

July 1923

Better Eyesight

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

July, 1923

The Short Swing

MANY people with normal sight can demonstrate the short swing readily. They can demonstrate that with normal vision each small letter regarded moves from side to side about a quarter of an inch or less. By an effort they can stop this short swing, and when they are able to demonstrate that, the vision becomes imperfect almost immediately. Practicing the long swing brings a measure of relaxation and makes it possible for those with imperfect sight to see things moving with a shorter swing. It is a good thing to have the help of someone who can practice the short swing successfully. Ask some friend who has perfect sight without glasses, in each eye to practice the variable swing as just described, which is a help to those with imperfect sight who have difficulty in demonstrating the short swing.

Nearsighted patients usually can demonstrate that when the vision is perfect, the diamond type at the reading distance, one letter regarded is seen continuously with a slow, short, easy swing not wider than the diameter of the letter. By staring the swing stops and the vision becomes imperfect. It is more difficult for a nearsighted person to stop the swing of the fine print, letter O, than it is to let it swing. When the sight is very imperfect, it is impossible to obtain the short swing. Many people have difficulty in maintaining mental pictures of any letter or any object. They cannot demonstrate the short swing with their eyes closed until they become able to imagine mental pictures.

Henry

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

HENRY first visited me in New York about five years ago. At that time he was attending school in Connecticut. The boy was naturally of a friendly disposition. He had many friends, I do not know that he had any enemies. He always treated me with the greatest respect. I became very fond of him, and I believe he was equally fond of me. He had one virtue, which is not always found in New England or elsewhere; he asked no questions and required no explanations of anything that I might ask him to do. With him it was largely a business to be cured without glasses, and he left the solution of it entirely to me.

At his first visit his vision was less than one-half of the normal. He was wearing concave 1.50 DS, combined with concave 0.25 DC 180 deg. I told him that he was curable and demonstrated the fact by curing him temporarily, improving his sight to 15/10 with the aid of palming, shifting and swinging. He demonstrated that staring at one letter very soon lowered his vision, and that by shifting from one letter to another his vision improved. I asked him if he felt any different when his sight was good and when it was imperfect. He answered, "I know by the feeling in my mind, not my eyes, when I am straining and making my sight poor." This was an interesting statement and is remarkable in this way that he was the first patient I ever had who could realize that his myopia was due to a mental strain primarily. The mental strain produced the eye strain. I asked him if he could remember mental pictures. He said that he could at times with benefit to his sight, but for some reason or other his memory was poor when he had imperfect sight. He demonstrated that when he remembered some letter of some object perfectly he did it quickly, easily and without any effort; but when he strained and tried hard to remember any mental picture he always failed. Furthermore, when he did remember the mental picture he always lost it when he strained or made any effort to remember it better. I spent a good deal of time with him all through his treatment in "Rubbing it in," as I called it. First he demonstrated that his vision was unproved and became temporarily normal by resting, by not doing anything. Then, to see imperfectly," he had to strain, to work hard, and go to a lot of trouble. He was a very thoughtful person with a good deal of common sense and became able to profit from his experience.

To me his problem was not learning how to do things with his eyes, but to find out in some way how he could avoid doing anything. He repeatedly demonstrated that when his sight was normal he did not do anything, that anything he did was always wrong or always lowered his vision. He was very fond of shifting because by continually moving his eyes from one point to another, alternately closing his eyes frequently, required the ability to avoid the strain at first occasionally, later more frequently, until he became able to finally avoid the strain continuously. Many of my patients are cured by practicing one of the truths of normal sight, and he was one of them. The normal eye does not stare as long as it has normal sight; it is continually shifting to avoid the stare. He learned how to do this for a while, and then his mind would wander, and before he knew it he was staring and producing imperfect sight. He knew the proper thing to do and knew how to do it, but he often failed and lost his mental control. I said to him one time, "You have a bad habit of straining, you would be better off if you didn't have that habit." One way of getting rid of a bad habit is to acquire a beneficial habit. When you strain it makes you uncomfortable. When you shift and avoid the strain you are comfortable. Surely you should not hesitate to make the right choice. Keep shifting, enjoy yourself and be comfortable. Keep that in your mind a good deal of the time and as long as you are perfectly comfortable you know that you are not straining because the straining always makes you uncomfortable. As long as things are going all right and you are doing the right thing, then you do not need to ask yourself questions about shifting and palming and swinging, you are doing these things when you are perfectly comfortable.

