

April 1926

Better Eyesight

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

April, 1926

Demonstrate

THAT the optical swing always improves the vision.

Stand before an open window with the feet about one foot apart. Sway the whole body, including the head and eyes, from side to side. When the body moves to the right, the head and eyes also move to the right, while, at the same time, the window and other stationary objects are to the left of where you are looking. When the body sways to the left, the window and other stationary objects are to the right. Be sure that the head and eyes are moving from side to side with the whole body, slowly, without an effort to see. When the swaying is done rapidly, it is possible to imagine stationary objects are moving rapidly in the opposite direction. While the swinging is being practiced, notice that the window and other stationary objects which are nearer, appear to move in the opposite direction to the movement of the body, head and eyes. Objects beyond the window may appear to move in the same direction as the body, head, and eyes move.

Note that when the body is swaying rapidly, the window and other objects are not seen very clearly; but when the swaying is slowed down and shortened, so that parts of the window move one-quarter of an inch or less, the vision is improved for those parts of the window regarded. More distant objects, which move in the same direction as the movement of the body, head, and eyes, are also improved with the slow, short, easy swing.

After you have become able to imagine the window to be moving, practice on other objects. All day long, the head and eyes are moving. Notice that stationary objects are moving in the opposite direction to the movement of the head and eyes. To see stationary objects apparently stationary, is a strain which lowers the vision and may cause pain, fatigue, and other discomforts.

Retardation

By W. H. Bates, M. D.

WHEN pupils in school fail to maintain the scholarship of other and normal children of the same age, their mental efficiency or their standing is said to be retarded. Such children may remain in the same low grade for several years with no apparent improvement in their scholarship, and are seldom promoted. The cause is rarely due to an impaired mentality. The fact that all of those observed have been benefited or cured by eye-mind education, is convincing evidence that retardation is functional.

Imperfect Sight

Imperfect sight is usually associated with retardation, which is very prevalent. When these cases improve, their vision always improves. One principal reported that all the school children in the rapid advancement classes under her jurisdiction had normal sight without glasses. In all the other classes the percentage of retardation was very high, and in some classes all the pupils were suffering with retardation. It was customary to separate the children whose retardation was extreme and put them all in one class under the control of one teacher. The teacher told me that after she had improved their vision, their scholarship advanced and they were transferred to the usual grades.

Retardation Cure

For many years, retardation has been studied by competent men; all sorts of causes have been ascribed to this condition, and remedial measures have been practiced which have heretofore not been of the slightest benefit. The method which I suggested was very simple. A Snellen test card was placed in the classroom in a place where it could be seen by all the children from their seats. Sometimes two or more cards were placed upon the wall. Every day for a short time under the supervision of the teacher, all the children read the card, first with one eye and then with the other, while one eye was covered with the palm of the hand in such a way as not to, press upon the eyelids.

Benefits

The teacher told me that the use of the cards in this way after a few weeks or months was followed by an improvement in the sight, when the retardation became less. One benefit of this practice was that it relieved or prevented headaches and other discomforts. The ability of the children to study was stimulated. The memory, imagination, judgment and other phenomena of the mind were very much benefited. It was also encouraging to note that, with the improvement in their retardation, a larger number of children continued in school than ever before. In the beginning, many of these children were so unhappy and so uncomfortable in school that they were usually anxious to stop school and go to work. After their retardation was improved and their vision benefited, they said that they could look at the writing on the blackboard and read it without discomfort. They also said that they could study without getting headaches. Furthermore, they seemed to become able to remember and understand what they read or what they studied.

Truancy

Truancy was very common among the children who were suffering from retardation. After the retardation was relieved or cured, truancy became very much less and the children volunteered the information that after they became able to read or study without discomfort, they could understand better the lessons that were assigned to them. Children who were very restless and mischievous, so-called bad boys or bad girls, became model pupils and very easy to handle.

Stare

The evils of retardation were numerous. The cause was always a stare, a strain, or an effort to see. The cure was accomplished by teaching the children how to use their eyes without staring or straining. While reading the Snellen test card in the way just described was a great benefit, there were other methods practiced by some children which were an added benefit. One teacher from the northern part of the State of New York was exceptionally good and was able to keep order in her classroom when other teachers failed. She wrote me that she always began the day by having the children palm, or cover both closed eyes with the palms of the hands in such a way as to exclude all light. This the children did for fifteen minutes and then they started in with their work, feeling rested and comfortable. When she noticed them becoming fatigued, she had them practice swinging, and the result was that they continued their work without becoming restless.

