June 1923

Better Eyesight

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

June, 1923

Try Dancing

THERE has been repeatedly published in this magazine and in my book that the imagination of stationary objects to be moving is a rest and relaxation and a benefit to the sight. Young children, when one or both eyes turn in or out, are benefited by having them swing from side to side with a regular rhythmical motion. This motion prevents the stare and the strain and improves the appearance of the eyes. It helps the sight of most children to play pass-in-the-corner or to play hide-and-seek?. Children become very much excited and laugh and carry on and have a good time and it certainly is a benefit to their sight. It seems to me that these children would be benefited by going to dancing school. Many of my patients practice the long swing in the office and give strangers the impression that they are practicing steps of a dance. One patient with imperfect sight from detachment of the retina recently told me over the telephone that he went to a dance the night before and although he lost considerable sleep his sight was very much improved on the following morning.
Dancing is certainly a great help to keep things moving or to imagine stationary objects are moving, and is always recommended. Some people have told me that the memory of the music, the constant rhythmic motion and the relaxation have improved the vision.

Common Sense
By W. H. Bates, M.D.

MANY people have asked me what I call my treatment. The question was a very embarrassing one because I really have no name to give it unless I can say that my methods are the methods employed by the normal eye. When a person has normal sight the eye is at rest, and when the eye is at rest, strange to say, it is always moving to avoid the stare. When the eye moves it is possible to imagine stationary objects are also moving. When the normal eye stares at one point of a letter or at all parts of a letter the vision always becomes imperfect. Persons with imperfect sight are always staring. Under favorable conditions all persons with near-sightedness do not stare, do not try to see, and the near-sightedness disappears for a longer or shorter time; no exceptions have been observed. In other parts of this magazine I have mentioned this fact and recorded that even patients with 40 D have moments when they are not nearsighted when they do not try to see.
The fundamental truth which should be demonstrated by all persons who desire to be cured of imperfect sight is the fact that the memory of perfect sight can only be accomplished easily and without effort. Furthermore, the memory of imperfect sight is difficult and requires time and is never continuous. Another truth of practical importance is that one cannot remember perfectly and imperfectly at the same time. What is true of the memory is also true of the imagination and of the vision.
I am in the habit of testing the vision of persons with imperfect sight at fifteen or twenty feet. Then I Have them close their eyes, rest them, and if possible forget that they have eyes by remembering other things which are of interest to them. When done properly, and most people if not all are able to do it properly, the vision is always temporarily improved. I spoke to one of my patients after this had happened and asked the question: "What did you do to improve your sight?"
The patient answered, "I do not know."
This seemed to me a remarkable answer. I asked a second question: "What did I tell you to do?"
The patient answered, "You told me to close my eyes and rest them."
"What helped you then to see better?"
"I do not know," answered the patient.
Then I had to start in and talk and explain and tell the patient that it was the rest that helped the patient and not any efforts that were made. It is a matter of common sense. Most people would realize that if they rested their eyes and their sight got better that the rest must have had something to do with it; and, strange as it may appear, I have seen very few people who could realize or understand this truth.
