectly white. Some patients become able to imagine such a letter perfectly at thirty feet, a vision of 30/10. Others can imagine the small letter perfectly at a distance of forty feet, 40/10, at fifty feet, 50/10. The perfect imagination of the letter O, or of other objects is always associated with perfect sight of other letters or objects not known.

FIELD. In many cases of imperfect sight not only is central vision lowered, but there is also a loss of the ability to see objects off to one side. Perfect imagination is a cure for an imperfect field. In some cases of imperfect sight not only may the whole field be limited in its extent, but also small areas of the fold may be absent or modified. In some cases of disease of the optic nerve or of the center of sight, the patient's vision looking straight ahead may be imperfect or absent. Some cases of no perception of light in any part of the field have been observed in which the imagination of perfect sight has followed by a prompt recovery. It is difficult to understand in some cases of destruction of the center of sight of the retina, with total or partial loss of vision, how the use of a perfect imagination has been followed by a permanent cure.

NIGHT BLINDNESS. Some persons with imperfect sight see better in a bright light than they do in a dim light, and some cases are so marked that they have been described as cases of sight blindness. These cases are cured at first temporarily, later more continuously by the perfect imagination of the letter O or some other object as well in a dim light as in a bright light.

DAY BLINDNESS also occurs quite frequently. Some patients in a good light, with correcting glasses, may read only 20/100, but after the light is dimmed, the vision may become 20/10 without glasses. These cases are quite readily cured by the intelligent use of sun-gazing. When the patient becomes able to imagine letters in a bright light as well as in a dim light, the vision becomes normal.

COLOR BLINDNESS. All persons with imperfect sight have an imperfect perception of colors. They may see large letters blacker than small letters, or the white spaces in the neighborhood of large letters whiter than the white spaces of small letters. Some patients will describe the color of the large letter C of the 200 line as blood-red, or they may see the large or small letters a shade of blue or yellow, or purple, or any color. The perfect imagination of one letter or other object is a cure for these cases of color blindness. Even cases of color, blindness associated with diseases of the retina or of the optic nerve are cured by the intelligent use of the imagination. Persons born with color blindness are also cured in the same way.

SIZE. The size of letters of the Snellen test card or of other objects depends entirely upon the imagination. If the imagination is perfect, one may imagine the size of known or unknown letters at the near point or at the distance correctly. If the imagination is imperfect, the size of letters or other objects will be imagined incorrectly. It is interesting to observe that artists who are familiar with the sizes of things which they draw, very seldom present a perfect drawing of one object. A portrait painted by one painter may look entirely different from a portrait of the same person by some other artist. Most artists fail to make an accurate drawing of various objects, because of the variation in their imaginations from day to day, or under different conditions of light. A drawing may be made of a plaster cast which may appear all right when fast completed, but may contain many faults when studied by the same artist at other times, in other places, or under a different light. The setting sun usually appears to be much larger than it was when overhead. This is an illusion or an imperfect imagination. Some scientists have demonstrated with the aid of a photographic camera, that the sun is always of the same size when viewed overhead as it is when viewed on the horizon.

TREATMENT. It can be demonstrated that we see not the image focused upon the retina, but our interpretation or our imagination of this image. Imagination, when used properly, is the most satisfactory, most accurate, most helpful method that we know to obtain perfect sight. As can be demonstrated that if our imag-ination for something is as good at twenty feet, forty feet, sixty feet, or further, as it is at a nearer point where we see it perfectly, our vision is just as good as our imagination. It can be demonstrated that it is only pos-sible to remember perfectly what has been seen perfectly. We can only imagine perfectly what we can remember perfectly. We can only see perfectly what we can imagine perfectly. These facts can be considered to be true because there are no exceptions. The difference between a theory and the truth is only a difference of fact. A theory is not destroyed by any exception, but one exception destroys the truth. The truth admits of no exception. The only reason we cannot see a star with the naked eye as well as with the telescope is our lack of imagination. To improve the imagination it is first necessary to improve the memory; to improve the memory it is first necessary to improve the sight; to improve the sight it is first necessary to improve the imagination.