Memory

Another teacher, living in Chicago, found it an advantage to teach the children how to remember. This was accomplished in some cases by having the children remember their own signatures at first, as well as they could. They improved their memory by alternately looking at their signature and then closing their eyes while remembering it. The children were able to demonstrate that it was easier for them to remember one word of their signature than three or more words. They also found that they could remember one letter of their signature better than the whole word. By practice, they became able to remember a part of a letter better than the whole letter, and the smaller the part remembered, the more perfectly was it accomplished. Many of them became able to remember a small period perfectly black, as well with their eyes open, as they could with their eyes closed.

Imagination

This teacher also improved the imagination of her pupils. Some one would read a story. Then all the children would palm and remember the story as well as they could. After opening their eyes, they would try to illustrate the story in various ways. The teacher sent me about forty illustrations, and I found them very interesting. They were unusual, but the teacher claimed that doing these unusual things was a great benefit to a large number of children who were suffering from retardation. Coincident with the improvement in the memory and the imagination, was a corresponding improvement in the sight. There were other benefits just as important in value.

Adults

Adults also suffer from attacks of retardation. For example, a portrait painter may do good work for a longer or shorter period, but at intervals his work becomes decidedly poor, unsatisfactory, and a failure. Writers, financiers, inventors, teachers and professional people of all kinds, have attacks of retardation, when their mental efficiency is lost or impaired, usually suddenly, for longer or shorter periods of time.

Automobile Drivers

It is an interesting fact that people who drive motor cars suffer greatly from eyestrain. Taxi drivers are under more or less of a nervous strain. I am very fond of talking to these people about their work, because, being very observant, they teach me a lot. Many of them have told me that when they had an accident, it was difficult for them to believe that it was their fault. At one time a taxi-driver ran into another, broadside on. There was quite a smash-up and a number of people were injured. The taxi-driver was not detained very long, and later he came to see me about his eyes. Among other things he said: "Doctor, I never saw the automobile that I ran into. I never knew it was there until after the smash. Do you think there is anything wrong with my sight?"

I tested him very carefully and found that his vision was 20/20 with each eye. I examined his eyes very carefully with the ophthalmoscope and finally I said to him: "You have perfect eyes, but you don't always see with them."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean this,—that while your sight is perfectly good usually, there are times when you become totally blind. Everybody with perfect sight does not have perfect sight all the time."

"Well," he asked, "what am I to do?"

After talking to him for a while and explaining what I meant by the stare, the strain, or trying to see, and how one always stared when one had imperfect sight, I told him that the remedy was to use his eyes in such a way that he did not stare. Riding all day long in a moving car, he should notice that the road in front of him comes toward him, while objects on either side of him, move in the opposite direction. In this way he would not stare so much and the attacks of imperfect sight would be eliminated.

Sailors

A sea captain called on me one day with a history of imperfect sight at irregular intervals. When his sight was tested with the Snellen test card at twenty feet, his vision was normal. I told him that he had perfect sight. I examined him with the ophthalmoscope and told him that he had perfect eyes. "Well," he asked, "why do I have those attacks of blindness when I cannot even see a big lighthouse, when I cannot see a large vessel coming, towards me sufficiently clearly to avoid a collision?" I talked to him the same way I had to the taxi-driver and he, very grateful, left the office.

Stories from the Clinic

No. 74: RETARDATION

By Emily C. Lierman

ABOUT seven years ago, a girl aged sixteen, was treated for a severe inflammatory trouble with her eyes. She was brought to me by her father. Her eyes were paining her continuously and her vision was very poor. To protect her eyes from the light, she was wearing glasses which were so thick that her vision was lowered to a great extent by them. The suffering of the girl was pitiable. It was impossible for her to do any reading whatever, and she had been compelled to stop school two years previously.

