October 1922

Better Eyesight

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

October, 1922

PRACTICING

A GREAT many people have asked, "How much time should one devote to practicing the methods of central fixation in order to be cured of imperfect sight without glasses?"
The answer is—ALL THE TIME.
One should secure relaxation or rest until one is perfectly comfortable and continue feeling comfortable as long as one is awake.
The feeling of relaxation or comfort can be obtained with the memory of perfect sight. Even if one cannot remember perfect sight one can imagine it. All black objects should be imagined perfectly black. All white objects observed should be imagined perfectly white. All letters observed should be imagined perfectly and everything that is seen should be imagined perfectly.
To imagine anything imperfectly requires a strain, an effort, which is difficult. Choose the easy way. Imagine things perfectly.
If you try to imagine an object as stationary you will strain and your sight become impaired. All day long the eyes are moving from one point to another. Imagine that objects are moving opposite to the movement of the eyes. If one does not notice this one is very apt to strain and imagine things stationary.
One can practice properly for ten minutes and be comfortable. That does not mean that all the rest of the day one can strain and tear one's eyes all to pieces without paying the penalty for breaking the law. If you are under treatment for imperfect sight be sure to keep in mind all day long from the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night the feeling of comfort, of rest, of relaxation, incessantly. It is a great deal better to do that than to feel under a strain and be uncomfortable all day long.

THE MINISTER
By W. H. Bates, M. D.

The case of this minister is interesting because he found out by himself that rest is a cure or a prevention for eye troubles. He reached the same truth, partly by accident, that has been demonstrated scientifically by my experiments, research and successful practice.

HIS daughter came to me for treatment of imperfect sight from myopia. After she was cured she told me that she had two brothers who also wore glasses, but that her father, a minister, 65 years old, had perfect sight in each eye, for distance and for reading and had never worn glasses. I was very much interested in the father. At my request he came to the office for an interview.
His vision in average sunlight was 20/10 with each eye. An ophthalmoscopic examination revealed a normal eye with no evidence of any disease whatsoever. He read diamond type at six inches or less and as far off as he could reach, about twenty-four inches or further. I told him that his eyes were unusually good not only for the near point but also for the distance. I asked him to tell me how he had escaped glasses for reading.
"Well Doctor, when I was about 45 years old," he informed me, "I had some trouble with my eyes after a period of hard work. As my eyes are very necessary to me in my work, I felt that I could not afford to neglect them and once consulted a well known eye-specialist. When I told him my age he was very much concerned and said that I should have had reading glasses sooner in order to prevent all strain and injury to my eyes. He gave me a prescription for glasses and insisted that I use them whenever I did any reading.

Professional¡¡Yes.¡¡Commonr¡¡Sense

"He talked to me at great length and explained how the focus of the eye is changed from a far point to a near one by an alteration in the shape of the focusing lens of the eye, and that with advancing years the lens became harder as the bones becomes harder, with increased difficulty of the lens muscle to alter its shape. On account of this fact one must wear glasses to prevent strain and injury to the eye, he said.
"I obtained the glasses but did not have occasion to use them right away and found that after a few days of rest my eyes became as comfortable as they were before I consulted the specialist. I did some reading without the glasses and without discomfort. By resting my eyes frequently I became able to read for longer and longer periods of time. And so I let matters drift and I have never felt the necessity of glasses all these years.¡¡I must admit that I am very careful not to strain them and only read when they feel comfortable.
"Closing my eyes rests them and this I do quite often and I have become so expert that I can rest them by closing them for only a few seconds at a time. Momentary closure of the eyelids for a fraction of a second is beneficial to me."
I was delighted to hear him talk and told him that he had discovered and demonstrated that my methods for treating imperfect sight are correct. When I asked him to look at one letter on the bottom line, 20/10, and asked him if he could see it continuously, he said he could. Then I asked him if he could imagine it moving from side to side, a very short, slow, easy movement. It was on the tip of his tongue to say something and then he said with an air of surprise:
"Why, I verily believe I do imagine it is moving, but the movement is so slow and so short and so easy that I would not have imagined it if you had not called my attention to it."
Then I said to him:
"Can you stop the movement?" He looked away.
I said to him: "Why did you look away?"
He answered: "Because when I tried to stop the movement it gave me a pain and I lost the letter and the whole card became blurred."
He was ready to believe me when I told him that he could demonstrate that it is impossible to imagine a letter stationary and that it could be readily demonstrated that one could only remember, imagine, or see a letter which is moving.

