April 1923

Better Eyesight

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

April, 1923

WATCH YOUR STEP

WHEN you know what is the matter with you it is possible for you to correct it and bring about a cure. If you do not know what is wrong with you the cure of your imperfect sight is delayed. Some persons have been cured quickly when they were able to demonstrate that to see imperfectly required a tremendous effort, an effort which was very difficult. Some persons are cured in one visit and they readily demonstrate that imperfect sight or failure to see is difficult. Others require weeks and months to demonstrate the facts. Perfect sight is quick, comes easy and without any effort whatever.
Imperfect sight is slow, difficult. One cannot consciously make the sight worse as readily as it can be done unconsciously. There is no danger in demonstrating the facts.
Look at a small letter on the Snellen test card which can be seen clearly at ten or twenty feet, a letter O for example. When the letter is seen quite perfectly it is usually seen without any apparent effort. However, by looking intently, staring at it and making an effort to improve it the letter blurs. It can always be demonstrated that the effort to see very soon blurs the letter. Now close the eyes and rest them for a part of a minute or longer and then glance at the letter again. It will usually be as clear as it was before. Again by straining, making an effort, the letter becomes blurred. One can readily demonstrate that to make the sight worse requires an effort, a strain.
Many obstinate cases have obtained a permanent cure only after learning how to make the sight worse consciously. In my book are published Seven Truths of Normal Sight. Prove the facts by demonstrating that the sight becomes imperfect when one or all of them is made imperfect by a strain.

An Opportunity for Teachers
By W. H. Bates, M. D.

THE future of this country is in the hands of the children. The children are in the hands of the teachers. Parents spend relatively very little or no time with their children while the teachers supervise the lives of the children for at least six hours a day. The duties of teachers have been increased very much in recent years. There was a time when the child got all the possible education from the home but now some children do not even get enough to eat at home and the teachers have supplied food, heat, warm clothing, fresh air, exercise and games. We ought to be very grateful to the teachers because they not only supply the necessities but also the pleasures which children need. A certain amount of physiology, a certain amount of morality and religion is important, and the child obtains it from the teacher in these days of enlightenment, much more than the child obtained them in the days of our fathers. I do not believe that most people realize the value of the teachers' services. It is a pity that their salaries are so low.
It is interesting to note that teachers do a great deal more for children than they are expected to do be the Board of Education or the Board of Health. The intelligence of the teachers regulates even the average adult and no matter what the ignorant people of the Board of Education or the Board of Health may insist upon, the teachers open the windows and give the child fresh air and many other things. So valuable are the teachers to the children, so valuable are they in many ways that one cannot lay down laws and rules for the teachers to follow. Quite often they will break a law when in their judgment the law is bad and you take notice the teacher is not expelled.
All the rules for the teachers to follow made by the physicians and other people, are followed when in the teacher's judgment it is best to obey these rules and I like to realize that teachers have the backbone to stand up for the right things as they see them, and to give help no matter what other people may say.
I am interested in the eyes of the school children. It seems to me a crime that young children should have to wear glasses; even children before they enter school, nursing babies, have occasionally been compelled to wear glasses. There was a time when I prided myself on my ability to prescribe glasses, even taught other doctors how to do it but I never fitted young children with glasses because it was very rare to find children under six years of age who could be manifestly benefited by wearing glasses. One teacher told me that the Board of Health of the City of New York not so very long ago sent a doctor to examine the eyes of her pupils. He prescribed glasses for every one of these children and even insisted that she should wear glasses. I told the teacher what to do and she very promptly became able to use her eyes without glasses and without any discomfort whatever. As one child after another lost their glasses the teacher told each child who was not wearing his glasses what to do to improve his sight and finally every child in her class obtained perfect sight without glasses after they stopped wearing them. Furthermore the scholarship of her pupils improved immensely.
By practicing Central Fixation her children had no more headaches when they looked at the blackboard or when they read their books. Surely what that teacher did was not a crime and what she did other teachers can do all over the United States. The number of children wearing glasses is steadily increasing. I have many school children brought to me wearing glasses, to be cured of their symptoms without them and I find that in a very large percentage of these cases the glasses prescribed were very weak and entirely unnecessary. By a little test, palming and swinging, the vision became normal and the eyes perfectly comfortable without glasses. Here is a great opportunity for all the teachers in the public and private schools to come forward and do the common-sense thing for their pupils. Of the hundred and ten million people in the United States when we average five children to a family, the number of children is approximately eighty million. Of course these figures are not at all accurate but even though there were only one million school children in the United States it would be worth while to preserve their eyesight. The majority of people are poor, they cannot afford to pay for eye glasses or to pay the doctor for his examination. The teachers have aided materially in supplying glasses to their pupils because they thought the glasses were necessary. Every teacher cured of imperfect sight by reading my book or practicing my treatment is able to cure every one of her pupils. There may be some exceptions to this but I have found out that so long as the child is able to see to come to school, the child can be benefited by the teacher. From time to time I have published articles on the prevention of imperfect sight in school children. From time to time I have cured teachers so that their sight became normal without glasses. Always I have urged them to do something for their pupils and many of them love, but there are a certain proportion of teachers who lack the courage of their convictions and neglect to do what they are able to do. I wish I could say something that would encourage such teachers to go ahead and benefit their pupils. They cannot do any harm to a child suffering from headaches; the child can be relieved of a headache by closing the eyes and palming. No eye specialist, no person of average intelligence would object to a child resting his eyes. Taking a test from his studies is not a crime and most teachers have the judgment which is accurate, and can tell better than anybody else how much rest a child ought to have. Teachers can help individually whereas the general law, where it may be all right for certain people and the majority, is not always proper for individuals. Every day school children come to my office and I tell them to take off their glasses. When the children are allowed to practice my treatment they get well without glasses. I think that is much better than to condemn them to the use of glasses for the rest of their lives. My discoveries in physiological optics have demonstrated that all children wearing glasses can be cured without them.

