February 1924

Better Eyesight

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

February, 1924

The Trinity

THERE are three things which the normal eye practices more or less continuously, which are necessary in order to maintain normal vision.

1—The long swing.

2—The short swing.

3—Blinking or palming.

The long swing has been described repeatedly and most people are able to practice it successfully, especially people whose sight is good. If you have very imperfect sight you may have difficulty in demonstrating the benefit of the long swing. Some patients are indeed difficult to manage. They may be able to practice the long swing when looking out of a window with its light background. By moving the whole body, head and eyes together, a long distance from side to side one becomes able to imagine a cord of the window shade moving in the opposite direction. This makes it possible to imagine the long swing when you turn your back to the window, and look at objects in the room which have a dark background. When the long swing is properly maintained the letters of the Snellen Test Card become darker as long as one does not look directly at the card. Looking above the card or below it is a help in maintaining the long swing of the card when the maximum vision is obtained by the long swing. Never look directly at the card or try to read the letters when practicing the long swing.

By gradually lessening the movement of the body from side to side, the swing of the card becomes shorter and one may soon because able to flash the large letters. The swing of the card can be reduced to an inch or less.

Fairy Stories

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

Editor's Note—We should read fairy stories for the benefit of our eyesight. It can be demonstrated that the imagination is a benefit to the vision and if fairy stories improve the imagination they will, also improve the sight.

THE BLACK FAIRY.—Zipp, bang, again and again, the cruel boys pasted the little boy with snowballs, calling: "Four eyes, four eyes," at him because he could not see well and wore glasses. The snow got down his neck, inside the collar of his little jacket, it stung the skin of his face, blurred his glasses and hurt him so that he cried in pain. He could not fight them, so he ran as fast as his little legs could travel. He stumbled and fell. It seemed to the little boy that he fell down a long, long way and kept on falling, falling so long that he could not remember how long it was. He closed his eyes for a moment only it seemed and then he stopped falling. When he opened his eyes and looked around him, he found himself lying on the grass and the grass was soft and warm, like it is in fairy land. Above him the branches of the trees were moving from a light summer breeze. Around him were bright colored flowers, with the bees buzzing to and fro. Everywhere was the bright warm sunshine. He fell asleep for awhile and awoke feeling rested. On his breast lay a little puppy fox gazing kindly at his face. He touched it with his hand and gently smoothed the top of its head. Then another little fox puppy came out from the shadow of the grass, poked its nose close to the little boy's face and licked his cheek. Then two more came romping, toddling into view, all anxious to get close to the little boy and to be petted. But suddenly he lost all interest in the puppies, when the mother fox appeared with a tiny black fairy on her back. The puppies and the little boy crowded as close to her as they could. He petted the puppies while the mother fox looked on, happy and contented. A contented fox is not always, or often seen. The mother fox said to the fairy; "Little Black Fairy, we found this boy all bruised and bloody. He is such a good little boy and he is so gentle, kind and good that I wish someone would make him happy. That is why I asked you to come and see him."

And then the puppies began to all talk at once. They begged the fairy to be good to the little boy, the little boy whose heart was so full of love that he even loved baby foxes. The father fox called just then and all the foxes ran away quickly, so as not to keep him waiting. The little boy said to the black fairy:

"How beautiful you are. I like to look at you. Your eyes sparkle like the diamond in my mother's ring, when the sun shines as it, your teeth are white like the pearl necklace my mother wears to parties; your lips are red like my sister's ruby ring; your ears are so like the fine sea shells at the sea-shore; your laugh sounds like the water bubbling over the pebbles in the brook, while your smile warms me inside my breast and makes me love you. Come closer to me little black fairy. Stay with me always and let me love you more than I have ever loved anybody else. When I look at you, the pain in my head leaves me, my eyes feel rested and cool, the light seems brighter, I can see everything clear, and the fog over the trees and flowers disappears."