Effect of Painful Memories

He also demonstrated that when he saw a letter, he saw always one part best and that his eyes were continually shifting from one part of a letter to another. If he tried to see the whole letter perfectly at the same time, he felt a strain and his vision became imperfect. He was one of the very few patients who was able to demonstrate that he could not see perfectly when looking straight at a letter, and that his sight was best when he looked a very short distance to each side of a letter. Staring always lowered his vision and produced pain.
He could remember a letter O with a white center perfectly white with a slow, short, easy swing and remember it continuously. He could remember a number of letters, which were perfect, but if he remembered or imagined a pain, his memory became quite imperfect. The memory of fatigue, the memory of a cough, a cold, rheumatism or any other disease or the symptom of any other disease, always impaired his memory and he could not remember a letter perfectly.
I told him that a perfect memory of white, black, red, green or any other color, prevented pain and he believed me. I suggested to him that being a minister he would have abundant opportunities of helping people who were sick in mind or body, that all he had to do was to teach them what he already knew about the sight and he would do them a great deal of good spiritually as well as mentally.
We had a very delightful hour together and I was sorry to see him go. Before he went, I asked him, "How is it that you did not do something for your daughter and your two sons instead of recommending them to me?"
He answered, "Doctor, I am not a physician; while my treatment was a benefit to me, I do not feel that the same treatment would be a benefit to other people. Of course I could not see any harm in it but at the same time I was timid about assuming the responsibility of practicing medicine on my family."

STORIES FROM THE CLINIC
By Emily C. Lierman

Two more colorful bits of human interest, form the pen of Mrs. Lierman. Dr. Bates' regular clinics in the Harlem hospital are attended by many incidents replete with blended humor and pathos, and Mrs. Lierman is a skillful narrator of them, indeed.

A YOUNG man came to the clinic recently suffering terrible pain in his eyes and head. He complained that he could not stand the light. He told Dr. Bates that he had been to other clinics where they told him he had iritis. Getting no relief from eye drops which were given him by others, he came to us to see if he could help him.
Dr. Bates examined his eyes and said that the other doctors were right. He did have iritis. I did not know what the discussion was between this young man and Dr. Bates so while Doctor was busy with other patients, I started to treat this case of iritis without realizing that the eye was diseased. I noticed however that the eyes were inflamed.
As I do not always ask the patient what the trouble is, on account of the short time we have to treat each patient, I go right ahead and test their sight and then work as earnestly as I know how with my patient until I have relieved the pain and improved the sight. I placed the young man fifteen feet from the test card and asked him to read as much as he was able.¡¡He complained that the electric light near the test card caused a severe pain in his eyes.
So I placed him in the sun and with my sun glass, I flashed the strong rays of the sun on the white part of his eyes after I had round his upper eyelid and had him look down. Then I again placed him fifteen feet from the test card and this time he began to read the letters without complaining about the light until he finished reading the 40 line, when he again said the pain had returned.
I taught him how to palm and left him for a half an hour. When I returned to him I was much surprised to find that the redness of his inflamed eyes had disappeared. His vision also improved to 15/10 with each eye separate. All this time Dr. Bates was busy with other patients and was paying no attention to the young man or me. I was very happy when doctor told me what I had accomplished.
He said: "Did you know this man had iritis?" I said:¡¡"No."
Then the Doctor proceeded to tell me what was the usual experience with the treatment of iritis, that these cases required usually three or more days before the pain in the eyes and head was relieved.
In most cases it might require two weeks of treatment before the sight could become anything near normal. Always eyedrops were prescribed to be used frequently during the day, sometimes at night and in all cases general treatment was prescribed and this treatment was usually continued in most cases for several years.¡¡To relieve a case of iritis in the short time of one hour was very wonderful and this without local treatment and without internal medicines.
"I have never in my life seen a case of iritis so bad obtain perfect sight so quickly and acquire such wonderful relief in the condition of the eye," the Doctor said.

