September 1926

Better Eyesight

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

September, 1926

Demonstrate

1. That the sway improves the vision because it prevents the stare.

Stand with the feet about one foot apart, facing a Snellen test card about fifteen feet away. Sway the body from side to side, at first with a rapid, wide swing. When the body, head and eyes sway to the right, observe that the Snellen test card is to the left of where you are looking. Then sway the body, head and eyes to the left. The test card is now to the right of where you are looking. Practice this sway for a few minutes and, without looking at the Snellen test card directly, observe that the whiteness of the card becomes whiter and the black spots on the card become a darker shade of black. The test card appears to move in the direction opposite to the movement of the eyes, while objects beyond the card may move in the same direction as the eyes move.

2. That when the forefinger of one hand is held about six inches in front and to one side of the face, the finger appears to move from side to side in the direction opposite to the movement of the head and eyes. Close the eyes and let the hand rest in the lap and remember the swing of the finger. Imagine that the hand, which is fastened to the finger, moves with it. Realize that when the hand moves, the wrist, the arm, the elbow and other parts of the body, being joined together, all move with the finger. Now try to imagine the elbow is stationary, while the finger is moving. It is impossible to do this. When the finger moves, you can imagine not only your body, but also the chair on which you are sitting, the floor on which the chair rests, the walls of the room, the whole building with its foundation, in fact, the universe to be moving with the finger. This is called the universal swing and is possible only when the memory, imagination, or the sight is good.

Rest

By W. H. Bates, M.D.

REST and relaxation of the eye and mind is perfect when the vision is perfect, and can always be demonstrated.

When the eye is at rest, it is always moving. To demonstrate this, instruct the patient to close his eyes and imagine that he is looking fast over his right shoulder, then over his left shoulder. By alternating quite vigorously, the eyeballs can be seen to move from side to side. While the eyes are still closed, one can place the fingers on the closed eyelids and feel this movement. Now instruct the patient to imagine a shorter movement of the eyes from side to side, that is, look a shorter distance from eight to left while the eyes are closed. The movement can usually be felt, but it is not so manifest to the observer as it is when the wide movement of the eyes is made. However, after a little practice, five minutes or more, when the patient is imagining the eyes are moving, one can feel the movement even though it may be very short, one-quarter of an inch or less. If the patient can* at a part of an imaginary letter with the eyes closed, the memory or the imagination of the better becomes blurred and the movement of the eyeball is not continuous. On the other hand, if the patient remembers a letter perfectly, the eyeball appears to move continuously a short distance in various directions.

When central fixation is practiced, that is, when one remembers or imagines one part of a letter best, the eyeballs move. If one tries to remember or imagine a letter, all parts equally well, the movement of the eyeballs cannot be seen or felt, and the eyeballs appear stationary. One can demonstrate the movement of the eyeballs very well with the aid of the ophthalmoscope. When the optic nerve is regarded with this instrument, one sees always see the movement of the pigment of the eye or of the blood vessels of the retina when the sight, memory, or imagination is normal. This movement is slow, short, easy and continuous. When the sight, memory, or imagination is imperfect, the eyeball may move very irregularly, with frequent periods when it is stationary.

In nystagmus, the eyeballs move from side to side, usually continuously, a distance so great that it is conspicuous. The rapidity of this movement may vary. It is always stopped after closing the eyes and resting them a sufficient length of time, several minutes or longer, or by practicing the slow, short, easy swing.

Nystagmus is generally believed to be difficult to cure. In fact, it is so difficult that very few cases have ever been reported as benefited by orthodox methods of treatment. It has usually been considered an incurable symptom of disease of the eye. Nystagmus is, however, to a greater or less degree, under the control of the mind of the patient. Some people are able to stop the movement at will. These cases, however, are rare. Some children acquire the ability to practice nystagmus just as they learn to look cross-eyed. Nystagmus requires a strain. When practiced either consciously or unconsciously, the vision is always lowered. When the nystagmus movements are lessened or stopped altogether, the vision improves and has frequently become normal, either temporarily or permanently.