After he spoke so nicely to the little black fairy, she giggled and laughed and blushed. She jerked her shoulders up and down, danced around on her toes, waved her hand to him, threw him many kisses and became so excited by her exertions she quite got out of breath. After she quieted down enough so she could speak she called to him:

"Oh, you dear little Fourteyes, I love you for what you say. I love you so much that I want to help you as much as a fairy can help you. Let me cure your poor eyes, so that you will always have perfect sight without glasses. Love me enough and I will cure you. Never forget me. Please remember me so well that you will always see me, one tiniest part of me blacker than all the rest of me, see me on everything you look at, no matter how large or how small or how far away. Let me be your sweetheart fairy, the one little fairy you love best, and the world will be for you a heavenly place to live, with your eyes at rest with perfect sight as long as you are true to me, and never forget me."

And then she waved her hand to him and moved farther and farther away, until she appeared as small as a tiny black speck, the size of a full stop in the little boy's reader. But always he remembered that he loved her, and so did as she advised, and found that no matter how far away she was he was able to remember how she looked, one tiniest part of her blacker than all the rest. He loved her so much that he saw her better than everything else. The sight of her rested his eyes. And after she had disappeared from view he loved her so much better than the trees, the grass, the clouds, the flowers, that he believed he saw her better than anything else. And the better he imagined or remembered his little black fairy, or saw her in his heart better than all else, he saw more perfectly the trees, the grass, the clouds and the flowers. He was true to his love, the little black fairy, and she was true to her promise to him that he would see perfectly without glasses as long as he remembered her perfectly. When he looked at a large tree she was a good sized fairy. When he looked at a small blade of grass or a tiny flower, she was the tiniest little fairy that one could imagine.

His sight was good when he remembered how perfectly black she was; but, when she looked less black his sight was worse. He found that he had to remember his love perfectly, to be perfectly true to her in order to have perfect sight. It was all a beautiful dream; and, when you dream of fairy land, sometimes your dreams come true. You, who read this story, can you remember the blackest, blackest little black fairy, the tiniest blackest fairy that ever was? Maybe you can remember the black better with your eyes closed. Can you remember the black eyes of the black fairy when reading your book? And when you do, can you read the words better? The next morning when his mother came into his room and wakened him with a kiss, he opened his eyes wide, with no dread of the bright sunlight which chose on his mother's face. He was all excited, laughing and talking eagerly, rapidly, of the good fortune that had come to him. Among other things he said:

"Oh, mother, I can see you without my glasses. I see the blue color of your eyes which I never saw before. The fog has gone from the pictures on the wall, I can look out the window and see the trees, the grass, the flowers, the people walking along the sidewalk, and there is father talking to a strange boy—oh no, he is the boy who lives next door. He is not a strange boy, but I see him so much clearer now without my glasses, than I ever did before when I wore them. Aren't you glad. Please I want to get dressed quickly, run down stairs and tell father all about it. I want to hurry away to school and tell the teacher I can see everything now without my glasses. And I want to tell all the boys in school and all the girls, the men in the grocery store, the men and boys in the meat market, everybody.

THE WHITE FAIRY.—The teacher was tired. It was very warm, and through the open windows one heard in the distance the birds calling to each other. Her head was aching, her eyes throbbing with pain. She took off her glasses to rest her eyes, and sat for awhile with her eyes closed, and her head resting on her hands. And the pupils were tired, restless, anxious to get out in the bright sunshine, and play on the cool green grass in the shade of the trees. Their eyes were continually looking out the windows.

George Smith saw her first, standing out the window till waving her hands to the children, smiling such a beautiful smile of love with her tiny mouthful of a mouth. But it was her wonderful black eyes which smiled most. They sparkled and twinkled so merrily, they were so full of life and love and happiness, they were so cheery, so encouraging, so comforting, that all were intoxicated with delight. She was only a few inches tall, but every bit of her from the top of her head to her tiny feet, was formed with a perfection of beauty rarely seen. And how graceful she was. She found her way somehow to the top of a vacant desk; and, after delighting the children for a few moments with the more wonderful, most delightful of fairy dances, sat herself down on the top of an inkstand—but she was not quiet a moment. Her feet and hands, her whole body seemed to swing from side to side, just like the pendulum of a clock swinge; and, when you looked alternately from one eye to the other they seemed to swing also. This swing was very noticeable, and the strange thing about the swing was that it was so restful, and did the eyes of the children so much good. Those wearing glasses took them off, and found that they could seethe swinging eyes of the little white fairy as well as everything else, quite perfectly. And the teacher noted that the fog over everything the formerly saw without glasses was gone, the pain in her eyes and head was gone. She saw everything clearly, so easily that she quite forgot that she had eyes.