Stories From the Clinic
By Emily C. Lierman
CRIMINALS

SOME years ago I was asked to go to Ossining to assist in examining the eyes of some of the prisoners. I firmly believe that if the prisoners had had no eyestrain their minds would not have turned to crime.
A foreigner who was imprisoned for arson told me in a few words how sorry he was that he set a building on fire for five dollars. He could not get work he said because he had bad sight and as a new baby was coming into his home where there were already three, he was desperate and so he did as he was bidden for a nominal sum of five dollars. Here was a foreigner who could hardly speak English who was willing to do most anything for his wife for a wonderful new five dollar bill. Four years had already been spent in prison and through the kindness of Warden Osborne, who was at that time doing such wonderful work inside the prison, he was allowed to live in a cell where there was a little bit of sunshine now and then. From being in a dark cell before Osborne came, for one whole year, the sight of his sight eye was practically destroyed.
There were so many patients in the room, sent there to be examined by Dr. Bates that we had very little time to devote to each one individually, but I arranged a test card on a desk and placed him about five feet away from it and in just a few moments time I improved the sight of his good eye from 5-200 to 5-50. He was so overjoyed that he fell on his knees before me and held my two wrists very tightly, pleading with me to help him out of prison if that was possible, for he was eager to go to the new baby who arrived after his sentence. Some people might say, "Oh, yes, he told you a hard luck story," but I can understand all about it or at least enough to convince me that if conditions had been better for him when he came to this country perhaps he might never have been there.
So many times I have found that patients who come to us at the clinic are wearing the wrong glasses for their eyes. It is not always eyestrain which causes trouble for some patients but the mistake of the optician who contrains a terrible error.
I would like to tell about a recent case, a girl, eleven years of age, who had myopia with glasses on and almost normal vision without them. As I do not test the strength of eye glasses of the cases which come to me, I was not at all sure whether the child was wearing them for fun or not The first question that came to my mind was, was she wearing her mother's glasses or someone else's, just because she enjoyed wearing glasses, so I asked Dr. Bates to test them and find out whether the child was telling the truth or not. At 15 feet I asked the child to read the test card and with glasses on she read 15-100. I took off her glasses and she just stared at the card and that was all. I told her to do the usual thing, just close her eyes to rest them for a moment or so. When she opened her eyes again and looked at the card she read without a stop from the 200 line letter down to the last letter of the 20 line. She looked at me in great surprise and smiled. The discovery that she made seemed to give her a thrill. I asked her then who fitted her for glasses. She said that the school nurse had called to see her mother and complained that the child could not see the blackboard nor could she read the test card when her eyes were examined in school, so her mother immediately took her to an optician to be fitted for glasses. She said that the optician had charged her mother $4.50 for glasses and for the examination of her eyes. To my mind this was not only an error but a crime.
Sometimes as I go along the streets or ride in a car early in the morning to my work, I watch a policeman as he walks along his beat looking in at each store window because they are told to do so to protect the storekeeper. I wish there were policemen who understood the fitting of glasses who could invade the stores of opticians such as this one who fitted this child with the wrong glasses, and bring them to justice.
This little girl of whom I started to write is not the criminal kind. She is a wholesome kiddie, just full of life, and when I told her that it was a great mistake for her to wear those glasses she promptly put them away in the case and begged me to help her some more. I gave her perfect sight that day and she has not been to me since. Her little friend who brought her the day she came told me that Belle was not wearing glasses any more but sat in the back seat of her class room showing off to her teacher for all she was worth reading the blackboard better than she ever did in her life. She also told me that Belle informed the teacher about our clinic and showed the teacher how to palm. She is what I call a good league member for she is surely spreading the work in the classroom and can do more than I can because she is right there.