Some years ago I treated a boy, aged ten, for the cure of nystagmus. His mother told me that she had visited many physicians and had sacrificed a great deal finan-cially in order to obtain a cure for her son. I tested his vision and found it normal at times, when the nystagmus would stop. Repeated tests demonstrated the fact that his vision was always worse when he had the nystagmus. While he was reading with almost normal vision. I said to him: "Stop the movement of your eyes!" Much to my surprise, he did what I told him and then read the card with normal vision. Then I said to him: "Start it up again and read the card." This he did very promptly, but he was unable to obtain normal sight. Again I asked him to stop the nystagmus and his vision became normal and remained normal as long as he had no nystagmus.

The mother paid close attention to the conversation. She realized that the boy was able to produce or stop the nystagmus at will. He deemed to be pleased by the attention he received when he showed off his control of fi. The mother asked me no questions. There was no need of questofm after the convincing demonstration that the boy gave of his ability to control the movement. There was a grim determination in her face when she left the office, and she grasped the arm of her boy with a great deal more force than was perhaps necessary. She spoke to the boy with considerable emphasis: "Just you wait until I get you home!" I am sorry that I cannot report what happened later, but I can guess. I hope that she was able to stop this bad habit without much severity.

It can be demonstrated that when the eyes are not at rest, the vision is always imperfect. When the memory or imagination is perfect with the eyes closed, the vision is improved when the eyes are opened. Usually the improvement of the vision is only temporary, and may last for only a second, or in flashes. In these cases, the memory soon becomes imperfect with the eyes open. By alternating perfect memory with the eyes closed, the memory with the eyes open usually improves. By practice, many patients become able to remember or imagine with their eyes open a small area of black or white, as well as they can imagine it with their eyes closed. When such patients look at a blank wall, where there is nothing in particular to see, no effort may be made to see and the vision improves. One can practice with the Snellen test card and remember for a moment one known letter of the card, with the eyes open, as well as one can for a longer time with the eyes closed. What am letter of the Snellen test card is improved, all the letters and other objects are also improved. The perfect memory of a known letter with the eyes closed is perfect rest, while an imperfect memory or imagination with the byes closed or open is always a strain. It is a great help to many people with imperfect sight to demonstrate that rest improves the vision, while the stare or strain always lowers it.

To fail to see requires an effort. When the patient regards the letters which are so blurred and indistinct that he cannot tell what they are, he is always straining, trying to see, either consciously or unconsciously. People are cured of their imperfect sight when they cease to strain, stare, or make an effort to see. When I explained this to one of my patients, she said that I was wrong, that the only way she could see was by means of an effort. I had her test the facts. When she looked at the Snellen test card at ten feet, she could not read it with normal vision. At five feet her vision was better, but when she made an effort, her vision became much worse. The same was true when she regarded letters at a nearer point, three feet, two feet, or even one foot. An effort to see always made her sight worse. She had to demonstrate the facts repeatedly before she was finally convinced that her vision was good only when her eyes were at rest and no effort was made.

Blinking, when practiced properly, promotes relaxation or rest. The normal eye blinks continuously all day long when the patient is awake. At night, when the patient is asleep, a movement of the eyeballs can be seen which resembles the movement of the eyeballs when the eye blinks. When the eye blinks slowly and the upper eyelid is slowly closed, distant appear to move up. When the eyelids slowly open, objects appear to move down. This movement is usually accompanied by an improvement in the vision. Blinking is absolutely necessary in order to obtain continuous normal vision. The normal eye blinks unconsciously, easily, sometimes with great rapidity and at other times rather slowly. It is impossible to stop the blinking of the normal eye. Any effort to do so is a strain, which lowers the vision and, if kept up for some minutes or longer, produces pain, fatigue, dizziness, and other nervous symptoms.