The teacher became interested in the eyes of her pupils. She felt that something should be done to prevent them from acquiring imperfect sight while they were attend-ing school. As a beginning she tested the sight of all the children at twenty feet and made a record. The next day she tested them again and found that the number of cases of imperfect sight was less. This bothered her somewhat, because she could not understand how she had made any mistake. She tested them again on the third day, and was more careful and painstaking than before. Again to her surprise, she found a less number with imperfect sight. Then it dawned upon her that testing the sight of the children with the Snellen Test Card was a benefit. At any rate, she said to herself, that she would test their sight every day for a month and note the results.

Some of the children called her attention to the fact that she had no record of the vision of her own eyes, and to please and encourage her pupils she had them test her sight every day and keep a record. Every time she read the Snellen Test Card it seemed to her that she read it more easily and better, and she found herself looking at the card every once in a while during the day. She acquired a certain amount of pleasure in looking at the card, and she found the pupils doing the same thing.

Standing twenty feet from the card, without her glasses, at the end of the month, she found that her vision with each eye was normal, and even a little better than the average normal vision. Furthermore her eyes, which formerly had bothered her more or less, although she wore glasses prescribed by a very prominent eye doctor, never gave her the relief that she now obtained without glasses, by reading the Snellen Test Card daily.

She was very much pleased to note also that her pupils were brighter and had better memories, and studied for longer periods without becoming tired or restless. Her attendance was better than it had ever been in any one month before.

One little boy told her that he no longer had head-aches from studying his lessons, and that he could read what was written on the blackboard without half trying. Other teachers became interested and they obtained the same beneficial results.

Stories from the Clinic

48: The Blind Girl

By Emily C. Lierman

DURING the month of August, 1922, while our clinic work was still going on at the Harlem Hospital, there came one day to our office a blind girl, aged 25, who was led there by her younger sister.

Dr. Bates and I were extremely busy and at the time, had to turn away many patients, because we already had more than we could manage. As she heard me approach-ing her she asked for Mrs. Lierman. I said I was that person, and asked what I could for her. She mentioned the name of a doctor's wife who had been treated successfully for cataract by Dr. Bates. A dozen or more patients were in the waiting room at the time, and were listening to all she had to say, for she talked loud enough to be heard. She said: "I came with great hope that you might help me to see." She then handed me a note, written by the doctor's wife already mentioned. It read something like this.

"You have helped so many patients in your clinic, won't you please help this girl if you can? I met her in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, as she sat beside me on a bench resting."

I am sorry to say that I frowned as I finished reading that note. I did not see how I could possibly take an-other case, when I already had more than I could handle. She could not be treated at the clinic because the Authorities would not allow us to take cases out of the hospital district. I was just about to say that she would have to come some other time when I was not so busy, but I caught the anxious look in her face. A look of hope, a look of faith. I could read in that face the answer she expected of me. No thought of being sent away that day without treatment had entered her mind. I solved the problem quickly and said: "I will take you this minute to our other office and see what I can do for you." At that moment, a gentleman sitting in the room gasped and sighed with relief. He smiled and said: "That was fine of you, knowing how rushed you are at present"

I disturbed Dr. Bates long enough to have him examine her eyes, and to tell me whether there was any hope of her seeing at all. Dr. Bates said she had Micropthalmus in both eyes. She had no red reflex from the pupils. A white membrane was visible in both pupils and the pupils were both very small. She could distinguish light from darkness but that was all. I asked her to tell me when her sight began to fail, or how long she had been blind. What a shock it was to me to hear her say: "I was born blind, so was my mother." What chance had I, if any, to ever help that poor girl to see even just a little of this, God's beautiful world? Was it possible that perhaps our Heavenly Father himself had sent her to me, and that through Him I would be guided to help ing her to see? Anyhow these were my thoughts at the time, so I started right to with the treatment, just as though she had sight, and then to help her improve her sight. She had so much trouble with her poor eyes that I did not know just where to begin first. Her eyes moved rapidly from side to side, a condition called Nystagmus. She also had a contraction of the throat muscles which caused a great deal of fatigue generally. Here was a big job ahead of me. I told her I would do my very best to help her if she would do exactly as I said.