Dr. Bates' Lecture
By L. L. Biddle, 2nd.

FOR the benefit of those who were unable to attend Dr. Bates' Lecture, before the New York Association of Osteopaths, at the Waldorf Astoria on Saturday Evening, February 17th, I decided to take down a few notes which I will now try to compile.
The chairman introduced Doctor Bates by stating that the Osteopaths take away the crutches and Doctor Bates takes away the glasses. After arising to the platform he did not start right in his subject but first rather humorously referred to a previous speaker who had been advising the doctors how to invest their money. I forget his exact words, but the substance of it was that he was impressed by the apparent prosperity of this assemblage. For at all the medical meetings he had ever attended, the doctors had never found it necessary to be advised how to invest their surplus capital. This seemed to strike their sense of humor and put everyone at his ease.
He then commenced by telling how he made his first discoveries and cited the opposition he had to back against. He stated that his attitude of mind, ever since he was a little boy, was to find out all the facts possible about a subject and then work on these as a basis rather than on a guess or theory. When he commenced practicing medicine in 1885, one of the first patients who came to him had a slight degree of myopia or nearsightedness, Upon examining his eyes with the ophthalmoscope, he found that the patient was not nearsighted all of the time. When the patient was looking at a blank wall and not trying to see anything, his eyes were for short periods, normal. He persuaded this patient to go without his glasses, and his eyes finally reached a point where they stayed normal all the time.
Doctor Bates said that he then started boasting around the hospital about this cure. However, it got so on the house–surgeon's nerves that he brought up a ward patient who was nearsighted, and with him Doctor Bates managed to have equal success. Much to his surprise, instead of the rest of the doctors praising him, and trying to find out how he accomplished these heretofore impossible cures, Dr. Bates suddenly became very unpopular with the rest of the staff. These successes nevertheless spurred him on in his experiments at the New York Aquarium and at the laboratory of the Columbia College for Physicians and Surgeons, and as a result he discovered that the accommodation of the eye is not brought about by a change in the shape of the lens, but by the lengthening and shortening of the eyeball itself, as the bellows of a camera.
When he explained and illustrated this to his doctor friends, it disturbed them greatly. The surgeon who had charge of the laboratory came to him and said: "Do you know that you have proven that Helmholtz is wrong and furthermore if you wish to be accepted by scientific men you will have to show how or why he blundered?" This was quite a proposition, but Dr. Bates continued his experiments and for two years tried to prove that Helmholtz was right, but failed, and finally discovered how Helmholtz blundered; which Doctor Bates has illustrated in his book. As a reward for this, he was expelled from the University.
This was quite a handicap, but he obtained a small laboratory for himself and continued in his work. He told us of a specific case: A woman wearing very strong glasses brought her daughter to him, because the little girl's eyes were getting so bad that she could not continue at school. When the woman, in her usual cross manner, told her daughter to take off her classes and read the test card, she was only able to read the top letter. Doctor Bates then very kindly asked the child to close her eyes and rest them. After a little while he asked her to open her eyes, and tell what she could see. Much to their surprise the little girl read the whole card. Her mother was very happy and said that she would see that her daughter would practice every day with the test card as Doctor Bates prescribed. In a few days, however, they returned very discouraged and the mother said that her child was only able to read the top letter on the test card. Doctor Bates said that he asked her who had tested the girl's sight, and the woman admitted that it was she. He remonstrated with her, and reminded her that he especially asked her to stay out of the room when her daughter was practicing, and to have someone with normal sight test her. He then took his little patient as before and speaking to her kindly had her rest her eyes, and she again read the whole card.
Doctor Bates stated that he cited this example to show how the strain which this woman was under from wearing very strong glasses, was contagious, and harmed her daughter's sight. Moreover, he said that it showed how the child's state of mind directly affected her ability to see. For when she was spoken to kindly and her mind was relaxed, her eyes were rested and she read the whole card. He explained that when one's mind was under a strain one unconsciously tightened the muscles which encircle the eyeball, and consequently squeeze it out of shape and out of focus. But when the mind is at rest these muscles are relaxed and the eyeball is allowed to assume its proper shape and focus. He furthermore stated that all diseases of the eye can be cured by similar relaxation, which can be obtained by methods Dr. Bates has developed. He said that all children under 12 years of age not wearing glasses can obtain perfect sight by reading the Snellen Test Card once a day, first with one eye and then with the other.
He once more reiterated his old challenge which he first gave before the New York Medical Association ten years ago, declaring that if anyone can prove one of his statements wrong, then all are wrong. He also stated that he has not found a case so bad or so blind that he could not benefit, and that he has not yet met his Waterloo.
He then returned to his seat, but was so applauded and urged to continue that he finally stated that if anyone wished to remain and ask further questions, he would be glad to answer them. This they all did, and fired questions at him until it became so late that in order to make his train, he was forced to break away.