HALOS. For example, persons with good sight appear to see the white spaces between the lines of fine print to be whiter than the margin of the page. It can be demonstrated that this is an illusion. We do not see illusions; we only imagine them. When the white spaces between the lines appear whiter than the margin of the page, we call these white spaces halos. Most of us believe we see them, and it is very difficult for many people to realize that the halos are not seen, but only imagined. The halos might be called the connecting link between imagination and sight. To see the halos is to improve the imagination, and the vision for the letters is also improved. One can improve the vision for reading not by looking at the letters, but by improving the imagin-tion of the halos. To look at the letters very soon brings on a strain, with imperfect sight. To look at the white spaces and to improve their whiteness, is a benefit to the imagination and to the vision. One cannot read fine print at all unless the halos are imagined. By practice one becomes able to imagine or to see the halos more perfectly—the better the imagination, the better the sight.

Stories from the Clinic

No. 61: Two Blind Girls

By Emily C. Lierman

ROSALIE

ONE day a doctor asked me if I would help two blind girls that he knew. I said I would be glad to see them, and help them if I could. One was Eleanor, aged sixteen, and the other, Rosalie, aged seventeen.

Dr. Bates examined their eyes with the retinoscope, and this is what he found. Eleanor had myopia in the right eye and atrophy of the optic nerve in the left eye. This is very seldom or never cured. There was a good deal of inflammation inside of both eyes.

Rosalie had retinitis pigmentosa in both eyes, and could not count fingers in an ordinary light. This is also a very serious defect. In. a very strong light she could at times count fingers I' held close to her eyes. Rosalie would cure anyone of the blues because she carried a smile that was continuous. She had black curly hair and olive skin. I held a conversation with her for a few minutes purposely in order to get acquainted, and also to watch her eyes while she was talking. The first thing that I noticed was that she stared and kept both eyes open all the while she was talking. I did not see her blink at all. She had a habit of talking rapidly, and I noticed that she moved her eyes from side to side about at the same rate that she spoke. This is called nystag-mus. I held the Pot Hooks card with the letter E of different sizes, pointing in various directions, close to her eyes, and she said I was holding something white before her.

I asked, "Do you see anything else on the card?"

"No," she answered.

Then I placed the palms of her hands over her closed eyelids and told her that this was palming. I told her that it was necessary to remember agreeable things, and she said she could easily remember her music. I could well believe that, because she already had a good reputation as a pianist. She had won the district bronze medal, the highest reward she could obtain in her school. After she had palmed awhile, ten minutes, I held the test card close to her eyes and asked her what she saw. She said the white card was covered with black spots. Quickly I told her to palm again for a short time. After about five minutes I told her to look at the card again, and this time she recognized the large E of the 200 line. We all rejoiced, because the rapid movement of her eyes from side to side had stopped temporarily.

Then I placed the card on my desk about a foot away from her, and told her to palm again. When she opened her eyes later she saw the 100 line letters.

The next time she came I placed her two feet away from the card. After palming a short time she read the 70 line letters. She palmed again, and this time her vision improved to 2/50.

The chaperon for the two girls did not realize that it was possible for Rosalie to read the alphabet or to read figures. She taught Rosalie at my suggestion. Her vision improved after she vision to 1/40 for the Pot Hooks, the letter and figure cards. The nystagmus had disappeared permanently. I am sorry that she was unable to visit me until she was cured.

ELEANOR

Eleanor's vision with each eye was 3/100. Her vision was improved by palming and by the long swing. She could make out figures much easier than letters, so I placed the figure test card at five feet from her eyes. While she was moving her body from left to right, she was told to glance at the figure I was pointing at. She was told not to look at the figure longer than a second, otherwise she would be tempted to stare, and her vision would be lowered. She practiced this for a few minutes and her vision with both eyes improved to 5/50. Her left eye, which had atrophy, was greatly relieved by the sun treatment.

Every time she came for treatment, which was once a week usually, her vision improved for another line of the test card. Changing cards helped to improve her vision also. After the regular C card was used, we tried the Pot Hooks card. Eleanor never had anything to say, but did just as she was told. When her vision improved and she became able to read small letters and figures, she would smile and become very much excited. In one week's time her vision improved to 6/20 with both eyes. Then I gave her small type, called diamond type, and asked her to hold it six inches- from her eyes. She could see black spots on the little card, she said, but nothing more. I gave her the sun treatment for a few seconds, and right away she became able to read the fine print.