Her sister whose age was twelve, had normal vision, and was called upon to assist me in the treatment. She proved later on to be a very good assistant. I asked the patient if her sense of touch was all right and she answered yes. Then I gave her an ordinary pin and told her to feel the size of it, then to feel the point and the head of it. She was told then to palm and remember the touch of the pin.

She could remember the touch of the pin very well she said, even though it was no longer in her hand. I was very much encouraged when, after a few minutes of palming she removed her hands from her eyes and I noticed that the rapid movement of her eyes had stopped.

But when I asked her a personal question the movement or Nystagmus returned. I then told her to forget the question I had asked her, and to cover her eyes again with her hands to rest them. While she was doing this I told her what had been accomplished for an old blind man, who was at the present time under treatment. I related how he once had good sight and now after several years of blindness and great suffering from eye operations, he was beginning to see. I watched my patient very closely and I could see that she was inter-ested in what I was saying, and a smile came, which was good to see. Again I told her to remove her hands from her eyes and I noticed the second time that her eyes were perfectly still. Her sister cat close by holding her breath in amazement and in an excited voice said to me: "This is wonderful. Anna has never been able to cov-ered that terrible movement of her eyes for some years. I feel sure she is going to receive benefit from your treatment and cure. I want very much to help you if you will tell me how."

It has always been my greatest desire to carry on Dr. Bates' ideas and methods and to follow very closely his directions in all cases. I remembered something he said to me at one time. "If you have a pain, find out what causes it and cure the cause." So I felt with this case, that perhaps if I can cure the Nystagmus and the nerv-ous contraction of her throat, I might be better able to do more for her vision. Her sense of touch was good and her memory of the prick of the pin had helped while she rested her eyes: Now I would try the swing and see if that would help her throat. I told her to put up her forefinger and to hold it about six inches from eyes. Then to turn her head slowly from side to side toward the right shoulder and then toward the left. I explained to her, that even though she could not see her finger, she could imagine she saw it. She answered me just as I wanted her to. She said: "Oh, I can imagine the size of my finger, and when I turn my head to the right my finger seems to move to the left and vice versa."

I encouraged her to keep on moving her head from side to side and to blink her eyes to prevent staring, which had been a habit since birth. I noticed after a few minutes or so that the settled herself in a more relaxed position as she sat in her chair. Then I called her sister's attention to the fact that the contraction of her throat muscles quieted down until they stopped.

(To be continued [link])

"How Joe Cook Learned to Shift"

IN the January number of the American Magazine, Joe Cook, famous eccentric comedian, says he never has seen a juggler who had to wear glasses. He himself has remarkable eyesight, and this is the way he accounts for it:

"In my work," he says, "I have to be constantly changing the focus of my eyes; adjusting it to different distances and different directions. In juggling several balls, for instance, I look up, down, to right, and to left; so quickly, of course, that even I am hardly conscious of moving my eyes. But I do move them. I am always practicing, and this exercises the muscles of the eye. I believe this keeps them strong, active, and, you might say, young."

"Oculists will tell you that this is true. Exercise your eyes by looking around you, at objects that are at vari-ous distances and in different directions. If your regular job is at close work, stop once in a while and look at things farther off. Practice changing the focus of your eyes. Get several small balls and try to juggle them. It will help to keep your eyes young."

The Use of Eyesight in a Printing Plant

By Bendix T. Minden

SIGHT is well held to be the highest and most perfect of all the senses; whereby we are able to recognize the form, size, color, and distance of thousands of different objects in nature. Indeed, it is wonderful to behold a balloon leave the earth and watch it till it becomes a black speck in the sky. But in a printing plant, this sense is so woven into the countless acts of our occupation that we scarcely appreciate this marvelous gift, so essential not only to the simplest matters of comfort, but also to the culture of the mind and the higher forms of pleasure. It seems to be the mind behind the eye that sees, for in each department of this plant, the employees perform their work rapidly and amazingly accurate.