Parents' and Teacher's Page
By Emily Meder

WE ARE adding this new feature to the magazine for the benefit of those who are vitally interested in the preservation of school-children's eyesight.
Parents are directly responsible for the welfare of these future citizens but we find that this is lightly shifted to the shoulders of the teachers who only see the pupils one-fifth of the time that the parents do. When this great truth is brought home: THAT ALL DEFECTS OF THE EYE ARE CURABLE; THAT ALL DISEASES OF THE EYE ARE FUNCTIONAL, THEREFORE CURABLE, then we can reach the parents who are criminally placing glasses upon their children. When told in Doctor Bates' own words, it is all so logical and easy, but the difficult part of it is to convince mothers that they are doing the wrong thing. The writer of this article has grown very fond of a little neighbor in the apartment next door. The little girl is four years old and has a very bad case of crossed eyes which is greatly exaggerated by a pair of tortoiseshell glasses. Her mother is constantly admonishing her not to run and jump with Buddy, her little brother, for fear that she might injure the precious goggles. I spoke to the mother about Dr. Bates' methods and that I knew the child could be cured: but when I suggested that she remove the glasses, the idea was met with a chuckle: This woman, although having the best interest of her little daughter at heart, was doing the worst possible thing for her. She could not overcome the old set ways of doing things. She accepted as true the theories that are retarding progress and obscuring the light of newer things. We pity the Chinese for their lack of interest in the new world and the thousands of discoveries and inventions which would advance them hundreds of years, but even in our own twentieth century we find cases of this "bowing to old customs."
When Dr. Bates realized the value of his discoveries, he immediately took steps to have this method placed at the disposal of school officials; however, because he could not affort to pay the price to these officials for the privilege of giving away his life work and because many obstacles were placed in his path to discourage him from removing glasses from the universe, this great work was retarded and the money and work expended, while great in itself, was only "a drop in the bucket."
The teachers and nurses of schools, however, who do not have to be financially reimbursed are doing good work. They places test card in the class room and have the pupils read this once every day. A record is taken of each child when he first begins and this is compared with the record taken two weeks later. The teachers are always amazed at the results.
I have in front of me a letter written to Dr. Bates from a nurse who installed this system in her school. Among other reports, is this one of great interest. She said, "the children come to me just before the close of the morning session. They palm and do the swing either with the head alone or with the entire body. Later I found that the swing was more successful than the palming, as the latter was irksome to the child." Another extract reads, "I helped correct squint in a child and his eyes remain straight unless he strains. His sight has also improved in spite of the fact that he practices less at home than any of the others, and needs constant urging."
This letter speaks for itself. These are the worthwhile things and anyone who reads this page, can improve the eyesight of a child with defective vision. We shall be glad to answer all questions through the magazine and give directions. Don't let your boy or girl grow up with imperfect sight. The eyes are truly the windows of the soul and if these are not normal, the whole physical outlook is altered.
If you are a teacher, look at your little charges and see if they need help. It is so easy, and means so much. If you are a mother, you will probably know now, why your child does not romp with the others.
Defective Vision Covers a Multitude of Ailments.