A Colored Mammy

A good natured old mammy came to us one day, walking very slowly with the aid of a cane. She was all dressed up with a faded red rose in her hat, which was gray with age. Her white apron was starched so stiff that it rustled every time she moved. When I asked her what her name was she answered, "Mah name is Annabelle Washington Lee."
I am still wondering if George Washington and General Lee attended her christening.¡¡Poor Mammy had squint in her left eye and I could see that she was in pain. I asked what her age was and she answered: "Now Ah don know, mun just zuckly, but mebby Ah is fifty and mebby Ah is seberty. But Ah do know Ah's cross eyed and mah head hab sech pain Ah can't sleep nohow."
Dr. Bates examined her eyes and told me that she had a hemorrhage of the brain and suggested that resting her eyes would be the best treatment for her. Mammy had a strong desire to talk and before I could tell her that we had so little time to talk she said: "You know, mun, Ah see you twice. Yo're Ah seen de better twice. Funny, hav you hah two heads."
Then mammy laughed.¡¡She sat quietly with both hands covering her eyes for quite a while and I began to praise her to other patients who were not so willing to palm more than a minute or two, when all of a sudden mammy's hands dropped to her lap and we found her fast asleep.¡¡The joke was on me all right. Mammy practiced palming faithfully at home, however, and the third time she came to the clinic Dr. Bates examined her eyes again and said that the hemorrhage must have been cured by palming or keeping her eyes closed a great deal for the retina was all clear and there seemed to be no more trouble.
Mammy's eyes are now both straight and she does not complain about seeing double anymore. The last time I saw her she said: "Mun, de world is bery different since mah eyes is better and Ah wants to smile all de time."
Mammy will do anything for me but read the card. I really believe her when she says, "Ah is plum lazy an Ah jes don' care 'bout readin'. Ah gets along bery well widout it." The best she was able to do for me with the test card was 12/20 with each eye while, in the beginning, her squinting eye was 12/70 and the other eye was 12/40.

Better Eyesight

THE Better Eyesight League should become a more active agency in the introduction of Dr. Bates' methods among school children.
The greatest benefits from the new ophthalmology can be conferred upon the world through its children. This is true because children's eyes are more immediately responsive to proper corrective efforts, and because through the children of today a greater part of the next generation can be reached than can ever be reached of the present generation, no matter how widely the new science may be known among it.
If you who read this, as a member of the League were to call upon the principal of the nearest school tomorrow or next week, and talk with them about Dr. Bates' methods and what they have accomplished and can accomplish, it is highly probable that that principal would install the Snellen test cards and intro-duce the new methods in the class rooms under his direction. That would mean a true science of the eye brought home to additional hundreds of children.
Won't you make such a call on the nearest school principal before the next meeting of the League?
Is it not a fact of more than merely medical significance that patients sometimes experience the first comfort of relaxed and perfect vision, under Dr. Bates' treatment, through the magic of their picturing in the imagination—and with an unconscious smile upon their lips—the blue eyes of a baby, a thousand miles away, or the smile of an absent wife?
The October Meeting of the Better Eyesight League will be held at 300 Madison Avenue, New York City, at the corner of 41st Street, at 8 P. M. October 10th.

"THE CURE OF IMPERFECT EYESIGHT" REVIEWED

The Journal of the Allied Medical Associations has recently published a page review by W. Wallace Fitts, M. D., of "The Cure of Imperfect Eyesight Without Glasses." [link] Dr. Bates' treatise on the new science of opthalmology. This review from an important scientific and professional publication is reprinted here.

THAT all imperfect sight is caused by strain, that the removal of the strain causes a return to normal vision and that all human beings should have perfect sight without the use of glasses are points maintained by Dr. W. H. Bates in his book, "The Cure of Imperfect Sight by Treatment Without Glasses."

Dr. Bates' statements to this effect are backed by a series of conclusive experiments which have extended over a period of more than twenty years. Four years of this time were spent in re-performing the experiments of Helmholtz, the great German opthalmologist whose work has been accepted as the basis of all eye knowledge for years.

In this experimental work Dr. Bates proves with seeming conclusiveness that the lens of the eye is not a factor in accommodation. He shows that myopia and hypermetropia—nearsightedness and farsightedness—can be produced just as readily in eyes from which the lens has been removed as they can in eyes having a lens. On the other hand, he demonstrates through another series of experiments that accommodation depends wholly upon the exterior muscles of the eyeball.

Revolutionary¡¡Opthalmology

So widely do the facts presented by Dr. Bates vary from the theories which have been so long accepted as authentic as to make this work perhaps the most revolutionary statement on opthalmology published in the last fifty years.