So many people ask me how my patients are benefited. Is it Christian Science, is it auto-suggestion, is it hypnotism, psychoanalysis, psychology, or has it to do in any way with mental science? The only answer that seems to me to approach the truth is "common sense." Now when I come to review my cases and try to fit common sense to the results obtained I get all mixed up. Most people have common sense, which is ordinary intelligence or the ability to do things in a reasonable, proper way. People who are highly educated, college graduates, professional men, teachers and college professors, would be expected to have a greater amount of common sense than ordinary persons, but I am sorry to say they do not. I have very little respect for mental science because of the numerous assumptions, theories, that are advanced. A theory is always something which makes me uncomfortable. I have never been able to make any progress with a working hypothesis. All my facts which were of benefit to me have no connection whatsoever with mental philosophy. I wish to confess that it gives me a great deal of unholy delight to prove, demonstrate, that all the theories of physiology are wrong. This is not a popular statement to make, but I do not care my patients by being popular. The sweetest morsel on the tip of my tongue is to say, what somebody else has said before, that logic is an ingenious method of concealing the truth.
When a problem comes to me which is very difficult for me to solve, instead of starting out with a working hypothesis it is my custom to accumulate as many facts as I possibly can, to analyze these facts in various ways and by every method known to science to try to discover whether my facts are true or not; and, believe me, that is not always an easy thing to do. Someone said to me that it was impossible to scientifically prove that my method for the prevention of myopia in school children ever actually did prevent myopia or near-sightedness; in other words, that it was impossible to prove a negative proposition, or that the children did not or were not prevented from acquiring imperfect sight. It has always given me great pleasure to make the statement that every child with normal eyes who has not worn glasses, who is under twelve years of age, can improve their sight by reading the Snellen test card first with one eye and then with the other, every day. It is a benefit if the pupil learns the letters on the test chart by heart. They all improve; when I say all, I mean all, there are no exceptions. I challenged the ophthalmologists of this country to bring forward one exception to any of my statements. One exception would prove that the statement is not a truth but at best only a working hypothesis. What is it that improves the sight of these school children? I have already stated that when the sight is normal the eyes are at rest. When the child reads a familiar card with normal sight the eyes are at rest. Common crease, just ordinary common sense, would conclude from this fact that the vision was improved by rest. Some teachers improve the sight of their children by having them close their eyes for a few minutes or less, frequently during the school session. They told me it always improves the sight when tested either with a familiar card or when tested with an unfamiliar card. When a child cannot read the blackboard his sight is usually improved by closing the eyes and resting them for part of a minute or longer.
The cure of imperfect sight without glasses is not a matter which is complicated, which can only be explained by the abstruse incomprehensible theories of the professors of mental science. The truth is that all can be explained by common sense.
One day I was testing the sight of some school children. The teacher was interested in one boy. In order to illustrate to the teacher and to the children the bad effects of staring I asked the boy to stare at the letter F on the bottom line of the Snellen test card at twenty feet. This card had been permanently fastened to the wall where all the children could see it from their seats and it had been in place for some months. When I asked him to do this he railedly said to me: "Not for me, I tried it once and it gave me a headache and spoilt my sight. I am too wise to do it again."
The boy's common-sense enabled him to realize that staring was a bad thing. I told the class that if they would all profit by his experience that they would never acquire imperfect sight and need glasses.

