September 1924

Better Eyesight

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

September, 1924

Permanent Improvement

MANY patients find that while it is easy for them to obtain a temporary improvement in their sight by palming a sufficient length of time or by other methods, they do not seem to hold it permanently. In this connection it is well to remember that the normal eye with normal sight can only maintain normal sight permanently by consciously or unconsciously practicing the slow, short, easy swing. When the normal eye has imperfect sight it can always be demonstrated that the swing stops from an effort. When the normal eye has normal sight, the eyes are at rest and all the nerves of the body feel comfortable. When the swing stops, one always feels more or less uncomfortable. To have perfect sight can only be obtained easily, without effort. To have imperfect sight always requires a strain or an effort which stops the swing. Near-sighted patients who have normal vision for reading at the near point become able, when their attention is called to it, to demonstrate that they are more comfortable when reading the fine print than they are when they fail to see distant objects perfectly.
One of the great benefits of the drifting swing is the comfortable relaxed feeling it brings. The retinoscope always shows that the eye is not near-sighted when so effort is made. Persons with imperfect sight should imitate the eye with normal sight by practicing a perfect memory, a perfect imagination, a perfect swing, without effort, with perfect comfort all the time that they are awake. As I have said before many times, it is a good thing to know what is the matter with you because it makes it possible to correct it

Quick Cures
By W. H. Bates, M.D.

CHILDREN are more easily cured of imperfect sight than are adults. Children twelve years of age or younger who have never worn glasses, who can read 20/100 or better, may obtain normal sight in two weeks or less by reading the Snellen Test Card four times a day after palming and practicing the swing for five minutes or longer. To obtain a permanent cure it is necessary that such children should devote at least five minutes a day to palming, swinging and reading the Snellen Test Card as long as they attend school. There is a great difference in the minds of children. Some have good memories and can maintain mental pictures perfectly for long periods of time. Many of these cases have been cured temporarily in one visit by palming for an hour or longer while remembering mental pictures perfectly. Those children who were unable to remember or imagine mental pictures were not so readily cured, yet many of them were taught how to remember mental pictures at the first visit, and, with the help of palming and swinging a sufficient length of time, they also obtained normal vision at the first visit.
A small boy who plays baseball frequently becomes able to see, remember or imagine mental pictures connected with a game of baseball, and the better he remembers the ball game the better becomes his vision.
Squint, which is more or less prevalent in young children, is oftentimes relieved promptly by playing games which require running. If the children enjoy the game the strain of the eyes will be relieved and they will become straight temporarily. By repetition the squint will become permanently corrected. The use of glasses in such cases should be condemned because they interfere with the cure without glasses.
People who have imperfect sight and do not wear glasses soon learn to find their way about the streets without much trouble. School teachers have been surprised to find how well they could get along in school without their glasses. A quick cure cannot be accomplished unless the patient stops wearing glasses. Some people who have worn them for thirty or forty years or longer have been cured in one visit. The patients who have been cured quickly make a lot of trouble for the doctor, because their friends who may apply for treatment expect as quick a cure. When such a thing is not possible their disappointment is very decided and their conversation may be very disagreeable.