Minutes of The Better Eyesight League

AT LAST dramatic action was taken at the last Better Eyesight meeting. One by one the officers dropped out, and the members themselves seemed to lack interest or ambition or that intangible something which brings results. In lieu of the regular officers, we had to enlist the services of various members who were kind enough to officiate. Miss Hurty had acted in this capacity for the past three meetings, and we were exceedingly glad to have one so capable.
We noticed a greater part of those present were strangers, and people who had inquired about Doctor Bates' work, and had been advised to attend one meeting, and get some idea about his method, and how others are being helped. We were very glad indeed to see these new faces, and to have them hear the wonderful reports some of our members made. Among the most important of these reports. was that given by Doctor Waters. He is practicing Doctor Bates' method, and is keenly interested in the sight of school children. There is a sub-normal school in Orange, N. J., with an attendance of about forty children. Out of the forty which he examined, five had normal vision. He installed the method by explaining Dr. Bates method to the teachers, and placing in the class room a Snellen Test Card. We shall be very interested to know at the next meeting, what progress has been made.
There is so much work to be done among the children, and we wish every one who reads this magazine, to have the pleasure of saying that they helped cure a child of imperfect vision. The field is so large, and the workers so few. There were a great many who told how they improved their own vision, and how elated they were, but there were none who told if they benefited others.
Miss Meder, who represented the Central Fixation Publishing Co., said that she desired to have a clear understanding about just what the Better Eyesight League meant, and how the Central Fixation Publishing Co. was affiliated with it. The Company is taking charge of Dr. Bates' publications, and in addition to this, selling optical instruments to other doctors. These, together with the advertising of the book and the regular routine of the office work, was all that the present office force could possibly handle. However, all the work of the Better Eyesight League was thrust upon the manager's shoulders, and this necessitated hiring extra help to apprise the members of the meeting date, get the reports in order, order camp chairs, etc. Also the Better Eyesight League does not pay for itself, and this extra expense was assumed by the Publishers of Doctor Bates' book.
When this was all explained to the assemblage a few of the members were greatly impressed at the enormity of their mindsets. It had never been expected that the Central Fixation Publishing Company assume any responsibility of the Better Eyesight League. Mrs. Duggett took the floor and her energetic style of speaking was good to hear. She aroused interest in those who were new, and woke up the lagging ones who are members. She appointed a reorganization committee, including Miss Hurty, Miss Reicher, Mr. Biddle, and herself. When they get together and talk things over, we are more hopeful of a brighter outlook. If the members could only realize the bigness, the importance of this work, we are sure that there would be a better attendance, and a more enthusiastic one. Those who attend the meetings are enthusiastic, but there are not enough of them. Everybody come. The fact that Doctor Bates is willing to answer all questions, ought to be an inducement in itself. If you have the book, and are doubtful about any one thing, he is glad to held you. You know what Dr. Bates is doing. Help him. Most of all help the children. Remove The Glasses.
The April meeting will be held as usual on the second Tuesday of the month, which falls on the 10th.

The Question Mark
By M. E. Marvin

For the benefit of those who are undertaking the cure of imperfect sight by following Doctor Bates' book we are adding a new feature to our Magazine and calling it the "Question Mark."
Questions in regard to the treatment are bound to arise from time to time, and these, we shall be pleased to answer either by mail or through this column, according to the request. If personal answers are to be made kindly enclose stamped addressed envelope.
What is Central Fixation?—S. P.
Ans.—Seeing best where you are looking; that is, an object, for instance, a chair, look at the arm or the leg. The object is brought out clearer. Trying to take in the whole chair at once, strains the eyes, and the object becomes blurred.
How long does Dr. Bates' treatment take?—L. M.
Ans.—This depends on the seriousness and nature of your defect. The average case takes three weeks. Some are cured in less time and some take longer.
Shall I have to leave off my glasses while practicing the treatment?
Ans.—Emphatically yes. No permanent benefit noticed while glasses are worn.

Are cataracts curable without operation?—A.W.M.
Ans.—Yes.

Previous Issue
THEMATICALLY ARCHIVED Issue
THEMATICALLY ARCHIVED To Contents Page