There is a popular opinion that persons who use their eyes for much reading or fine work are more apt to have imperfect sight than others. A visit to the majority of printing plants would disprove this theory. In the plant with which the writer is connected there are only ten people out of 60 employed who wear glasses, and one of them has had a cataract on his eye since childhood.

In three other plants visited, the percentage ran from 10 to 20 per cent of those who wore glasses.

It is strange to say that the continuous use of the eye in a correct manner, strengthens that organ rather than spoils the vision, which is proven not only by a printing plant, but by intimate knowledge of a juggler.

A juggler's eye, the same as a printer's, is always focusing quickly on moving objects, and it is merely that constant and automatic correct use of the eye which is so valuable for the detection of mistakes in a printing plant. We will enter the workrooms with a piece of copy, which may be either manuscript or reprint matter. This is given to the foreman, who glances through it quickly and marks the style, size of type, measure of lines, etc. He then hands this copy to the compositor. If it is hand-written, it is not a question of the compositor being able to see, but of his brain being able to decipher the hieroglyphics of the author. In this case, inadvertently the letters were badly written—"u's" looked like "n's", the "i's" were not dotted or the "t's" crossed. This caused a mental strain, and not an eye strain, especially when a name or a word is taken from a foreign language.

When the compositor is through setting the type, the printer's devil pulls a proof. The proof and copy are then handed to the proofreader, who proceeds to read it with the help of the copyholder.

The proofreader is called upon to exercise his eye and his brain in unison. His eye is to see wrong fonts, that is, mixed type. He is to detect mistakes in spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, grammar, or other errors. He must not have any optical illusion as to what the letters really are. The letter, the word or the punctuation mark must stand out clearly—exactly as it is.

Fortunately, the light in most printing plants is well diffused. The desk of the proofreader is placed so that the daylight comes in through the window from above and behind, and over the left shoulder, which is important for the eyes; as daylight seems to be a most south-ing, invigorating and strengthening tonic. The eyes appear to be rested when looking from one-object or color to another of a different form or color.

In going to the Pressroom, we come to another department which calls upon the eyes to see and discern a new phase of sight.

A pressman uses his eyes to note the equality of impression, and to bring out the different shades of a half-tone or cut, so as to make it appear as near real to the object as possible. He is called upon to see both with his eye and his mind's eye the various ink colors. By mixing different inks the pressman can produce various hues, shades or tints. To produce violet he will mix 10 parts of white, 21 parts of red, and 69 parts of blue; likewise in making the color scarlet he mixes 85 parts of red with 15 parts of orange. Thus the pressman must have a good eye in order to understand and see the colors as they are. If he were "color blind" he would be unable to distinguish even red. Our pressman had occasion to mix a color which was to match the blue sky and the green color of a dollar bill. He would look up at the sky and then down at the greenback in his hand. One not familiar with what he was doing would think he was praying for greenbacks. No, he was not doing that, but was matching colors.

We now leave the Pressroom to enter the bindery. Here our eyes are met by the striking beauty of a number of young ladies. The mind's eye is here centered on the fingers, and one cannot help but remark how skillfully they do their work.

Folding, counting, and numbering of sheets are done quickly and accurately. They are done so cleverly that it becomes almost automatic, thus we see a person functioning only by reason of the mind. The ladies at the wire-stitching machines, without a gauge are able, very speedily, to stitch a booklet or a leaflet in the same place almost without an error. We notice a man cutting paper on a big cutting machine. It is most remarkable how the eye can be trained to do its work so nearly perfect. Should the cutter be mistaken in his measurements, he would cut the paper wrongly, thereby spoiling the job.

In passing through the plant, we go to the shipping department. Eyes are even important here, for should the shipping clerk place the wrong address on the case, it could not be very easily corrected. The case may go to Kansas instead of Kentucky. This would not only delay the delivery, but would cause considerable unnecessary labor and expense.

There are innumerable more uses of the eye in a printing plant than described in this article. Best of all, one should visit a printing plant and see for himself the wonderful workings of that valuable organ—the Eye.