Quick cures of patients over forty years of age who have lost their ability to read the newspaper or any printed matter at the near point occur from time to time. One day five patients over fifty years of age, who were unable to read at the near point without glasses, obtained normal vision temporarily in one visit. Each one demonstrated that the memory of imperfect sight required an effort; that it was difficult, tedious or fatiguing, and that imperfect sight could not be remembered or imagined continuously for any great length of time. They demonstrated that when they stared at one part of a large letter of the Snellen Test Card at twenty feet, after a few seconds an effort was required and the vision very soon became imperfect. When they looked at the diamond type at ten inches from their eyes they had the same feeling of strain and effort when they failed to distinguish the letters. They were able to demonstrate that when they stared, tried to concentrate or tried to imagine the small letters were stationary their vision became worse. When they rested their eyes and imagined things were moving their memory, imagination and vision improved. Some of them soon became able to imagine that the white spaces between the lines were whiter than the margin or the rest of the card. By closing their eyes they felt a measure of relief and rest, and by keeping them closed or by palming for five minutes or longer, they became able to imagine the white spaces much whiter, the letters much blacker, and to imagine the card with a slow, short, easy swing of less than a quarter of an inch.
Some years ago a remarkable patient came to see me. The first thing she said was that she had to catch a train which left in a few hours. She apologized by saying that she would have called to see me before but she had only just heard of me from a lady that she recently met at a luncheon. Her eyes, she said, were a great trouble to her and all the glasses she had worn had not been satisfactory.
I asked her if she wanted to be cured quickly. She answered:
"If you please."
Then I said to her: "You can be cured quickly if you do just exactly what I say."
She replied very solemnly: "I promise to do whatever you say."
I handed her a small card on which was printed some lines of diamond type. I asked her what she could see. She said:
"I see a gray card with a lot of blurred gray letters. They all seem to look alike and there are no spaces between the words or the letters and not always between the lines."
I said to her: "With your eyes closed, can you remember such a thing as a sunset, a red sun and different colored clouds?"
She said: "Yes."
"With your eyes still closed, can you remember or imagine a white cloud in the sky, dazzling white with sun shining on it?"
She answered: "Yes."
Then I gave her the following directions: "Close your eyes, keeping them closed until you can remember a white cloud in the sky, dazzling white with the sun shining on it, then open your eyes and glance at the fine print, still remembering your white cloud, but be sure and close your eyes before you have time to read any of the letters." I watched her do this for a few minutes and saw that she was following my directions properly, then I left her to practice by herself. After about half an hour I returned and asked her how she was getting along. Her face was a little bit flushed and in an apologetic tone she said: "I tried to do just exactly what you told me to do, Doctor, and I am sorry to say that although I only looked at the card for a second at a time, in flashes, contrary to your instructions, I read every word on the card." Then I explained to her that of course at the first visit she was not expected to do what I asked her to do exactly, but, under the circumstances, I thought that she had done very well indeed. I gave her some other fine print to practice with in the same way, but to hold it not more than six inches from her eyes. With her eyes closed she remembered the white cloud as before, keeping her eyes closed until her memory of the white cloud was perfect, and then she flashed the white spaces between the lines for a second. I watched her for a while, and I said: "What is the trouble?"
"Nothing," she said. "I close my eyes and remember the white cloud. I also remember it very well with my eyes open. When I do I cannot help seeing the white spaces perfectly white and the black letters perfectly black, but I am sorry to say that I cannot avoid reading the letters."
Then I held out my hand to her and said: "Shake hands. I am very well pleased with you and this time I will forgive you for not avoiding reading the letters." She then departed for her train.
I tried the same method on a great many other patients but very seldom did I find one who succeeded as well as she.