The first thing we did for her, was to give her the sun treatment with the aid of the sun-glass. Before she was placed in the sun, she was instructed to close her eyes and keep them closed until she was told to open them. She was then placed in a chair where the sun shone directly on her closed lids, while she moved her head continuously, a short distance from side to side. After ten minutes, her eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the sunlight. With a little encouragement, she succeeded in opening her eyes while looking far down. The upper lid of each eye was gently raised sufficiently to expose the white of the eye to the direct rays of the sun. Her eyes rapidly became more and more accustomed to the strong light, until she was able to stand the light focused in flashes on the white part of the eye with the sun glass. Her vision at times was 20/200. Best of all, she was able to open her eyes without discomfort. It seemed like a miracle. For the first time in two years, she was free from pain. Both she and her father were very happy. Whereas, at the beginning, her father had led her in the room, she led him laughingly out, without the thick dark glasses on. Being of a nervous temperament she would, at times become hysterical as her vision improved, but after she was entirely cured, she seemed like a different person. Her nervousness disappeared and her manner was calm. As she became more accustomed to the strong light, her vision gradually improved to the normal.

Palming helped her very much. Imagining stationary objects to be moving whenever she moved her head and eyes, relieved or prevented the stare or trying to see. The memory or imagination of perfect sight enabled her, at the same time, to read the Snellen test card with normal vision, at first in flashes and later more continuously. The greatest benefit she obtained from the eye treatment, was that her mind became able to do things with much greater efficiency and her memory was decidedly improved. She became able to remember a small black object, or a small black period, as well with her eyes open, as she could with her eyes closed. Formally, when she read a page of history, she had to reread it half a dozen times before she could understand any page that she read. In three months time, her trouble had entirely disappeared; she returned to school and her friends and teachers were amazed at the great change in her. After her eyes were cured, she read the pages in her history book only once, and not only grasped the meaning but also was able to remember it for six months or longer without having to read it again just before examination time. At one examination, the questions were written on the blackboard and, after she read them, she was shocked to find that she could not answer a single question. Fortunately, she remembered her eye treatment and the little black period. With the help of palming, swinging, and the memory of perfect sight, she remembered the answers to all the questions.

This experience that she had, is very valuable because she was cured of an attack of retardation by simple methods which could be employed in all schools, colleges or elsewhere in the business world.

The principal of this school visited Dr. Bates to learn more about our method of treatment and also placed herself under his care until she was cured without glasses. She had been wearing them for presbyopia.

Some years ago I wrote about a group of children who were suffering from retardation. Their teachers could not understand so many failures. After it was discovered that they had imperfect sight, the school nurse sent them to the optician to be fitted for glasses. Later, it was noticed that even though they were wearing glasses, the retardation still continued. A little girl from the same school, who wore glasses, came to our clinic and was cured without them. She encouraged other children to come to us. Part of this large group of children who came were the "Wild Indians," I wrote about in my book, "Stories from the Clinic." [link] The little girl who encouraged them to come, was a very good assistant for she knew, exactly how to start each one with the treatment. With her help, all of them were cured without their glasses.

This happened in the Spring when the thought of being promoted was uppermost in their minds. Through one of their teachers, who was cured of her myopia by Dr. Bates, I learned that all were promoted with the exception of one little boy. Not one mother of any of those dear children was any happier than I, when they brought the joyful news to me. I was proud of my work and proud to tell it, too.

During that vacation, two public school graduates, who were under treatment for their imperfect sight during the previous Spring and had obtained normal vision, told me how they had successfully passed all their tests. One of them said, "If it had not been for the memory of a little swinging black period which I never forgot, I am sure that I would have failed." The other graduate said, "I did not need to remember anything in particular when the tests were easy, but you bet I never forgot the movement of a small black period when the test was difficult."

I believe retardation will no longer exist when imperfect sight is avoided and eye-glasses are a thing of the past.

Retardation

By M. F. Husted

Superintendent of Schools, North Bergen, N. J.

IT has been found by educational experts that certain norms for the Age-Grade location of pupils should exist. Pupils above this age for the grade are classed as Over-Age for their grade and pupils of this age are classed as Normal Age and pupils below this age are classed as Under-Age. Classes, schools and school systems are considered in good condition when the number of over-age pupils does not exceed the number of under-age pupils. It is considered by administration experts that this standard test of a school system affords the best single test of the value of the school work done. The normal ages are determined by expert educational authority to be used as follows:

Grades.....IIIIIIVVVIVIII

Normal Ages.....6-77-88-99-1010-1111-1212-1313-14

Pupils who are over this age are known as "Retarded" or as "Repeaters."