The normal eye is shifting or looking from one point to another continuously, not only when one is awake, but also when we is asleep. This continuous movement of the eyes brings about a condition of perfect rest. To stare at one point for a few seconds or part of a minute is a difficult or painful thing to do. It requires a great effort which lowers the vision. It is not possible to see two black periods perfectly black at the same time. The only way that they can be seen perfectly black is to shift from one to the other alternately. It is not possible to see a large letter of a small letter perfectly without shifting or looking from one part of the letter to another part. It is well to realize that the human mind is not made to see more than one thing perfectly at a time. To see two or more things perfectly at the same time is impossible, but one can shift from one thing to another and alternately see each perfectly for a short time.

When regarding a person's face, it is impossible to see the whole face perfectly at once. It is necessary to shift from one part of the face to another to see those parts perfectly. If the shifting is more or less rapid, one gets the impression of seeing the whole of the face at once, when, as a matter of fact, only a small area is seen at a time.

One of my patients had normal sight in one-eye and one-half normal vision in the other. He was very positive that he could see every letter of the Snellen test card perfectly at the same time. He was not aware that he shifted from one letter to the other, or that he shifted from one part to another of large and even small letters in order to see them clearly, or to be able to distinguish them at all. When he covered his good eye and looked with the poor one, he could read only one letter at a time. He was quite conscious that he did not see even the large letters perfectly; but when he practiced shifting with his poor eye, his vision improved not only for the large letters, but also for the small letters. It required considerable time and much patience to convince him that it was impossible for him to see all parts of any letter perfectly at the same time. When he demonstrated that staring lowered his vision, and that shifting improved it, he obtained normal vision in each eye.

When palming is done correctly, the vision, memory, and imagination always improve. By palming is meant to close the eyes and cover them with the palm of one or both hands without exerting any pressureon the closed eyelids. Think of something pleasant, something that you can remember perfectly. Then let your mind drift from one pleasant thought to another. This should be practiced for five minutes ten times daily, or more often when convenient. Some people obtain more benefit by palming for one-half hour, an hour or longer.

There are patients who have difficulty in palming, that is, they strain and make hard work of it. For them it is easier to simply close their eyes and in this way rest them. Other patients obtain relaxation by closing their eyes for part of a minute, then opening them for part of a second, and quickly closing them again. This is called flashing, and usually improves the vision immediately.

It is true that when the eye is perfectly at rest, the sight, memory, and imagination are always normal. Conversely, it is impossible for the sight to be imperfect when the eyes are perfectly at rest. Not only are all errors of refraction benefited and cured by rest, but also organic diseases of the eye,—glaucoma, cataract, opacity of the cornea, disease of the retina, choroid, or optic nerve are cured by rest and relaxation.

Stories from the Clinic

No. 79: RELAXATION EFFECTIVE

By Emily C. Lierman

WHEN some of my patients are told upon their first visit that glasses will not be prescribed, they wonder what kind of treatment they will receive and they become very much frightened. During my first year of study in clinic work, I noticed that adults, especially, were so frightened that it was difficult to test their sight. Under these trying conditions, a fair test could not be made. Each time the patient was told to read the test card, the retinoscope showed a change in the shape of the eyeball. As I studied each case under treatment, I became convinced that mind strain had a great deal to do with eyestrain. I planned a way to approach such patients and put them at ease, and found it effective with adults and children.

I have had many school children under my care who, for no apparent reason, became nervous as soon as they entered school. When I questioned them about their teachers, the answer was usually a favorable one. Sometimes they would complain about some boy of girl whom they feared, and I was able to help them solve the problem. I would find out sooner or later that my patient was suffering from adnd strain and fat. It was necessary to convince the patient, after an eye test with the Snellen test card, that it was eyestrain and undue effort to improve in school studies, that caused the trouble. After the vision was improved. there were no more complaints from either the patient or the school officials.

An interesting cot was that of a house-painter who spent most of his working-hours on a scaffold, painting the outside of high buildings. He would become so dizzy that he was finally compelled to give up his work. Other jobs were not so easily obtained, and he began to worry because there was no income for his wife and family. He called on a doctor about the dizzy spells and was advised to go to our clinic to have his eyes examined. With the ophthalmoscope, Dr. Bates could find nothing organically wrong with either eye. Dr. Bates said that apparently the man was in geneest good health. I questioned the patient about his former position as a painter. He told me that his fellow-workman on the scaffold had lost control of himself, had fallen to the ground and been killed. Since that time, the patient had had attacks of dizziness.