Stories from the Clinic
55. A HOSPITAL PATIENT
By Emily C. Lierman

DURING the hot summer days while we were still treating patients at the Harlem Hospital Clinic, a little girl named Estelle, about eight years of age, was brought in and placed in the children's ward of the hospital. She met with an accident which destroyed the sight of her left eye. Not being a Clinic case, another doctor took charge of her. One day this doctor came to our room and asked Dr. Bates when he expected to take a vacation. Dr. Bates answered: "I take a vacation every day. Why do you ask?"
The other doctor answered: "I am serious, Dr. Bates. When do you go away for a rest?"
Dr. Bates replied: "When I am treating my patients it rests me, so I don't have to go away. Is there anything I can do for you?"
"Yes," said he. "There is a little girl in the children's ward upstairs and while I am away I would like to have you take care of her case. When I return I shall remove the injured eye, for it is in bad shape and the sight is completely destroyed."
Dr. Bates agreed to care for the little girl and asked me to help him. We called on Estelle soon after and the nurse in charge of the ward led the way to the tiny cot in a far corner of the room. Rows upon rows of cots we passed and on each lay a young child. Some of them were the dearest little pickaninnies you ever saw. A number were crying with pain, while others looked wistful as we passed them by. I could feel their loneliness, away from their mothers, and my heart ached. I glanced at the doctor's face and I could see that he, too, felt sorry for the little ones. Finally the nurse stopped beside Estelle's cot, and the poor child looked very much frightened as the doctor and I came along. We could only see part of her face as she lay there, because the whole left side was covered with a bandage. Before Dr. Bates could say a word to her she began to cry and beg the new doctor to please not hurt her, like the other doctor did. The nurse began to remonstrate with her, but the doctor soon quieted her when he promised in his gentle way that he would not hurt her one single bit. She stopped weeping instantly when the doctor asked her if she would like to see how really funny she looked in a mirror. Was there ever a girl or a woman who didn't want to see herself in a mirror? Estelle answered: "But I haven't any mirror."
"Oh!" said the doctor, "Mrs. Lierman always carries one in her purse."
I produced it quickly, before the child lost interest. As she held the mirror and looked at her bandaged face I noticed that the nurse was bored; all this was a waste of time. She had other duties, undoubtedly, but Dr. Bates believes in taking his time and he surely did on this occasion. The doctor very carefully directed the child to *remove the adhesive* plaster herself, and in this way the bandage was removed without discomfort or pain. After the doctor had examined the eye, which was almost healed, he turned to the nurse and asked: "Why on earth is this child kept in bed?" The nurse answered: "Because of the injury to her eye."
"So I see," said the doctor, "but the rest of her body is not sick or injured. Why cannot she get up and walk around here?"
The nurse replied: "But I am obeying the doctor's orders."
"All right," said Dr. Bates, "I have charge of her case now, and I think she ought to be out of bed."
Before the nurse could tell Dr. Bates that the child would have to be dressed, he put out his arms toward Estelle and her arms went out toward him with a smile. If our reader has ever visited a patient lying in a hospital bed, why need I explain just what Estelle had on at the time. She didn't care, neither did the doctor. He lifted her gently out of bed, and as she readily gave him her hand both walked slowly down the whole length of the ward. But, coming back, she ran with him. Of course her steps were uncertain, for she had been in bed for two weeks, which made her weak, but she had full confidence in the big doctor who held her hand and who surely would take care that she did not fall. What a funny sight the ward! Bare feet, a smile, and practically nothing else. The nurse looked on disdainfully, but I must confess that I giggled. The other children in the ward became interested in the game of the doctor and Estelle. There was a grand exodus of most of the children from their beds, who were anxious to join in the fun. During this time Estelle was not quiet. She was so happy that she screamed with delight, while the other children added their voices to the cry. The nurses had a lively time for fully ten minutes or longer getting things settled again.
Back again to the other end of the ward can pose little Estelle, with Dr. Bates trotting alongside of her. Coming back, the doctor stopped beside a cot where a baby lay swathed in bandages from head to foot. She had been horribly burned. Neither of her tiny hands was free to hold a dolly or some other play-toy. Over in a corner of the room was a box with all sorts of toys. At the doctor's suggestion Estelle produced a dolly from the box and held it up so the poor baby could see it. Her moans changed to smiles right off and in an instant two little girls forgot their pain. To go back to Estelle's trouble. She told us how she had been playing on the sidewalk near her home when she slipped and fell against the curbstone. A piece of a broken glass bottle lay in her path and it penetrated through her upper closed eyelid and cut the eye so badly that the sight was destroyed completely. Dr. Bates treated the eye later so that it did not have to be removed. Even though she could only see out of one eye, anyone observing her could not have guessed that the sight was destroyed in the left eye. Ruth Estelle and her mother were very grateful to us, and at every visit Estelle would till the doctor's pockets with fruit and candy which she was only too glad to share with the big doctor who did not hurt her.