REASONS FOR RETARDATION

1. All experience shows that "All men are" not "created equal."
2. Parents change places of residence and pupils change schools. These pupils are not promoted at the end of the term, as are pupils who have spent the entire year in one school.
3. Ill health of a pupil or in a family, irregular attendance, prevents the receiving of the usual amount of instruction.
4. Entering school so late as to produce over-age.
5. Misfits for a grade for a time—those who do not speak English.
6. Changes of teachers are too frequent.
7. The quality of teaching is too low because teacher-training is too little.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The Boston National Educational Association Meeting in July, 1910, which the writer attended, contributed the following: "Children who make rapid progress (underage) through the grades shall at least equal in number those who make slow progress (over-age). At the present time this condition does not exist commonly, if indeed it does anywhere. It is probably a most conservative statement to say that in the average city there are at least ten times as many children making slow progress as there are making rapid progress. To change this condition is the great school problem. "Develop and perfect measures:

1. For conserving and increasing the physical soundness of pupils.
2. For discovering and excluding cases of contagious disease.
3. For finding and having remedied physical defects.
4. For making the entire school and its surroundings happier, healthier and more wholesome.
5. For that sort of record-keeping that shall enable the school to keep track of each individual child from the time he enters school until he leaves and to tell when he fails and why he fails and guide in preventing him from failure.
6. For changing our courses of study or our methods of grading and promotions so that the children who make rapid progress through the grade, shall be at least equal in number to those who make slow progress."

One of the important remedial measures in solving this great problem is not emphasized, namely: better and more efficient methods of teaching, this is what North Bergen has relied on to produce its progressive betterments in age-grade conditions.

Because "Retardation" means a below normal standard of attainment for pupils, and a higher standard of cost for communities, North Bergen, N. J. has, since 1907, given this problem special attention.

EDUCATIONAL WASTE

The factors used in reducing this educational waste of time and money, and waste in community progress, are:

1. Better methods of teaching.
2. Closer supervision of school work.
3. Better cooperation of parents.
4. Better school attendance.
5. More of the play spirit in class work.

(TABLE A)

PERCENTAGE OF RETARDATION DIMINISHES

1913	1916	1917	1918	1919
Under-Age	19	23	28	29
Retarded	27	19	16	13

1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
Under-Age	29	30	30	30
Retarded	14	13	14	13

According to Dr. Ayres, the founder of the age-grade method of measuring school progress, the table A, above, indicates a high standard of school attainment. Under-ageness of 19% in 1913 was gradually increased until in 1921 the table shows a 30% distribution. Retardation of 27% shown in 1913, is gradually further reduced and shows only 13% in 1918.

The excellence of these conditions is also seen from a comparison of North Bergen with other systems.

(TABLE B)

COMPARATIVE DATA FOR 9 CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

(American Ed. Digest, May, 1924)

City	Per cent Under-age	Per cent Normal	Total Under-age Plus Normal	Per cent Retarded
New York City.....	14.0	46.0	(60.0)	40.0
Seattle, Wash.....	10.5	47.6	(58.1)	41.9
Newark, N. J.....	14.3	40.7	(55.0)	45.0
St. Paul, Minn.....	6.7	45.9	(52.6)	47.4
Reading, Pa.....	7.2	44.9	(52.1)	47.9
Grand Rapids, Mich.....	9.0	43.0	(52.0)	48.0
Omaha, Neb.....	5.0	37.0	(42.0)	58.0
Portland, Ore.....	4.0	31.0	(35.0)	65.0
Birmingham, Ala.....	1.3	19.0	(20.3)	79.7
North Bergen, N. J....	29.0	57.0	(86.0)	14.0

Nine cities are ranked in the order of highest efficiency as shown by the combined number of under-age and normal pupils (column 3).

The excellence of these conditions is also found in the fact that Americans exploited the efficiency of German schools—exploited by Germans to American pedagogues visiting the German Empire and they in turn to American Educators. Their schools contained 50% of retardation but this was not revealed until statistics leaked out after the war.

EYE-MIND EDUCATION

After working ten years upon the solution of the problem of Retardation, I found that we had about reached its maximum reduction for several reasons:

Teacher and pupil morale waned and effort accordingly, because:

1. Retardation problem was no longer a stimulation.
2. Because of the disorganization due to influenza epidemic.
3. Because of emphasis given to well known differences in pupils.
4. Because of emphasis given to intelligence testing.
5. Because of unsatisfactory salary conditions.