Later we used a black card with white letters, which Eleanor liked very much. I placed it ten feet away from her and I noticed that she turned her head over to one side in order to read the letters. The distance of only one foot caused her to strain while trying to read the strange card. I directed her to swing and blink as she flashed the white letters I was pointing at. In less than a half hour she read the letters one line after another with her head perfectly straight. She was given the sun treatment about six times in one hour, and was encouraged to read the card after each treatment, and before she left me her vision had improved to 6/20.

I did not see her again for a few weeks, and I feared that she would not get along so well by herself. When I saw her again she surprised me by reading all the different cards she had practiced with and she was able to keep her head perfectly straight. Her vision had im-proved to 6/10. Eleanor plays the violin and sings. Always when I guided her in reading the card with her head straight, I reminded her of her violin and how well she could play something that she knew. This always helped to improve her vision.

Eleanor and Rosalie left the city for a time, and I did not see them again.

The Sun as a Cure for Imperfect Sight

By Emily A. Meder

The article reprinted below gives us the opportum to dwell in a little more detail on the benefits of the sun fore cases of defective vision. Although this subject was discussed in the January issue, too touch stress cannot be laid on it:

SIGHT RESTORED BY SOLAR ECLIPSE

Lodi, N. J. January 27.—As the result of looking at the eclipse of the cun late Saturday, Louis Peronla, 54 years old, professes to have regained his sight after having been unable to see without glasses for seven years due to cataracts.

Peroila had undergone four unsuccessful operations for removal of the cataracts.

After he had gazed at the sun without smoked glasses he suffered severe pains, but within a few hours his sight began to return to normal and he discarded the strong glasses he had worn for seven years.—Cincinnati "Inquirer."

I HAD an experience last week, which served to bring home more forcibly, the great healing, alleviating power of the sun.

I was to spend a few days at the ocean-side, and arrived in the midst of a terrific storm. The sky was black, the rain came down in great sheets, and the waves beat ceaselessly against the rocks under my window. It was a little frightening, watching this, but soon the rythm of the gathering, rising, and recoiling of the huge billows seemed to form a natural swing. I could relax by moving forward and backward, almost imperceptibly, with the rise and fall of the waves.

The next day was beautiful, with the ocean smooth and peaceful, and the sun shining gloriously on everything. I left the hotel for a stroll along the boardwalk, but upon emerging from the dim light into the blazing sun, I was blinded. I tried to open my eyes but found them straining to close, and it seemed as though a great flashlight was being focused on my eye-balls. The sudden strain brought on a severe headache. Perhaps it was the glare of the sun on the water, or it may have been the intensified brightness after a dark and gloomy day that caused the sudden blindness.

There was a summer house about fifty yards off, overlooking the ocean. I made for that, and sat down, facing the water, and with the sun beating down on my closed lids. After about fifteen minutes of this sunbath, I was able to open my eyes with comfort, and look across the water. The glare was gone, but I found it difficult to look directly at the sun. I just lazily shifted my glance from one object to another. A flock of sea-gulls amused me for about an hour. In my interest in them, I forgot about the sun's effect on my eyes, and caught myself glancing straight up, watching the flight of a particularly energetic pair of birds. There were so many of them, they were all so busy and active, that my eyes were not still for one moment.

I palmed again for about ten minutes, and when I removed my hands, I saw a fleet of four sailing ships away off in the distance. I could barely discern the outline, but this was more remarkable, because I did not see them when I first sat down, and they were much nearer then.

Before I left, I could look directly at the sun for about five seconds, but had to keep it swinging. Another unusual feature was that the sun, instead of being a blazing red, as it first appeared, changed to a silver or white color. This was more relaxing and soothing. Dr. Bates informed me that the sun always looks white to those with perfect sight.

Thus first attack was the only one I had during my stay. I enjoyed the sun and glanced up at it whenever I thought to do so, without discomfort. Pain and tension immediately disappeared.

With the spring on the way, there will be more opportunity to give your eyes a sun treatment. Try it.

Report of the League Meeting

By Mabel A. Young, Secretary

THE regular meeting of the Better Eyesight League was held at 383 Madison Avenue, Tuesday Teeening, February 10th. Miss Secor our new president, presided, and welcomed the new officers of the League.

It was moved and seconded that the time of the meetings be changed from the second Tuesday to the first Tuesday, the change to take effect in April. The motion was carried.