Here was a boy who, like many boys, had his faults, but somehow or other they were not conspicuous. All his friends spoke well of him, and he had many. His best friend, the one who knew him the longest, was his father. Unfortunately his father was a very busy man, who believed that he was doing the right thing by attending to his work and looking after his business affairs. Someone has said that the principal business of the world is children. If it were not for the children, no country would have a future. I believe this is a true statement and I believe it to the extent that I feel that the principal duty of every man, of every woman, is the business of looking after the children. Of what use is it to accumulate many dollars when your child goes around half blind wearing glasses? He is uncomfortable and not happy because of those glasses. I shall always criticize Henry's father. I do not believe I can criticize him too severely because he did not realize, and I could not make him realize, that for the best interests of his son that he should cure his own eyes for the benefit it would be to Henry. There wasn't very much the matter with his eyes, he could see perfectly at the distance without glasses, he only wore them occasionally when he had to read. Henry could have cured him of that. The father wearing glasses disturbed the mind of the son, and I have found during all these years that one of the greatest difficulties in curing children is to counteract the evil influence of the parents wearing glasses. Nearsightedness is contagious. Children are great imitators, and they consciously or unconsciously imitate the habits of their parents, even to the smallest detail. I have talked until I was all talked out trying to explain this fact to the parents of children who were wearing glasses. I have tested the sight of many thousands of children in public schools, and was very much impressed to find that in those classes presided over by teachers wearing glasses the percentage of imperfect sight in the pupils was very much increased, while in those classes where teachers did not wear glasses imperfect sight was less frequent.

Now, Henry was an easy case to cure, as I said in the beginning; he obtained temporary perfect sight at the first visit. But why didn't he hold it; why did he have so much trouble in obtaining permanent benefit? The answer is that his father was at fault.

Henry enlisted and passed the eye tests without any difficulty. After the war was over Henry called to see me. Of course, my first question was, "How is your sight?" His laconic answer was, "Good."

As he had not been to see me in a long time, some years, I was more or less doubtful about his vision and tested him with a card that he had never seen before. I remember how he stood backed up against the opposite wall in order to get as far away as possible, and the speed with which he read the whole card with normal sight.

"How did you do it?" I asked.

He replied, "Shifting."

Some years later my attention was called to an article in a popular magazine which attacked my method of curing imperfect sight by treatment without glasses. In the next issue of the magazine appeared an article defending me, and signed with the initials of my dear friend, Henry.

Stories from the Clinic

By Emily C. Liernan

SARAH

A FEW years ago there came to our clinic at the Harlem Hospital a curly-headed girl named Sarah, aged twelve years. As she stood among patients who were waiting for treatment, I noticed how pretty she was. She was standing sideways with her right side toward me, and as I did not see her enter the room, I received a shock when I discovered that the left side of her face was distorted. I pretended not to notice anything wrong with her, because she seemed very sensitive. However, her left eye appeared ready to pop out of its socket any moment, and both upper and lower eyelids were terribly inflamed. Dr. Bates explained the history of her case, and also the cause of her affliction, and then left her entirely in my care. She told me that at the age of four she became ill with cerebrospinal meningitis, and all of the left side of her body became paralyzed. Until she came to us she had been receiving treatment from nerve specialists, both in England, where she was born, and also in New York. Electric treatments were given without success. Money was not spared and all of her family sacrificed every penny for Sarah's medical treatment to bring about a cure. When one doctor failed, another was recommended by their friends. Finally, the family bank account dwindled to scarcely nothing, and Sarah stopped treatment, believing that she could never be cured. Later, as I learned to know her better, I noticed that she was ever conscious of her trouble and would always turn the good side of her face toward me. There was one good thing about Sarah she was never downhearted, or she never revealed it to me, if she was. She was a good scholar at school, and graduated at the age of 14 from the public school.