A Personal Experience
By Henrietta C. Clinton

FOR more than twenty years I had suffered from what the doctors call migraine headaches, with the usual digestive disturbances, which greatly interfered with my general health, both from their frequency and the medical remedies supposed to be necessary in such cases. I fortunately refused to wear glasses except for about three years of that time. At forty-six my vision was very bad for the near point and I had double vision in each eye. My headache became almost continuous, and I was very thin and nervously wrought up all the time.
One of the leading ophthalmologists of San Francisco told me that double vision meant incipient cataract. I walked the streets trying to realize blindness, because his opinion was that I should wear terrible lenses and wait until the cataract developed and got hard enough to be cut out.
Fortunately I did not give up my attempts to read. One day at the library I came across the article in an old "Scientific American" of January 12, 1918, about Dr. W. H. Bates' discoveries in regard to curing the sight without glasses. I immediately wrote to the doctor, but it was some time afterwards before I understood anything about how to apply the principles toward a cure.
I am now fifty-one years old and my sight is almost perfect. I can read the photographic reductions readily and I can stand in the window of my office on the ninth floor of an office building downtown and read the numbers on the automobiles as they pass in the street. The stenographer, who is in her early twenties, vies with me in seeing the most difficult things she can think of, and sometimes she beats me and sometimes the reverse.

I do not yet consider my sight perfect, because I can only see the ten line on the test card at fifteen feet. My ambition is to see it at twenty or even thirty feet, and I have a great ambition to see Venus as a crescent. Shortly after I purchased Dr. Bates' book, "Perfect Sight Without Glasses," [link] in which he says that some people see the rings of Saturn and the moons of Jupiter without glasses, I saw an article in the "Scientific American" in which the writer told of a tablet dug up in Asia Minor in which a priest made a prophecy. It said that "When the north horn of Venus was over a certain star certain things would happen, and that other things would happen when the south horn of Venus was over another star, showing," the article said, "that the Babylonians knew Venus to be a crescent," and added, "that the ancients must have had lenses, because it was not thought possible that the human eyesight could be ever acute enough to see Venus as a crescent."

That interested me greatly. At that time I had great difficulty in seeing newspaper print. I would squint and make my head twist with pain in order to read without glasses. I hated them, and I made up my mind that I should some day see Venus as a crescent.

The first thing I tried to do was palming. It was impossible, because I tried to see the inner field black, and the more I tried to see it so the more the lights would come. I tried to read the photographic reduction. It was impossible, because I would squint and strain. I got worse daily. I tried central fixation. I could not do it, because every time I looked at a thing I would cue-tate it until my eyes seemed to pop nearly out of my head.

I could not seem to know how to relax until I conceived the idea of using my imagination. The first time it occurred to me to use my imagination I was at the table and imagined that black ants were crawling over the tablecloth. To my delight I instantly saw the threads of the tablecloth. In two weeks I learned to relax enough to read newspaper print easily. I remembered that when I was a child and shut my eyes, they were shut, not merely the lids, but the whole paraphernalia of sight was shut. When one "sees lights" he does not shut the centers of sight. I kept imagining that I was a child sleeping in my little crib and that the black sight was all around me. The first time complete blackness was all over the inner field it startled me so much that the lights came on worse than ever. You see, I had begun again to regard the lights with my centers of sight and forgot to relax. But persistence gave me the power to disregard those bothersome lights.

The memory of a period escaped me until I imagined a spot of black molasses on the tablecloth. It was very black and some black ants ran all around the black fluid. I got so that I could dispense those ants and leave the very small spot of blackness moving slightly back and forth on the whitest surfaces. My period! Palming and going through that scene over and over again gave me such relaxation that I would open my eyes and read a line or two of the photographic reduction before the glaze of staring would come back. I do not know at what stage I lost the double vision. The headaches went while I was trying to see fine print, even staring and squinting at it before I learned to relax.

Another mental image I found relaxing was that of a black velvet cloak I once owned. I thought it had a rip and I had to take several spools of black silk and match the blackness of the cloak. One spool of silk would not be black enough, then I'd take another and another, until I could get a spool as black as I could possibly conceive blackness.

I was also benefited by remembering some word of photographic reduction and have the letters rapidly change places with each other and spell different things. I find that in reading the test card at a distance I can see them more distinctly if I imagine a black wand slowly pointing out the letters to me. I think it is the unconscious swinging that I do of the letters as the imaginary wand approaches the letters that helps me to see them more clearly and more centrally fixed.

One thing that may interest other fifty-one-year-olds is that almost all the wrinkles which had been around my eyes have disappeared, and people meet me and tell me that I look ten years younger than I did ten years ago!