Stories from the Clinic:
By Emily C. Lierman
PALMING

ONE day an Italian mother brought her little son, Joey, nine years of age, to the clinic to be fitted for glasses. His teacher in school thought he needed them. After Dr. Bates had examined his eyes with the retinoscope, I tested his sight with the test card and then I told the mother he could be cured without glasses. This interested her greatly. She had wonderful sight herself, for she could read the smallest letters on the card at more than fifteen feet. I gave her doctor's diamond type card, which she read with perfect ease at four inches and also at twelve inches from her eyes. She told me her age was thirty-eight and that she was the mother of ten children. With a great deal of pride, she said that they were all born in this country, and that they were all alive too. Here was a real mother, proud of her big family. I liked to hear her talk, so encouraged her to do so. Like many of her race and sex, she had beautiful teeth and smooth olive skin. Although she was poor, her clothes were neat and clean, and Joey was just as nicely dressed as she was. She looked at him smilingly and said: "Think of it, Joey, you don't have to wear glasses." Before this little talk Joey seemed scared to death, or as though something terrible was going to happen to him, but when his mother began to show confidence in me, he smiled and looked happy, as all normal boys do. Both watched me very closely as I explained the method of palming to them. Dr. Bates found no organic trouble with Joey's eyes, but just near-sightedness. At fifteen feet he read the fifty line before palming. After palming ten minutes, Joey obtained normal sight that day. When he read the card with each eye separately his left eye seemed to be the better of the two, because he made a few mistakes in reading the ten line letters with his right eye. He was encouraged to palm again for a few minutes, and then he became able to read 15/10 just as well with his right eye as he could with the left. His mother stood where she could see all this, and beamed with happiness as she saw her little boy's sight improve. I started to explain to her the necessity of Joey resting his eyes as soon as he wakened in the morning, because he might have strained during sleep. Also to rest his eyes again at noon, after school and before bedtime. She listened very attentively and then she said: "Maybe you think you tell me something new, but I don't think so. All the time when I nurse my babies, I put up my one hand to my eyes as I close them, and I keep quiet while my baby is nursing. Then my baby goes to sleep quicker and easier and I am rested too." I asked her with a great deal of surprise who taught her to do this, and she answered, "Why, nobody did. I found that out myself." She was thankful, however, that Joey did not need glasses, and promised to help him every day until his eyesmain was entirely relieved.
She returned a week later with a good report of her boy. The test card I gave him for home treatment was appreciated by the whole family. Joey's mother tested the sight of all her children and found two of her little girls also had eyestrain. She taught them to palm and cured them herself. Here was a busy mother, with ten American citizens to help support and educate, and yet found time to teach them how to obtain normal sight. Surely they are worthy members of our Better Eyesight League. I saw Joey and his mother but twice, but Joey had suffered no relapse, nor has there been any complaint regarding his eyes from the school he attends.
The last time I saw Joey he was anxious for me to know that his father, who has no trouble with his eyes at all, came home from his work one evening and thought the family were all playing peek-a-boo with him. The mother had them all busy palming, which was a strange sight to him.
Most people, like myself, have not the time to palm daily. However, if I suffer from eyestrain, which sometimes happens after a strenuous day, I find the memory of palming is all that I need to obtain relaxation. The memory swing, which Dr. Bates explained so tactfully in one of our Better Eyesight magazines, has helped a great many patients. So it is with the memory of palming, or, in other words, remember how relaxed you were and how free from strain you were the last time you were able to palm successfully, and this will help you through the day while at work, or at the theatre, or any place where it is impossible to place the palms of your hands over your eyes.

June Meeting of the League

The newly appointed program committee, with Miss Reicher as its chairman, is most successful in securing interesting and instructive speakers for the League meetings. The committee has the privilege of announcing Dr. Cornelia J. Browne, President of the Better Eyesight League of the Oranges, as the speaker at the meeting on Tuesday, June 12. Dr. Browne is well known not only as a physician but as a speaker of unusual force and charm.
Those who did not have the good fortune to hear the convincing talk of Superintendent Husted, of North Bergen, at the May meeting, will be interested in the brief summary which appears in the minutes of the League.

A "Book Patient's" Experience

AS a result of reading Dr. Bates' book, PERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES [link], I was enabled to discard my glasses, which I had been wearing for twenty-one years. I first heard of Dr. Bates and his book through my old partner, a doctor who had seen him personally, and was able to tell me the details of the Bates' method. This doctor gave me a copy of Dr. Bates' book in March of last year, and after reading it carefully I decided to lay aside my glasses. At that time I had so much astigmatism in my right eye that anything at which I looked appeared double or blurred. For the first five days after laying aside my glasses I had considerable pain in the muscles in my right eye, but I paid little or no attention to these pains, as I knew they were due to accommodation efforts of the extrinsic muscles of the eye-ball, I relaxed as much as possible during this time, used the palming quite frequently and got as much sleep as I could. By the end of three or four weeks I began to pay no attention at all to my eyes, except to shift whenever I found that my vision was not as clear as usual.

Before using these simple methods as advocated by Dr. Bates I would have a headache in a few moments' time, due to eye strain, if I read without my glasses.

I did more reading last summer in three months' time than I had done before in a year, and in spite of, or perhaps because of it, my eyesight is better than it has been since I was a boy. I found that if my eyes became fatigued I could easily rest them by reading finer print, and as my work consisted of reading many of the technical journals I found that I could do this with benefit, as most of the technical literature is in fine print.