The speaker of the evening was Captain C. S. Price, of London. He said that there is a Better Eyesight League of many members in England, but that they do not hold regular meetings, as is done here. Each member is doing definate work. Having no direct contact with Dr. Bates, they have gained their knowledge of his methods from an intensive study of the book. It is interesting to note that the different workers more or less isolated, gained similar results by different methods.

The members of the English League have tried to avoid anything that would cheapen the work. They try to hold it above any idea of empiricism or quackery, and take their work where they find it near at hand. They fast cured their relatives and neighbors. They worked for results, got them, and the news has spread.

Captain Price spoke more particularly of his own work, and that of his colleague, Miss K. Beswick. He said that back of all eye troubles are mental factors. He has given much thought to the psychological side of this work. People need, first of all, to be made to realize the value of sight. Relaxation is a prime necessity, and the ways of securing it are numerous. No two patients respond to treatment in the same way. The teacher must approach them on their own ground. He would not use the same method with an artist as with a mathematician. The body must also be considered as a whole, and the eye as a part of the body. The very poor people commonly live under conditions which make relaxation impossible, and many of them visit the clinic and ask to be allowed to merely sit there and rest. A tired person must rest before he can relax.

Thousands of poor patients are treated in the free clinic each year, some of them having been discharged from the hospitals as incurable. Myopia is rare among them, and cataract and blindness are common. The work was first carried on in institutions, but as its unorthodox character became known, Capt. Price and Miss Beswick were debarred from working there. The most of patients followed them however, and visited them in their free time at the office.

Captain Price described several cases. One man had his eye removed by an operation. The other had not been used for eighteen years, and had atrophied. After six weeks practice, the patient was able to open the lids an eighth of an inch. The eye when seen was a horrid looking mass—inflamed and sunken. It is now fully developed, has perception of light, and he can distinguish colors.

A lady who had been blind eight and a half years from glaucoma, and who had been discharged from the hospitals as incurable, now plays cards without glasses and takes her friends to see the shops.

Captain Price's talk was followed by a discussion, when he answered the members' questions. Dr. Darling, Dr. Achson, and Mr. Hunnel spoke. the latter telling of his wonderful success with this method in the schools. Mrs. Lierman described several interesting recent cases from her clinic.

The members of the League were concerned to learn that Dr. Bates is seriously ill in the hospital, due to an operation on his arm. Before the meeting adjourned, Mrs. Marsden proposed that the League send flowers to him. It was voted to do so.

Suggestions to Patients

By Emily C. Lierman

THERE are many reasons why some patients do not respond readily to treatment. A few of these are listed below.

1. If the vision of the patient is improved under the care of the doctor and he neglects to practice when he leaves the office, what he is told to do at home, the treatment has been of no benefit, whatever. The improved vision was only temporary. Faithful practice improves the sight to normal.
2. If the patient conscientiously practices the methods as advised by the doctor, his vision always improves. This applies to patients with errors of refraction, as well as organic diseases.
3. For squint cases we find that the long swing is beneficial to adults and to children.
4. When a patient suffers with cataract, palming is usually the best method of treatment, and should be practiced many times every day.
5. All patients with imperfect sight unconsciously stare and should be reminded by those who are near to them to blink often. To stare is to strain. Strain is the cause of imperfect sight.

Announcement

Beginning with April, 1925, the BETTER EYESIGHT LEAGUE will hold its regular monthly meeting on the first instead of the second Tuesday.

The March meeting will be held on the second Tuesday at 8 o'clock, as usual. This falls on the tenth. The League meets in the Central Fixation office, 383 Madison Ave., and the many ways of improving the sight are discussed.

Everybody welcome!

The Two Princes

By George Guild

A YOUNG prince and his brother were confined in a tall, stone tower far away from their home. The jailer had received orders to feed them very little, and if they died he would receive a big reward. Under these circumstances the two princes did not have an enjoyable prospect. Both of them were famous throughout the kingdom because they had seen fairies. Furthermore they had taught other young children how to see fairies. They spent a great deal of their time in the top of the tower looking for the fairies in the distant woods and in the green fields close by. This improved their sight and the improvement in their vision was followed by an improvement in their ability to remember, imagine, and to plan things to help other people as well as themselves. If you look for the fairies, sooner or later you will see them. The desire to see the fairies is a great benefit to the eyesight. They wrote many letters to their friends asking to be rescued. The fairies visited the young princes frequently, and advised them to treat the jailer very kindly and to notice the result. It was not long before the jailer, under the influence of the kind treatment recommended by the fairies, fell in love with the two boys, and treated them better than most fathers treat their children.