The Fairy School
By George Guild

IT was very hot. The school windows were wide-open, but not a breath of air was stirring and the teacher and pupils were very uncomfortable from the heat. Freddie was only eight years old and he could not be blamed when his mind wandered from his work. In spite of all that he could do his head would nod, his eyes would close and he would drop off to sleep. Then he heard the White Fairy talking to the children while she sat on the teacher's desk, waving her hands and dancing around to the amusement of the children. Her eyes were so bright and full of sympathy, kindness and love that not one of the boys or girls could keep their eyes from her face. She said:
"Now watch me as I swing from side to side. Please, all of you stand up, with your feet slightly apart, facing me, and move your whole body, your head and your eyes from side to side while I am moving."
"Now sit down, close your eyes and cover them with the palms of your hands, resting your elbows on your desk. While you are doing this remember me standing up, smiling at you and loving you with all my heart." In five minutes she said: "Now open your eyes and watch me while I dance."
Freddie noticed how much more distinctly he could now see the face of the White Fairy.
Then all of a sudden the White Fairy stopped dancing. At first the smiling eyes were very close, but in a few seconds or so they began to blur and fade away. It was not long before he was unable to see her face or her tiny feet; they had become just a blur. He felt uncomfortable, and he must have looked uncomfortable because the White Fairy called out: "Freddie, swing your head from side to side." Freddie was only too glad to swing from side to side, and it was not long before he became able to see her tiny feet, her eyes and face just as clearly as before.
Then the White Fairy said: "Now, Freddie, close your eyes and remember me as well as you can. If you love me you will remember me."
And Freddie closed his eyes, and I am quite sure that he remembered the face of the White Fairy, because he loved her so much. After he had kept his eyes closed for a few minutes the White Fairy called out:
"Open your eyes and tell me what you see. And when Freddie opened his eyes the school-room was gone. It seemed as though he was in the woods; it seemed as though he was a fairy and that all the other children were fairies, and he enjoyed being a fairy because when he imitated the look of love on the face of the White Fairy he thought of his mother and his father, his brothers and his sisters and other people that he could remember. He seemed to love all of them a great deal more than he had ever loved anybody in his life. The White Fairy invited him to dance with her. It was very strange to Freddie that he could dance for a long time without getting tired, and the more he danced the better did he feel. Then the White Fairy told him to stop dancing, and while sitting on the grass she walked around him, touching his head with the tips of her fingers until he fell asleep. When he woke up the teacher was petting his head and loving him. At once he called out: "Oh, teacher, the White Fairy taught me to dance, how to see, and now I feel just like studying." When the teacher heard him say this she said:
"Freddie, I am curious. Show me what the White Fairy helped you to do." And so, before the whole school Freddie showed how the White Fairy taught him to swing, shift and palm and how she showed him how starting and straining made his sight worse and that by moving his head and eyes from side to side his sight got better. Right away the children all did it, and after they had practiced with Freddie for a short time they were all very happy and told the teacher that they also felt a great deal better, and, like Freddie, they wanted to get to work because they felt just like studying.