I take great pleasure in recommending Dr. Bates' book and his method to my friends and patients, and everyone else who is interested in having perfect sight.

Very truly yours,
WM. JAY DANA, B.Sc, D.C.,
North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering, Raleigh, N. C.

"A Chain Is Only As Strong As Its Weakest Link"
M. E. Marvin

IN the lecture given last Monday evening before a body of chiropractic students and others numbering 200 or more, Dr. Bates demonstrated this fact very clearly in explaining his method. For the benefit of those living out of town who are unable to take advantage of these instructive talks, we will try to cover the important points discussed.
To begin with, Dr. Bates was in his finest oratorical form. His little anecdotes were genuinely appreciated, and it must be said here that in these he was not always the "hero."
It is always interesting to the new followers of Dr. Bates to learn how he came to discover the method that is revolutionizing the study of the science of the eye. This he told in his quiet, modest, matter-of-fact way, until those who knew him were almost tempted to cry out to the audience, "Let us tell you how Dr. Bates came to discover the facts he produces, and let us tell you how this scientist has been discouraged, handicapped, yes, and humiliated. Why? Because he thought for himself, and would not accept the theories that were presented to him." Our feelings notwithstanding, we did not say the things in our minds, and we venture to say, nevertheless, that everyone in the audience, be they doctor or layman, was now eager to learn more.
Dr. Bates then cited some of the theories under which the eye specialists are working today, and then, in opposition, offered his facts, which defy contradiction.
The first theory was that presented by Helmholtz, who was one of the greatest authorities on the physiology of the eye. He says that the eye changes its focus for near and distant vision by altering the curvature of the lens. Dr. Bates has shattered this theory by demonstrating on many pairs of eyes that the lens is not a factor in accommodation. In substantiation of the above, he told of an interesting experiment upon the eyes of a rabbit. The lens of the right eye was removed each eye having been tested previously with the retinoscope, and found to be normal. The wound was allowed to heal, and for a period of two years after electrical stimulation always produced accommodation in the lensless eye precisely to the same extent as the eye having the lens. At a meeting of ophthalmologists of the American Medical Association, held in Atlantic City, Dr. Bates exhibited the subject in the ante-room, and to eye specialists from all over the world. Each one of them admitted that Dr. Bates was right but in their subsequent articles never mentioned the fact
Don't you see that there are exceptions to their old theories? This makes nothing more than a working hypothesis of the Orthodox Ophthalmology. Dr. Bates admits NO exceptions. Not a single one. As he says so often, "If one exception to any statements that I have made in my lectures or in my book can be produced I will acknowledge my whole method to be wrong."
Secondly, was the theory concerning presbyopia, commonly known as old-age sight For centuries we have been led to believe that when one reaches the age of 45 or thereabouts, one was to expect an organic change to take place in the shape of the lens, which lessened the power of vision. This theory, too, was annihilated. Dr. Bates has proves that presbyopia is merely a functional derangement in the action of the extrinsic muscles and has cured thousands of this defect, including himself. In various experiments he has proven that age is positively no barrier to one wishing to attain perfect sight. He related the cases of the old gentleman, passed 106 years of age, and the old colored "mammy" who lost track of her age after the 90th year. Both these were cured of old-age sight, together with other errors of refraction.