I tested her sight and she had normal vision, 10/10, in her right eye, and 10/50 with the left. I placed her in a comfortable position and showed her how to palm and told her not to remove her hands from her eyes while I was testing the sight of other patients. After a few moments I noticed while Sarah had her eyes covered that her face became terribly red and I wondered if she were comfortable or not. I spoke to her and she complained that she did not like to palm, that it made her nervous. I thought that she was not doing it right and explained to her again how easy it was to cover her eyes with the palms of her hands to obtain the relaxation which was necessary to improve the vision of her left eye. She very faithfully tried again but I noticed that she was getting more uncomfortable all the time. Her vision did not improve at all by the method of palming so I tried her with the long swing which proved successful. I thought in time that Sarah would feel friendly toward the method of palming and that she would improve faster in that way but I was mistaken.

For two years Sarah came to us at the clinic quite regularly and in all that time I could not induce her to palm. She complained that it made her nervous. This was my first experience in all the years that I have been assisting Dr. Bates in that the patient could not be made comfortable by palming. The long swing was very helpful to her, holding her left forefinger in front of her or to the left side of her face, about six inches from her eyes and then slowly moving her head from shoulder to shoulder, blinking all the while she was doing this. At the first visit the vision of her left eye had improved to 10/30. Sarah was encouraged to do this long swing as many times during the day as it was possible for her to do it and she was reminded to blink her eyes very often, which she was not able to do at all with her left eye at the first visit. The upper lid of her left eye seemed stationary and she could not close this eye in sleep which gave her a strange appearance. As I never had a case like hers before, I was deeply interested and studied hard to find every possible way to help her. She was a dear bright little girl and was so willing to do everything that we wished her to do, to help in the cure of her eye. I asked Dr. Bates for permission to try helping her improve the condition of her left cheek and mouth, as well as her eye as I thought that our method of relaxation might possibly do something for her face. Doctor smiled his usual smile and said, "Well you might try."

On her second visit to the clinic her left vision had improved to 10/15 which was most encouraging to me. She told me that she had tried to palm at home just to please me, but every time she tried this it bothered her, but the long swing helped a lot. As time went on I told her to shorten the swing and move her head slowly from side to side, seeing things move opposite from the way her head was moving and this also gave her a great deal of benefit. Before she had been coming to us a month I noticed that the upper lid of her left eye was beginning to move and the inflammation which caused Sarah so much discomfort had almost entirely disappeared. Her vision stayed about the same, left 10/15, right 10/10. Always when she came, we went through the usual treatment of seeing things move opposite as she held her left forefinger to the left side or in front of her face. I sat before her, doing the treatment with her to encourage her to keep it up. During a period of eight weeks of this treatment her facial expression began to change for the better. It was more noticeable when she smiled. When I first saw her smile I noticed that her mouth would turn way over to the right side of her face.

(To be continued)

Owing to the unusual nature of this case, and of the remarkable results obtained, Mrs. Liernan is going to tell of it in detail, therefore it will be continued in the August number. [link].

The following poem was taken from a current magazine, but its discrepancies were so apparent that I could not pass it unchallenged.

E. A. M.

MY EYEGLASSES

Little helpmates yoked together,
Twin-born servants of mine.
How your presence helps and cheers me.
Your barriers of time.

Many days have laboring men
In mines across the sea
Spent searching for the components
To solve your mystery.

Glistening eyes and dainty rims,
Exquisite mountings, too,
What dreary days of solitude
Had I not met with you.

Sometimes I lay you out of place,
A place I cannot see,
And then it seems part of myself
Has gone away from me.

And then I pause to wonder how
You ever could be here,

What genius burned the midnight oil
To make your portals clear.

I have no means to show the depth
Of my gratitude to you.
My eyes will flood with burning tears
When your services are thru.

I herewith seal this solemn vow
That henceforth you will be
Kept clean from dust and fingerprints
While you are serving me.