Palming seemed to give him relief almost instantly, even though he had his eyes covered for a very short time, a period of five minutes or less. At fifteen feet from the test card, he easily read down to the forty line, but beyond that line the letters were blurred and the dizziness returned. He was instructed to palm again, and while doing this, I told him to remember moving objects. He said it was easy for him to remember an automobile moving slowly, or a street car stopping at a corner, letting of passengers and taking on others. He could imagine boats moving up and down the Hudson River. In this way, we passed on from one thing to another, and after a few minutes of palming, he read the whole card without stopping and without a mistake. I placed my forefinger on the card to guide him in seeing the white spaces between each letter and reminded him to blink as he flashed each letter. The dizziness disappeared and he said that he felt as though a great load had been removed from the top of his head.

During each treatment, I was careful not to mention the scaffold or the accident, but we did talk about paines and colors as he sat with his eyes closed. He seemed eager to explain and I encouraged him to do so. It was interesting to hear him tell how colors were mixed to produce the correct shades desired. His mind became free from strain and his dizziness disappeared entirely. Test card practice was continued both in the clinic and at his home. Later, I added the swing to be practiced with eyes open and with them closed.

One day he came with an interesting story of how he had tiered and cared his little son, nine yars of age, who was nervosal and destructive. Punishing him seemed to make him worse. When his father first practiced the swing, the boy imitated him in fun. Later, it became a natural thing to see both of them swaying and keeping time with the victrola music. Other practicies of the Bata Method also became a daily habit to the boy. He especially enjoyed keeping his eyes closed while his father told him of a farm out west where he had lived as a boy.

Faithful practice has given the father normal vision and a relaxed mind, and he has returned to the scaffold and painting with no more attacks of dizziness. Recently, while crossing the river on a ferry-boat, I stood where I could see the pilot at the wheel and watched him carefully. He was a man about the age of fifty, and did not wear glasses. As we started out of the ferry-slip, we moved slowly. The pilot looked straight ahead and I observed that he blinked his eyes frequently. At first I counted five blinks to the second; then he blinked so often and so irregularly that I could not keep count. I continued to watch him, however, as we crossed the river, and noticed that his head moved about half an inch from side to side and that he blinked his eyes all the time. It particularly interested me to note that when he changed his position a little, perhaps to stand more comfortably, he kept on swaying his body and blinking. The ferry-boat were into the slip as though it were sliding on ice, and there was not the slightest jar as the boat touched the sides of the ferry slip. The pilot had good vision.

Near our office building there is a traffic policeman who manages a steady flow of traffic. He sees things moving all day long. Sometimes his right hand is raised and other times the left, as he hals traffic. He turns his body to the right or to the left, whichever way the traffic is going. His eyes serve him well because he keeps them moving. His whole body appear to be perfectly relaxed, and he demonstrates the efficiency of a relaxed mind.

The following radio talk was broadcasted from Station WMCA, Hotel McAlpin, on Thursday, July 8th, at 4:15 p.m.

"Eye Education"—Blinking

By May Sacur

HAVE you a tiny baby in your home? If so, he will teach you how to use your eyes with relaxation. Notice how gently he blinks his eyes—and how often! If you have no baby in your home go to the park to-morrow, and learn your lesson from a baby there. You will notice that when Baby blinks, his eyelids sim-ply drop. He blinks very, very gently.

Now, will you please sit in a very comfortable chair. Rest your feet and the calves of your legs, on a stool which is as high as the seat of your chair.

Let us all palm. Gently dose the eyes. Cup the hands, and place them geotly over the eyes.

Think of something that is very, very black.

Now imagine that you are watching a tiny baby as he lies in his carriage. See how gently he blinks! And how often!