In the midst of these perplexities, salaries were raised and Eye-Mind Education was practiced for the purpose of maintaining the high standards we had attained. After careful analysis, observation,

and personal tests, I became convinced of its great educational values. After seven years' experience with Eye-Mind Education, I class it as one of the marvelous discoveries of the present age, second only to that of radio waves and their control. The Bates' method of Educating the Eye-Mind, to prevent and remove eye and mental strains, to prevent and lessen Retardation in schools, is soundly established. Its contributions to the happiness of mankind is unspeakable.

Since 1920 our records of progress in Eye-Mind education have been carefully made.

Not only does eye-mind education place no additional burden upon the teachers, but by improving the eyesight, health, disposition and mentality of their pupils, it surely lightens their labors and furnishes an additional means of preventing retardation.

In 1924, out of 129 pupils wearing glasses, 18 were found with normal vision and 111 with vision below 20/20. Out of 4,026 pupils without glasses 1,133, or 28.1% had below-normal vision. The total below-normal vision was 1,244 out of 4,155 pupils or 29.9%.

In this year out of 118 below-normal pupils wearing glasses, 89 or 75.4% improved and of 1,072 pupils not wearing glasses but having below-normal vision, 693 have improved, or 64.5%. Out of a total of 1,190 pupils with below 20/20 vision, 782 improved, or 65.8%. Of those who improved 342 even attained normal vision, or 43.7%. This is indicative of what may be attained by this educative process under more systematic and persistent procedure.

Dr. William M. Carhart says in the Medical Times: "Not all retarded children are so retarded from eye strain, but the effects of eye strain are one of the main causes of such retardation.

The vision tests of 1925 showed that 17% of pupils with glasses had normal vision and 64% without glasses had normal vision. The year's work produced wonderful effects in Eye-Mind Education. The records show 70% of those wearing glasses were improved, that 87% of those not wearing glasses improved, and that of those improving, 56% attained normal vision.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The writer had 24 years' personal experience in wearing glasses, most of the time with bifocals. After this 24 years' knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of glasses, they were laid aside on August 15, 1924, and have not been worn since.

Owing to attained age and 24 years of Eye and Mind strains being physically recorded, Eye-Mind improvement was slow but marvelous and my visual difficulties are now confined to poor print, poor type and poor light. I have attained wonderful improvement in this one and a half years of Eye-Mind practice. On many occasions truly miraculous conditions prevailed. They were periods of reflective, very free thinking, when thought flowed, was created as fast as pen could write. There was ease, relaxation of eye and mind. A noted experience of this occurred on the morning of November 3, 1925, after I had read some article upon school work. I was seeing thoughts with my mind's eye. Near and distant vision was wonderfully free and clear. These experiences and phenomena have occurred many times during the past six months. The thrill of ecstasy, and feeling of freedom during these periods, arising from a complete emancipation from the thralldom of wearing glasses and their effects, are indescribable. They indicate an intimacy of relationship between the mind and matter never fathomed, and they also indicate that man is still a free agent to search out truth and happiness, and if he wills to use and uses his intelligence and available scientific data, he may carve out a new birth of freedom and progress for the human race. Man creates his own destiny.

Eye Education as an ally of mind development, of eye and physical health conditions and of human efficiency and happiness, should be practiced in every American school. Excepting radio, it is the miraculous wonder of the great age in which we live.

Questions and Answers

Question—At intervals, sometimes months apart, I find my eyes twitching but it is hardly noticeable to an observer. What is the cause and how can I overcome it?

Answer—This is caused by mental tension which has a direct effect on the eye. Practice relaxation methods, palming and swinging.

Question—Why does eating ice cream hurt my eyes?

Answer—Because the nerves of the eye are in direct relationship with the roof of the mouth, and the sudden chill makes the nerves sensitive.

Question—If I am worried at night and lie awake, my eyes burn and pain, and I have a feeling that a magnet is drawing my eyes through my head. What causes this and what is the cure?

Answer—This is caused by the tension of the mind. Just before retiring and the first thing in the morning, practice the long swing.

Question—If I am sitting in the sun reading, I can see the print perfectly and my eyes do not trouble me, but if I raise my eyes and look at any other object, everything seems blurred and there are colored spots before my eyes. Is this caused by the sun or the manner in which I read?

Answer—The sun is beneficial to the eyes but the glare of light on the white page produces a tension of the nerves. The sun treatment should help you to become accustomed to the strong light. Sit in the sun with the eyes closed, allowing the sun's rays to shine directly upon the closed eyelids as you slowly move your head a short distance from side to side. Practice this daily for half an hour or longer.

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