My Eyeglasses
By Emily A. Meder

THE sentimental poem given above evidently required a good deal of forethought and concentrated effort to devise. We wonder, however, if this anonymous genius had spent the time taken to create this gem, by reading Dr. Bates' book, and practicing the method as outlined by him, whether he would not have written a masterpiece. He would have discarded his "twin-born servants," attained better eyesight, and we know, would have benefited physically.

With apologies to the author, I am going to dissect this "child of his brain" to see what it is made of. As the surgeons say, this might be painful and uncomfortable, but it is for the patient's eventual good.

Like a great majority of people this man believes that glasses have to be put on when one has attained a certain set age. I suppose that we must be grateful that theorists have not ordained that we place splints on our arms and legs to prevent old age attacking them prematurely. However, as all know, who have read Dr. Bates' book, and who have been treated by him, the eyes are no more delicate than any other part of the anatomy. When we read the sentence, "You barriers of time," it seems as ludicrous to us as the opinion people held in the olden days when they ridiculed Columbus for thinking the earth round. We might fittingly change that sentence to read "You hasteners of time."

The author continues to relate the labor men were put to, "to make these portals clear." We admit that a great deal of time was spent to make the glasses ornate. But this did not in any material way add to their usefulness and value. We know that when people purchase glasses—they spend a good deal of time making sure that they look well in them. There is always a heated and lengthy debate as to whether tortoise shell or gold is more studious looking, or whether rimless glasses add to one's dignity. Men may have exhausted their energy in "mines across the sea," and I have a mental picture of them using their life forces to attain—nothing. It makes me think of the squirrel on a revolving wheel. The faster he works, the more energy he uses, and he is eventually exhausted, getting nowhere. The trouble with the old oculists is that they were started on the wrong track, and stayed there, without looking for an avenue of escape. Like the labyrinth in mythology, they walked and walked and went back and forward, in a ceaseless round, with no one to show them the one way out. To follow the metaphor you may remember the story of the cruel giant who put all the fair young maidens in the labyrinth and left them to die. But one maiden obtained a ball of twine and fastened it to the entrance of the cavern. As she was lead deeper and deeper into the intricate passages, she let out the cord. Upon being left alone, she called all the unfortunate prisoners to her, and they followed the right path back, as indicated by the ball of twine. This story always occurs to me when I think of Dr. Bates' work. As all the others are lost in a maze of theories, his wonderful truth is the string of hope to cling to when escaping the awful giant—bad sight and glasses.

An Encouraging Letter
By Elizabeth McKoy

[EDITOR'S NOTE]—Miss McKay has given us permission to use her letter for our magazine, we feel sure that this will prove of interest and will encourage our readers to impart their information to others.

I WISH to tell of the results of Dr. Bates' methods of treatment on my eyes. Many times I have wished to tell of these results, but not wishing to trouble him have so far refrained.

I saw Dr. Bates first in October, 1921, and since the first visit have not worn glasses. He and Mrs. Lierman taught me to palm and to swing things and told me of ways to help school children. My eyes improve steadily though one of them is most of the time far from perfect as yet. I study the book and gain something from the magazine each month. As a member of the Better Eyesight League I have found that I help my own eyes most when helping others.

My brother has learned that palming and swinging will help his headaches. He came to me one day asking for some medicine for his head; I had nothing, but offered to help him. He declared he had only five minutes. I showed him how to palm and while he did it I sat beside him asking him to think of the different black objects I mentioned. I described shapes and parts of a number of familiar black objects, and he must have done his part well for at the end of the five minutes the headache was all gone much to his surprise! He has been sending his friends to me ever since. My mother's eyes are changing, second sight they call it, she palms when her eyes bother her and after palming finds she can read without her glasses.

In my home in North Carolina the past winter I have interested and helped many people. One woman who was a comparative stranger at first, I told of Dr. Bates simply because I was disturbed by her harassed look and the intense strain apparent in the eyes behind her glasses. She was willing to take off her glasses and also her daughter's glasses. She read my book, subscribed for the magazine, and followed my instructions with much benefit. No one who asks for help fails to be interested in all I can tell them and more than half are willing to take off their glasses just on my say so. Of course those who know me well realize that whereas I was dependent on my glasses for seventeen years now I see as well or better without them. I still have difficulties, but am improving. The study becomes more and more interesting.