In presenting the experiments upon which all his conclusions are based Dr. Bates has treated his subject with a scientific thoroughness which will command the interest and respect of every physician and which perhaps only the trained eye specialist will completely comprehend. There are illuminating and detailed chapters, for instance, on "Simultaneous Retinoscopy," "The Truth About Accommodation as Demonstrated by Experiments On the Eye Muscles of Fish, Cats, Dogs, Rabbits and Other Animals," "The Variability of the Refraction of the Eye," "The Illusions of Imperfect and Normal Sight," "Presbyopia: Its Causes and Cure," "Squint and Amblyopia: Their Causes and Their Cure." etc., etc.

But in the description of the results obtained and of the methods of correcting imperfect sight, and in the report of actual cures effected Dr. Bates has employed a style which will both interest and instruct the lay reader as well as the physician and eye expert. It would be impossible to quote at length all of the interesting incidents and facts, and the logical deductions from many of them, with which, together with some sixty illustrations, the three hundred pages of the book are replete.

Strain is Responsible

Muscular strain is the root of all imperfect sight, says Dr. Bates, and this muscular strain is in itself caused largely by mental strain. Only through complete relaxation and a complete resting of the mind can perfect vision be obtained. The efficiency of the optic nerves, as well as of all the sensory nerves, is impaired when made the subject of effort.

Central Fixation, the ability to see one part of everything looked at best, is the mode of the normal eye. The loss of this ability produces eccentric fixation, a condition of every abnormal eye which causes much discomfort and often pain. Memory and imagination are two important factors in the production of perfect eyesight. An interesting corollary of the deductions of Dr. Bates is that it is logical to account for the keenness of practical memory of the primitive man by his exceptional keenness of vision.

Upon first reading some of Dr. Bates' statements as to what can be accomplished, it may seem to the superficially minded that surely too much is being claimed. Truly the accepted canons of opthalmology are flouted. The story of cure after cure said to be impossible is told. But it is in this very respect that Dr. Bates' accomplishments are accounted for, since the fundamentals of his treatments and discoveries are different fundamentals than those of Helmholtz and the host of opthalmologists of the present school.

Cures of cataract, by treatment, are recorded, for instance. Revolutionary results in the treatment of squint and amblyopia and of presbyopia are cited. Myopia cases are listed. Chapter after chapter of the book make up a fascinating, engagingly yet scientifically told account of cure after cure of what, according to prevailing standards, was hopelessly defective and inherently incurable eyesight.

Milestone¡¡in¡¡Bibliography

An important section of the book is devoted to the prevention of myopia in schools and to home treatment for children and adults. Explicit directions for the home cure or home relief of defective vision are given.

The book is a surprisingly comprehensive, lucid, coherent and fascinating resume of a new opthalmology which does not recognize the need of artificial lenses, founded on the experiments of Aub rather than of Helmholtz, and carried further by modern methods and equipment and by personal devotion of years—plus an equally fascinating and overwhelmingly conclusive record of the accomplishments, in actual cures of defective vision, of this new science of the eye. It is undoubtedly a milestone, and a milestone marking an abrupt and complete turn, in the scientific bibliography of the eyes.¡¡The book is published by the Central Fixation Company, 300 Madison Avenue, New York City, and sells for $5.00.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Is reading too great a strain for the eyes?
Ans.¡¡No. Reading is good for the eyes.
2.¡¡Is it an injury to read in dim light?
Ans. No. It is a benefit to the eyes.
3.¡¡Is it a strain to the eyes to read while riding on a train?
Ans.¡¡No. If there is no discomfort. It is a good thing to look out of the window and see the scenery moving opposite, then continue to read.
4. How can one look at the sun without injury?
Ans.¡¡While looking toward the sun it is best to blink the eyes and to look to the right and to the left of the sun.¡¡This will help you to look directly at the sun without discomfort or pain. One cannot look directly at the sun without normal vision.
5.¡¡What causes and cures abnormal watering of the eye?
Ans. Strain produces watering of the eye. Relaxation obtained by palming and swinging will cure this trouble.
6. How can one, without glasses, accustom himself to reading by electric light?

Ans. The sun treatment, as it is explained in an article written by Emily C. Lierman in "Stories from the Clinic," September, 1922 number [link], is beneficial to anyone troubled by strong light of any kind. Whether it is a natural sun light or electric light, it does not matter. The sun treatment can only be applied by an expert.

Previous Issue
™™™