Parents' and Teachers' Page
By Emily A. Meder

ONE of the teachers who was attending a lecture at which Dr. Bates was expounding his treatment, explained that she was intensely interested in his method, and would love to be the medium through which the children in her classes could attain better eyesight. She said, however, that inasmuch as she had no technical knowledge of the work, she was rather timid about attempting the method by herself, and that there was a possibility of her doing more harm than good.
For the benefit of those who are in a similar position, we want to say that no technical knowledge is necessary. If one realizes the harm done by glasses, and if one is desirous of helping those wearing them, then the good one can accomplish is unlimited.
The following instructions may be carried out either in the home or in the classroom, and while the form used is particularly applicable to teachers with large classes, it may be used in the home on a smaller scale. The installation of this method requires a little more time than is necessary for its continuation. The first step is to make a list of the children's names, together with their age and the date of the first examination. This requires about two minutes for each child. Place the Snellen testcard on the wall, and have each one read as far as she can, first with one eye, and then with the other. The lines on the card are numbered. Place the child at a distance of ten feet, and if she can only see the top line which is a big C and line number 200, then her vision for that eye is 10/200. Her record will read as follows—

June 1st, 1923AgeRight EyeLeft Eye
Mary Anderson12/20010/100
Date of subsequentexamination

The above report indicates that Mary's sight is very defective. The line numbered 200 should be read at 200 feet by the normal eye. Here is a point to remember: when the denominator is greater than the numerator the vision is defective.
It is not necessary to keep a daily record, but a general examination should be made every month, and the improvement noted. The results will be astonishing. We have seen cases where the card was read every day in unison by the client, and was the means of raising the average 87%.
Many people question Doctor Bates as to how it is possible for the test card to make such radical improvements in children's eyesight, and he always replies that he is not certain which of the exercises are most beneficial, but seeing those black letters every day, and shifting the eyes from one letter to another, breaks the stare, and tends towards complete relaxation, which is the keynote of the treatment. Concentration is the antithesis of relaxation, and if you are not relaxed, you strain. No good can be accomplished when one strains.
Another point often brought up is that a child may memorize the card. Doctor Bates says that in all the thousands of school children he has examined, many of whom have had the Snellen test card in their possession until the letters were bound to be memorized, he has never seen a case where a child would say that she could see the letter when she could not. You will find that the children are more interested in this than you would be lead to believe. We do not believe children wearing glasses should be included in this, because it is understood that they are under the care of a physician, and since no permanent benefit can be obtained when glasses are worn, we do not think it advisable to include them.
Further information anent the prevention of imperfect sight in children may be had by writing this office, and enclosing a stamped envelope. We hope to receive many reports from teachers and parents.
REMEMBER: AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF GLASSES.

Minutes of the May Meeting of the Better Eyesight League
By F. B. Rusk, Recording Secretary

THE large room of the new headquarters of the Central Fixation Publishing Company was crowded to its utmost capacity at the May meeting of the Better Eyesight League.
Mr. M. F. Husted, Superintendent of Public Schools of North Bergen, New Jersey, was the speaker of the evening. Mr. Husted explained, with the aid of charts, the experiment he has been conducting during the past three years.
In the fall of 1919 a Snellen test of the eyes of all pupils in the North Bergen Schools was made. A Snellen test card was then placed in every class room. Those children whose vision was defective were encouraged to read the card more frequently. In June, 1920, a second examination was made in order to test the value of the methods used. The same experiment has been repeated each year since with amazing results.
After hearing of the remarkable benefits which accrue to children who practice central fixation, a visitor asked if there was any hope for the old folks. One of the audience rejoinedsaid that he was acquainted with a lady who had had a complete cure after wearing glasses for fifty-six years. As a result of her experience he had traveled 2,000 miles to see Dr. Bates (and attend the May meeting of the Better Eyesight League!)
In reply to the question as to whether astigmatism was curable, Dr. Bates said that if there was any one kind of astigmatism which was worse than the others, it was conical cornea—a condition with which he always had marked success.
Respectfully submitted,
F. B. RUSK, Secretary.