I am tempted to tell of some of my experiments which have especially interested me. My sight is excellent for nearby things, but I have astigmatism and cannot see so clearly in the distance. It took me months to find out for myself that I could see distant things best when I did not try to. After a good deal of practice each day I can make myself see the last line of the Snellen Test Card at ten feet with the bad eye. I do it best when I think of something entirely foreign to the subject or when I let people about me claim my attention as I look toward the test card. My little nephew often gets between me and the card and I find it a help instead of a hindrance when I take it calmly. Also, when I can bring up vividly to my memory attitudes and expressions of certain children or picture certain flowers in my garden, the small letters on the card will rush out at me black and distinct.

All winter in Church I had time to practice a great deal. There were letters on a stained glass window above the altar. For months I could not make them out. Finally I discovered that the more closely I followed the thread of the sermon the more distinct the letters seemed, and one day as the minister was describing a scene which I could imagine vividly the letters were suddenly readable. They were gone again almost as soon; but I was able to bring them back. For this purpose one trick which succeeded admirably was to imagine that I could remove the flame-colored wings from the angel in the resurrection picture of the window and place them on the shoulders of the white-robed minister, return them to the angel and take them again and again. As soon as I could do it well, I could read the lettering. Another trick was to pick up with my eyes one of the brass vases on the altar and place it on the pulpit. There it would stand and at times be almost knocked off by the gestures of the speaker or momentarily be occupying the same position as his hand. As I look back on my childhood I remember that children are always imagining absurdities of this sort.

I practice on the streets and when no other letters are near use moving automobile numbers for test cards. I found they generally passed too quickly for me to read. Then I discovered that I could take a glance, close my eyes quickly, then read unhurriedly with eyes shut and still have time to open my eyes and verify the numbers before they were out of sight. This pleased me as much as anything I had learned.

With children I have found that palming helped most when I read aloud to them. They all liked the swing and caught quickly on to it and also to my idea of seeing the letter best with a stolen glance.

I have enjoyed telling of Dr. Bates as much as I have enjoyed anything all winter. I have never once wished to put my glasses on again after the first visit, though for days I had many difficulties especially on the street. Now I do not miss the glasses at all except for quite a distance and at the theatre. One most welcome result of the treatment is in connection with the severe headaches which I have always had. Always when these occurred the pain in the eyes was acute. For the past year without glasses this eye pain has not been intense when the sick headaches came—thanks to Dr. Bates.

I do send him my sincere thanks for the results of his work with me. His book and the magazine have been of much value to me and to my friends. I have felt that the best way for me to show my appreciation was to tell of his work to as many as I saw that needed his help.

Sincerely yours,
ELIZABETH MCKOY,
10 Highland Terrace, Winchester, Mass.

An Enjoyable Vacation
By By M. E. Marvin

VACATION-TIME is with us again in all its glory, and most everyone is looking forward to some change in environment during the next few months. Some are pouring over "Blue Books" mapping out their trail for their auto-camping trip. Others are concerned about the mode of bathing-suit being used at the seashore this summer, while the rest are intent on the more dignified pastime of replenishing their wardrobes that they may more appropriately enjoy the splendors of the mountains.

Whether in the woods, at the seashore or in the mountains, we want to say to our friends and subscribers again, "Do not be tempted to wear "sun glasses." Of course most of you who are familiar with Dr. Bates' book, know the reason of this. He has proven again and again that the sun is very beneficial to the eye. Sometimes one experiences temporary discomfort, but this is not harmful, and when one learns to "swing the sun" properly as advised by Dr. Bates, it always proves a relaxation. Anyone wanting further information on this subject is invited to write us at this office.