Report of the December Meeting

DOCTOR M. E. GORE, of East Orange, New Jersey, was the speaker at the December meeting of the Better Eyesight League. He remarked that it was a pleasure for him to address the meeting, and he hoped that he could say something that would help someone to see. He said it is the easiest thing in the world to have perfect sight, but it takes an effort to have defective vision, and an effort and strain to continue it.

Doctor Gore gave a brief synopsis of how he became interested in Doctor Bates' work, after having heard him lecture. He then attended the Chair, at the Harlem Hospital, where he was amazed at the results Mrs. Lierman obtained with her patients. To test the correctness of Dr. Bates' method, as he was skeptical, he began with a patient who had very bad sight, which was further hampered by a goitre. While he was improving her sight, he was astonished to notice that the goitre was slowly diminishing in size. At the end of two years she had normal vision, and the goitre was gone. He cited a great many other cases, too numerous to mention, by which he proved that Dr. Bates was not only right, but had made a wonderful discovery.

After his talk Dr. Gore invited all the members of the Better Eyesight League to visit ii Clinic at 7 West 76th Street, New York City, where he treats patients by Dr. Bates' methods from one to two p.m.

Miss Irwin, President of the Better Eyesight League of the Oranges, was introduced by Dr. Gore, and gave a report of her own eye trouble. Hers was a difficult case, and she deserves a great deal of credit for the tenacity she showed when everyone advised her to keep her glasses on, and not to try any "new-fangled" ideas. Her history, in brief, is that she had to remain home from business at least one-day a week. She had frightful headaches, and could not stand the light. Her bedroom was always darkened, and the sun was never allowed to shine in on her. During that period she said she only desired a little dark nook to slink into and be alone with her troubles.

One day she heard Dr. Bates talk, and was so encouraged when he told her she could be cured, that she bought his book, and started immediately. She went through a great many trials before her friends would believe she really intended leaving off her glasses. She palmed on the ferry, on the train, before and after work, and wherever and whenever she had a few minutes to spare. The result was that she left off her glasses, improved her work, and was no longer troubled with headaches. She goes to the movies, and above all, likes the sun. She swings it whenever possible and loves to wake up in the morning and find it streaming over her bed.

On the head of this glowing report of courage and self-control, one young lady in the audience, who admitted blushingly, that she was twenty-one years old, desired to know if she could be helped. She gave a detailed description of all her symptoms, much to the amusement of the meeting, and said she was very myopic. She went on to say she wanted to improve her sight in order to leave off her glasses, and also improve her looks. She was told if she followed Miss Irwin's example she could obtain perfect sight. She pondered this, and asked Dr. Bates couldn't she just try a little experiment of her own. Instead of discarding her glasses immediately, couldn't she get weaker and weaker lens, as time went on. Dr. Bates answered this by telling an amusing little story, the moral of which was, that if she was able to recite symptoms, give the diagnosis and prescribe the treatment, she didn't need a doctor's help, as she was physician-to-chief to herself.

Dr. Bates was kept busy for half an hour answering questions, and explaining imagination in its relation to the cure of imperfect sight. The meeting was adjourned one-half hour later than its schedule, but everyone had learned a little more about their eyes.

The February meeting will be held on the 12th and all are invited to attend.

The Question Mark

QUESTION—Can a child three months old be cured of squint?

ANSWER—Yes.

QUESTION—Does the bright sun light harm a baby's eyes?

ANSWER—No.

QUESTION—Is being in a dark room with the eyes open as beneficial as palming?

ANSWER—No.

QUESTION—Can any other color be substituted for black when palming?

ANSWER—Yes, if imagined consciously and intentionally.

QUESTION—How often must one read fine print to obtain benefit?

ANSWER—Daily.

QUESTION—What one method of improving the sight is best?

ANSWER—Swinging and blinking.

QUESTION—To palm successfully is it necessary to remember black or try to see black?

ANSWER—No. When one palms successfully the eyes and mind are relaxed and black is usually seen, but any effort to see black is a strain which always fails.

Announcement

Miss Mildred Shepard, 50 Main St., Orange, N. J., is now a certified teacher of better eyesight. She is well qualified to cure imperfect sight by treatment without glasses. The Editor of Better Eyesight takes great pleasure in recommending her to any who may need her services.

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