Now place your hands lazily in your lap. Gently blink, slowly turn your head to the right, as you—

Blink, blink, gently blink, slowly turn your head to the left, as you blink, blink, gently blink; very, very gently blink.

Slowly turn your head to the right, and blink, blink, gently blink; very, very gently blink.

Slowly turn your head to the front, and blink, blink, gently blink; very, very gently blink.

We hope that you have enjoyed this little lesson in Eye Education. Other exercises which will improve your sight are described in Dr. Bates' book entitled "Perfect Sight Without Glasses."

The Original Nut

By George M. Guild

JIMMY was ten years of age and much interested in fairies. One day he was walking along a country road when he saw a great many bees flying, among the flowers, looking for honey. Every once in awhile, a bee would rest upon a flower and then almost instantly the flower disappeared and there stood a little fairy, for some of the flowers were fairies in disguise. When they saw Jimmy approaching, they called out to him: "Little boy, little boy. where are you going?"

He answered: "I am looking for The Original Nut"

"And who is The Original Nut, pray?" they asked.

"I do not know, but I am very curious to find him and see what he is like," Jimmy said.

"Why doesn't your father help you?" questioned the fairies.

"He is very busy. He is a policeman, a traffic cop. When he raises his hand, the automobile drivers stop quickly. If they hesitate or argue, they receive a ticket and have to go to court and see the judge about it."

"Does your father believe in fairies?" they asked.

"No, he thinks fairies are of interest only to little boys and not to big policemen," Jimmy answered.

Then the fairies told him that if he could persuade his father to believe in them, they would help him to find The Original Nut He promised faithfully to do this and continued on his way. Jimmy had walked a long distance when he became tired and lay down on a mossy, grass-covered bank to rest. After awhile it grew dark. The scan came out, looked at him and winked their eyes. Jimmy was becoming more and more sleepy, but he winked back at them. Then the fairies began to come in large numbers. They danced as they circled about him.

A little while later, the fairies had gone and as Jimmy lay on the grass, he saw a man looking down upon him. It was so dark that he did not recognize him until he spoke. It was his father. He told him all about the fairies and that they had promised to help him to find The Original Nut if he could persuade his father to be-lieve in them.

Jimmy's father laughed and said: "Why, Jimmy, I do believe in the fairies. They are always happy as they sing and dance, and do all they can to make the world a better place in which to live."

Jimmy jumped up and down in his joy, threw his arms about his father's neck, kissed him on both cheeks, and hugged him tightly. His father placed him on his shoulder and carried him back to his home. Jimmy went to bed and was soon fast asleep. It was not long before he began to dream. He thought he was on the top of a high mountain, looking down upon a large lake at its foot. On the shore of the lake he saw thousands and thousands of fairies happily singing and dancing. With a great deal of difficulty, Jimmie found his way down through the trees which covered the mountain until he came to the shore of the lake. There the fairies were circled about the Fairy Queen. Jimmy ran up to her, fell down on his knees before her, and told her that his father did believe in fairies.

The Fairy Queen smiled and said: "Now, I suppose you want to final The Original Nut. Follow me and I shall lead you to him."

Jimmy walked along behind the Fairy Queen as fast as his little legs could carry him, and he had to walk very fast because the Fairy Queen covered the ground with amazing speed,—almost as fast as a horse could trot. After traveling, as Jimmy thought, many, many miles, they came at last to a house which was made of glass. The roof was glass, the chimney was glass, the porch was glass, all four sides of the house were glass and through them one could see the chairs, the tables and all the fur-niture in the house.

In a rocking chair on the porch sat a queer little man who was cracking nuts with a nut-cracker. As fast as he cracked the nuts, he threw the kernels to a number of glass chickens that surrounded him. Each time a chicken swallowed a nut, all the glass on that chicken was smashed and out of the broken glass a duck stepped. It immediately turned and waddled down to the lake, jumped in and swam across.

The Fairy Queen told Jimmy that the glass chickens were not really chickens, but were little boys and girls in disguise who had been turned into little chicken by an ogre who lived on the other side of the lake. Only The Original Nut could change them back to little-boys and girls by first transforming them into ducks. They would then swim across the lake and come out on the other side as little girls and boys, like they had previously been.