The Better Eyesight League
AUGUST MEETING

THE vacation season is in full swing now and the August attendance at the Better Eyesight meeting was small. Miss Harry, the President, is away for the summer, and Miss Secor, Secretary, is away during the month of August. Owing to the small gathering, Dr. Bates informally opened the meeting and gave a lecture which lasted about an hour and a half. During this time he demonstrated the various swings and ex-plained their value.
One visitor remarked that she is a high school teacher and interested in the results obtained in schools. She wished to help her children, but when practicing the method she failed to see things more. She emphatically said that when she looked at a chair it stood still, and no fear of her imagination could make it move.
She was a very difficult subject, inasmuch as she stared at everything instead of taking things easy and relaxing. Dr. Bates explained the principle of the swing, admitting that it was imaginary, but no more so than the moving of the telephone poles when one is riding in a train. The other members present benefited by her errors, because they were being shown the wrong way to do things and the correct method of improving the sight by the use of the swing.
Before the visitor left she saw the chairs moving by looking first over one shoulder and then over the other, glancing at the chairs as she swayed but not staring at them.
The most important fundamental principle to keep in mind is that defective vision is caused by strain and cured by relaxation. One of the greatest causes of strain, and the beginning of many unpleasant symptoms, is stating. This is due to an unconscious effort to concentrate and to put the utmost energy into every act or movement.
The subject of seasickness was then discussed. Dr. Bates said this also is caused by strain. People who relax and allow their bodies to sway with the movement of the boat never become sick. A sailor's walk is spoken of as a "rolling gait." If he were to stand stiff, stare at the waves, and strain to resist the movement of the ship he would never become a sailor.
Dr. Bates told the story of one of his patients who would never ride in an elevator if she could avoid it. She detested going into the modern office buildings because the elevators were so swift and the buildings so high that she became ill before she was half way up. She told Dr. Bates she had to steel herself to the ordeal of boarding one, and at the end of the trip felt as though she had just crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a rough voyage.
When Dr. Bates invited her to go with him for a ride in the elevator of his building she opened her eyes in amazement, thinking he lacked sympathetic qualities. He explained to her that steeling herself to take a ride was wrong, in addition to being a dreadful strain. He told her to look at the operator and not at the walls gliding past. This helped her to such an extent that she insisted upon riding up and down several times to see if the cure was permanent. It was, just so long as she did not strain to hold the floors stationary.
A wonderful report was received from the superintendent of nine schools who installed this method in his classes. This proved without a doubt the value of Dr. Bates' method, especially with children. The report will be read at the September meeting of the League. We hope all the members may be able to attend, because the report of the summer work will be worth-while and helpful.
The September meeting will be held on the second Tuesday, as usual, which falls on the ninth.

Chief Four Eyes
By Emily A. Meder

A LADY called at the office and introduced herself. She was one of our regular correspondents and I remembered her name because she had such a great deal of trouble with her thirteen-year-old son, Dick. She explained in her last letter that he is a normal, active boy who finds more enjoyment in playing baseball and hoeing than doing his home work. As Dick wouldn't wear glasses she decided to see what Dr. Bates' method accomplished.
There is a vacant lot near her home, used by a band of "wild Indians," with her son as "Chief." The band, however, objected to a leader with glasses, and Dick became quite ingenious in inventing ways to wear them and still not wear them. She said she watched him continually. He walked innocently past her with the glasses gracefully perched on his nose, but in some mysterious way they disappeared before he reached the sidewalk. This became a nervous game of hide-and-seek between them. He said he would not be called "sissy," and she was equally sure that he would have to wear glasses in order to be cured.
About this time news of Dr. Bates' work reached the mother's ears and she wrote to us for information. She bought the book and told Dick that if he did as she instructed he could leave his glasses off for two weeks. At the end of that time she found that he could not only go without his glasses but his sight had improved.
Dick enjoyed the palming, much to her surprise, and he did not have to be told to do it when his eyes felt strained. He is proud of his test card and his "Indians" try to outdo each other in reading it at the farthest distance. It has became a modern Indian rite.
"The best of it," Mrs. Jamieson said, "is that I can look at my boy now without the suspicion usually attached to a murderer, and he lost the hated nickname of 'Chief Four Eyes'."

Questions and Answers

Question—Is there any power in the lens of dark sun glasses? Are they harmful?
Answer—Yes. Dark glasses are very injurious to the eyes.
Question—I improved temporarily by your method, but I am at a standstill now. What is the next step?
Answer—Practice the swinging.
Question—I enjoy palming, but it makes me drowsy after ten or fifteen minutes. Is this helpful?
Answer—When palming is done properly it does not make you drowsy.
Question—Is a case of detached retina likely to respond to treatment?
Answer—To cure detachment of the retina requires in some cases a year or longer.
Question—Could a little colored girl cure a cataract on her eye by blinking and swinging?
Answer—Yes, but the patient should practice many hours daily and it should be kept up for many months under the supervision of someone with perfect sight without glasses.

Previous Issue
THEWHITEFAIRY ePDF Issue
THEWHITEFAIRY To Contents Page