Eyes But They See Not
By Emily A. Meder

THE ostrich is known to be the swiftest of birds, and can outdistance the fastest horse with ease. Yet when he is attacked unexpectedly, or run into a cul-de-sac, he foolishly hides his head in the sand. He DOESN'T WISH TO SEE. Naturally his fate overtakes him, and he is doomed. His wonderful body, made especially for swift and long-distance running, his exceptional endurance, are assets which avail him nothing when he "sticks his head in the sand and will not see." I have come in contact with people who have many desirable assets but when a thing looks a little "strange" they become dogmatic and refuse to learn. They literally stick their tails in the air and their heads in the sand. The same thing happens to them that happens to the ostrich. Their doom overtakes them. THEY WEAR GLASSES. As evidence of these "mental errors of refraction" I will tell of two instances which I noticed particularly.
In a popular magazine there appears an article each month by a very noted writer who gives Beauty Hints to women over forty years of age. She gives very minute directions of the care of the hair, skin, teeth and figure generally, and I admit I was very surprised to see an item about the eyes. This, unfortunately, is a part of the physiognomy that is usually neglected by these Beauty Doctors. She explained that from her observations, many people received excellent relaxation by closing the eyes and forgetting that they possessed them, excluding all the light by putting the palms of the hands over the eyes very lightly, and thinking of black objects which tends to rest them more quickly. This interested me because this is part of Dr. Bates' own method. When I read on a little further, I was disagreeably astonished to read something like this—"that the hard bend of a new body of oculists who say that they can cure eyes without glasses. This she says is impossible, because when a woman reaches the age of forty, she simply has to forfeit her eyes with glasses, as this has been done for centuries, and it does not seem possible that man has it in his power to cure the defects at this age."
This is a typical case of the ostrich again. Why doesn't this writer make herself more popular by believing this could be done, and by reading the book with an open mind. She is in a position to help thousands suffering with eye ills, and her scope is unlimited.
One more case of "mental blindness."
At a dinner given at the Hotel Astor under the auspices of the Society of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Bates was asked to speak, along with five or six other doctors, all specialists in their respective branches. Senator-elect Royal S. Copeland was Toastmaster, and a very good one he made. Everyone knows the far-reaching results of Dr. Copeland's administration when he was Commissioner of Health of the City of New York. The many improvements he made while building that position are a credit to him. But even Dr. Copeland has a vulnerable spot that might be pierced.
Doctor Bates was the first to speak, and as he knew many others would talk after him, he limited his remarks to about ten minutes. He gave a brief synopsis of his method of treating imperfect sight, and ended by telling the audience that Germany had adopted his method, and was using it in all the schools. At the conclusion of his discourse and before the next speaker had been introduced, Senator Copeland thanked the Doctor for his remarks, and said that he was sorry that Dr. Bates did not have more time to explain his treatment, but he had worn glasses so long, and besides now being a United States Senator, he was a hard man to convince.
We have no wish to "convince" anybody. If they read the book and assimilate the facts, they will convince themselves. PEOPLE WEAR GLASSES FROM HABIT, NOT BECAUSE THEY NEED THEM.

The Question Mark

Denver, Col.
Question—If one's arms become tired while palming will a black silk handkerchief covering the eyes, produce the same amount of relaxation one gets from palming? "R. E. F."
Answer—No. Palming is the best method for relaxation and improvement in vision. When tired of palming, the hands can be removed and the eyes kept closed until one feels relaxed.
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Question—Will it still be necessary to continue practicing the method of swinging and shifting after my eyes are cured? "W. B. D."
Answer—No. When you are cured of eyestrain you will not be conscious of your eyes. However, if you strain them you will know what to do to relieve the strain.
East Orange, N. J.
Question—Can squint be cured by treatment without glasses after an operation proved unsuccessful? Does age make any difference? G. A. B.
Answer—Yes. No, age does not make any difference.
Cleveland, Ohio.
Question—Can the vision be improved without glasses after the lens has been removed for cataract? L. G.
Answer—Yes.
St. Petersburg, Fla.
Question—Does Dr. Bates approve of dark glasses to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun at the sea shore?
Answer—No. Dark glasses are injurious to the eyes. The strong light of the sun is beneficial to the eyes, although it may be temporarily painful and blinding.

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