When Jimmy awoke from his dream, he found his father standing beside his bed, looking down upon him and smiling. He had a flower pinned to the lapel of his coat. His father pointed to the Rower and closed his eyes. Jimmy, with his eyes wide open, saw that the flower was the Fairy Queen who smiled at him. She removed the pin from the stem of the flower and the coat. The fairy then climbed down to the floor and waved her hand to Jimmy and his father and beckoned them to follow her, which they were glad to do. Although the fairy was very small, she ran as fast that they had all they could do to keep up with her. They passed through the chicken yard which was filled with glass chickens, all anxious to go along also.

The Fairy Queen soon led them to the shore of a lake, which oddly enough, seemed to be the same lake that Jimmy had dreamed about. There were the same fairies, thousands of them. The Fairy Queen with her magic wand led them to the foot of the mountain to the same glass house with The Original Nut busily cracking his magic nuts with the same magic nut-cracker. The Original Nut was glad to see them and greeted them joyously.

Surely dreams come true, especially to little boys who have loving, kind fathers who are traffic cops and are busy many hours of the day, doing all they can to make everybody safe and happy.

Questions and Answers

Question—What is redinitis pigmentosa?

Answer—Retinitis pigmentosa, is a disease of the in-terior of the eye, in which small areas of the retina and other parts of the eye are destroyed. They are replaced by small black pigment patches.

Question—Can opacity of the cornea be cured?

Answer—Yes. The treatment which is most beneficial is the sun treatment as described in "Perfect Sight Without Glasses," by W. H. Bates, M.D.

Question—Are all cases of squint curable without glasses or an operation?

Answer—All cases of squint or cross-eyes are curable by the Bates Method.

Question—Is it possible to cure squint in a child under two years of age by the Bates Method, and what is the treatment employed?

Answer—A child, two years of age or younger, can be treated and cured of squint, with or without imperfect sight, by the Bates Method. The treatment is varied. The swing can be practiced by the mother holding the child in her arms. If the child is able to stand or walk, it is held by the hands and the sway is practiced with the child moving from side to side. Keeping time with music encourages the child to continue the swaying for a longer time.

Improving the memory and imagination is also recommended. The child is encouraged to play with toy animals and is taught the names of the different animals. Usually the animals are placed on the floor in groups and the child is asked to pick up the animals as they are named. As the child reaches for one and then another, the parent may observe whether the child goes directly toward the toy or reaches to either side of it. This method is used in extreme caps of squint where the child does not see perfectly where it is looking.

Colored yarns are also used in these cares. The child is taught names of the different colors. An improvement is always noted after such treatment because the child is constantly shifting his glance from one colored skein of yarn to the other as he selects the ann called for. The problem is to educate the eyesight. The more the eyes are used, the better.

Palming is beneficial in the cure of squint. If the child is told that it is just a game of peek-a-boo, he immediately becomes interested and enjoys it. Reading a story to the child so he palms is usually beneficial, and improves the squint.

With children three years a older, the Pot Hooks card is used. This is a test card with the letter "E" pointing in various directions. The child tells whether it is pointing up or down, left or right. If a mistake is made, palming is introduced in order to rest the eyes.

Children with squint are usually unruly, disobedient, or destructive. When the squint is improved, a change in their conduct is also noted. They become quiet, obedient, and their mental efficiency is improoved.

Question—Is diabetic cataract curable?

Answer—Diabetic cataract is curable when the general disease of diabetes can be relieved by treatment

Question—After a serious illness eight years ago, my pupils became very large. Is there anything you can suggest that will help them to contract?

Answer—Dilated pupils are not usually symptoms of disease of the eye. The sun treatment is beneficial. Sit in the sun with the eyes closed, allowing the sun's rays to shine directly on the closed eyelids, moving the had a short distance from side to side to avoid discomfort from the heat. This should be practiced for a half-hour, an hour, or longer.

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