One day, as they were looking out of the window high up in the walls of the tower, they saw coming towards them an army of children. It seemed that all the musicians in the country were with them. The dancing and the laughter were very considerable. When the children reached the tower, without the permission of the jailer, many of them rushed in and overflowed the place. Those who couldn't get in, stayed outside and made an awful lot of noise. Suddenly fro)i the woods an army of fairies appeared, all dancing and singing and happy as they coulo be. The children welcomed them, clapped their hands and incited them to dance on the green. While the fairies were dancing and the children were trying to imitate them, the princes came down from the tower and danced with them. The jailer was so taken up by the unexpected attentions of the children that he forgot all about his princesses.

One of the fairies said, "Let us play 'Follow my leader'." She started off to run, and all the others behind her, but there were so many that they lost the leader and found themselves just going back toward London.

About this time the jailer appeared, and in a loud voice called out that he had something to say. So they placed him on top of a pillar where he could be seen by everybody. "My friends," he said, "I am only a poor jailer. Some wicked men in London came to me and offered me money to murder the two princes, because after they were killed their cousin would ascend the throne. But the fairies treated me so nicely and the princes treated me so nicely that instead of being their enemy, I am now their friend. Follow me to the house of those wicked men, and we will put them in a jail from which there is no escape."

All the men and women and the fairies and the children followed him to the house where the wicked people lived, and they were all dragged out and thrown into jail and placed under the care of the jailer. Then the princes and the fairies and all the people rushed up to the palace of the king and queen, and drove away the wicked soldiers who were holding them prisoners. The two princes were restored to their parents and there was great rejoicing. The king and queen felt very much indebted to the fairies because it was through their activity that things had all turned out so well. The two princes improved their sight very much by looking for the fairies; and the eyesight of the children in the kingdom was improved because they had to imitate the princes and be in the fashion.

Read Fine Print

ALL of us imperfect sight is just the result of our using our eyes wrong, and permitting bad habits to grow on us. Staring is only a bad habit, but it causes a great deal of trouble. When it is stopped and the eyes are rested by palming and blinking, the eight is immediately benefited.

Bad habit number two: The reading of large type in preference to fine print. It requires more of an effort to see a large letter than a small one, strange as it may seem. When you look at the big C on the Snellen Test Card, you don't see it all at once. You have to look at one part here, the hook on the upper right hand corner or the curve on the left side. You cannot look at the hook, the space on the right and the curve on the left side all at once. Some people think they see it at the same time, but they do not. Their eyes shift from one point to another, unconsciously.

Fine print is a benefit because it cannot be read while the eyes are under a strain. They have to be relaxed. For instance, in reading the chapter printed below, you cannot accomplish anything by staring at the letters, or screwing your face into a knot. Do not look at the letters but at the white spaces between them, and imagine them whiter than the margin. Blink and shift constantly to avoid the stare. If your eyes feel strained, stop and palm. You will notice that where it all looked blurred before, a word will appear clear and distinct. By constant practice more words clear up, until the entire chapter can be read easily.

Questions and Answers

Question—Explain what you mean when you say "imperfect sight, imperfect memory."

Answer—If you see an object imperfectly, blurred or gray instead of black, you cannot remember it perfectly. You will remember it as you see it.

Question—My eyes feel fine after I palm and let my mind drift on various black objects. The period is more difficult though.

Answer—Perfect mental pictures of ordinary objects means a perfect mental picture of a period. To try to see is an effort or strain, and produces defective sight.

Question—By blinking do you mean shutting and opening the eyes quickly, or in done closely, like a wink?

Answer—Blinking is done quickly, and not slowly like a wink. Watch some one with perfect sight do this unconsciously, and follow his example.

Question—How can one overcome the stare if it is unconscious?

Answer—Blink consciously, whenever possible, especially when reading. Never look at an object for more than a few seconds at a time. Shift your gaze.

Question—I have noticed when I palm that my eyeballs hurt from the pressure. When I loosen this tension the light filters in.

Answer—Palming is done correctly with the fingers closed and laid gently over each eye, using the palms like a cup. If this is done properly there is no pressure and the light is shut out.

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