This is the time of year, when those wearing glasses, who have not had the good fortune to learn of Dr. Bates' method, find themselves more uncomfortable than ever. Eye glasses are a handicap in every sport or pleasure in which one wishes to indulge, and it is for those who know how they can be dispensed with, to spread Dr. Bates' message. You will meet all cases of defective vision this, summer, and when an opportunity presents itself, prove yourself a true friend, and tell those who will listen, just how the glasses can be left off, and with a few moments spent in palming and swinging, the benefits will be readily manifested.

Last Fall, we received quite a few testimonials from those who had learned of this work on their vacation and with the aid of the book were enabled to discard their glasses. We were also deluged with, inquiries which were the result of these "vacation chats."

You will find that nine out of every ten people wearing glasses are only too pleased to learn how their eyes can be cured without them. They know that glasses do not eliminate the defects. They know that while in some cases temporary relief is afforded by the strong magnifying lenses, it stands to reason the eye is not functioning naturally, since it is straining itself all out of shape to conform to the shape and strength of the glass lens.

While we are anxious for you to help as many people as possible it is also our wish that all our friends continue to practice and help themselves during vacation. The following instance may prove of interest. A lady telephoned to Dr. Bates this week, asking him what she should do in regard to her son who is Dr. Bates' patient. They are going to travel through the state on a week's motor tour, and she was wondering if her son should palm while riding. Dr. Bates said that riding is extremely beneficial. The scenery, the road signs, and houses all seem to move, and this demonstrates the fact that the normal eye should never be stationary, but should continually see things moving. The boy while enjoying his trip, can also practice swinging various objects. If he strains while traveling he can close his eyes and imagine the trees, the road, etc. This is equivalent to palming, and the mental relaxation is immediately apparent.

To get back to the main point at issue. When one meets a friend anxious to learn how to get rid of glasses, and all the attending discomforts, tell him all you know. We are very busy in our new office, but we shall be glad to give all the information at our command, and to explain any parts of the book that may appear ambiguous.

We are looking forward to encouraging reports from all our friends at the end of vacation-time. Take your book "Perfect Sight Without Glasses" [link] and your Snellen chart with you and you will find that your vacation is a happier one in a great many ways.

Announcements
Meeting of the Better Eyesight League

DUE to the fact that our magazine goes to the press a week earlier than heretofore, we are unable to publish the minutes of the BETTER EYESIGHT LEAGUE for the month of June. These will appear in the following issue of the magazine.
We hope that everyone will be able to attend the next meeting of the League, which will be the second Tuesday of July, at 383 Madison Avenue.

Microscopic Print

WE are very glad to announce that, owing to the large demand for samples of diamond type and microscopic print, we have at press a little folder containing chapters of the Bible, etc., printed in this type. We know that this announcement will meet a great need, and we shall be glad to add your name to our list to receive this upon its publication.
The price has not yet been determined, but it is extremely nominal. We shall be pleased to give, on request, further information relative to the benefits of fine print.

If any of our subscribers have friends to whom they would like to make known Dr. Bates' work, we would be pleased to have you send us their names and addresses, so that we may place them on our regular mailing list. This will insure their getting our literature from time to time and if they make a special request, we will send a sample copy of our magazine.

The Question Mark

Question—Why is it a rest to read fine print. I should think it would be more of a strain? M. F. S.
Answer—Fine print is a relaxation, large print a menace. Send for the December, 1919, number which explains this in detail.
Question—My son is taking treatment for squint. While on auto trips it is necessary for him to palm continually? A. O. R.
Answer—No. The finest thing he can do is to see things moving. He can do this to great advantage in a car. If his eyes burn or seem tired, he can then palm occasionally.
Chicago, Ill.
Question—I am 75 years of age. Do you mean to say that you can make me see with normal vision? G. W. M.
Answer—We most certainly do. Old age sight is not incurable.
San Francisco, Cal.
Question—I still cannot visualize "black" what else can I use as a substitute? W. H. H.
Answer—Don't try to see anything. If it is an effort to visualize black, think of something that is pleasant, for instance, a field of daisies, a sun-set, etc. The result will be just as beneficial.
Question—Must the body be at rest before the eyes can be cured?

Answer—When the eyes are relaxed, the whole body is relaxed.

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