

**TO THE CHILDREN OF THE CLINIC,  
AND TO  
W.H. BATES, M.D.,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.**

## **PREFACE**

The articles comprising this book were first published in the monthly magazine "Better Eyesight" during a period of five years.

Various eye defects are described in simple and intelligible language, so that those who are interested may follow the practical instructions and improve their own vision, or that of others.

The stories are drawn from my clinical experience in the cure of imperfect sight by treatment without glasses. I have been Dr. Bates' assistant for eleven years, and they were years of a great education in the knowledge of the eye, in health, and in disease.

To Dr. W. H. Bates, the discoverer of the method, I am indebted for his encouragement and help.

EMILY C. LIERMAN.

## DEFINITIONS

**NORMAL VISION** is perfect sight at all distances. The Snellen test card is the standard for testing the vision. When the ten foot line of the card can be read at ten feet or further, and fine print can be read at six inches or less, one has normal vision.

**MYOPIA** or **NEAR-SIGHTEDNESS**: The vision for near objects is good, while the distant vision is imperfect.

**HYPERMETROPIA** or **FAR-SIGHTEDNESS**: The sight is not so good at a near point as it is for more distant objects.

**PRESBYOPIA** or **OLD AGE SIGHT**: The vision is imperfect when the patient tries to read fine print at a near point. The distant vision may or may not be good.

**ASTIGMATISM** is an imperfect curvature of the eye. Usually the front part of the eye has one curve which is different from all the other curves.

**CATARACT** is an opacity of the lens in the pupil, which interferes with good vision.

**RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA** is a disease of the interior of the eye, accompanied by the formation of black pigment spots.

**FLOATING SPECKS** are not real, they are imagined.

**IRITIS** is an inflammation of the iris, or the colored part of the eye.

**CHALAZION TUMOR** is a swelling of one of the glands of the eyelids.

**MEMORY**, or **IMAGINATION**, is the ability to see or recall letters, or other objects, when the eyes are closed, as well as they can be seen with the eyes open.

The **SNELLEN TEST CARD** has letters or other objects printed in varying sizes. The smallest letter or picture seen clearly on the card is a measure of the vision.

**POT HOOKS** is the name used for test cards which have a letter "E" printed with the opening pointing up or down, in or out. The test letter is made of different sizes similar to other Snellen test cards. It is usually employed to test the vision of children or adults who do not know the alphabet. The smallest "E" which the patient recognizes "pointing" in the true direction, measures the amount of sight.

**DIAMOND TYPE** is one of the smallest types used in printing and helps to improve the vision if it is read every day.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. If the vision of the patient is improved under the care of the doctor, and the patient neglects to practice, when he leaves the office, what he is told to do at home, the treatment has been of no benefit whatever. The improved vision was only temporary. Faithful practice permanently improves the sight to normal.
2. If the patient conscientiously practices the methods, as advised by the doctor, his vision always improves. This applies to patients with errors of refraction, as well as organic diseases.
3. For cases of squint we find that the long swing is beneficial to adults and to children.
4. When a patient suffers with cataract, palming is usually the best method of treatment, and should be practiced many times every day.
5. All patients with imperfect sight unconsciously stare, and should be reminded by those who are near to them to blink often. To stare is to strain. Strain is the cause of imperfect sight.

The following rules will be found helpful if faithfully observed:—

6. While sitting, do not look up without raising your chin. Always turn your head in the direction in which you look. Blink often.
7. Do not make an effort to see things more clearly. If you let your eyes alone, things will clear up by themselves.
8. Do not look at anything longer than a fraction of a second without shifting.
9. While reading, do not think about your eyes, but let your mind and imagination rule.
10. When you are conscious of your eyes white looking at objects at any time, it causes discomfort and lessens your vision.
11. It is very important that you learn how to imagine stationary objects to be moving, without moving your head or your body.
12. Palming is a help, and I suggest that you palm for a few minutes many times during the day, at least ten times. At night just before retiring, it is well to palm for half an hour or longer.

## **AIDS TO PERFECT SIGHT BY TREATMENT WITHOUT GLASSES**

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Dr. W. H. Bates has made many remarkable discoveries relative to the prevention and cure of imperfect sight without the aid of glasses during his thirty-eight years of research and experimental work. Among the most important of these discoveries, and one that he has proved again and again. Is the following:

**FINE PRINT IS A BENEFIT TO THE EYE—LARGE PRINT IS A MENACE.**

It is impossible to read microscopic or very fine print by making an effort to see it. It can only be read when the mind and eyes are relaxed.

The above chapters are written in diamond and microscopic type. At first it may seem difficult to become accustomed to the fine print, but by looking at it without trying to read it, the print will become discernible.

Some people find it beneficial to imagine the white spaces between the lines, whiter than the margin. When one imagines the white spaces perfectly white, the print becomes very black and legible, apparently of its own volition.

Large print is detrimental to perfect sight because the eye tries to see the whole letter at once. When one is looking at an object, for instance, a chair, the object blurs if the whole is seen at once. You cannot possibly see the arms, legs, back and body at a chair all at once. You either see the back first or the seat. This is Central Fixation. Seeing best where you are looking.

We know that if these instructions are carefully followed, the above articles will prove extremely beneficial

## TEST CARD PRACTICE

1. Every home should have a test card.
2. It is best to place the card permanently on the wall in a good light.
3. Each member of the family or household should read the card every day.
4. It takes only a minute to test the sight with the card. If you spend five minutes in the morning practicing, it will be a great help during the day.
5. Place yourself ten feet from the card and read as far as you can without effort or strain. Over each line of letters are small figures indicating the distance at which the normal eye can read them. Over the big C at the top of the card is the figure 200. The big C, therefore, should be read by the normal eye at a distance of two hundred feet. If you can read this line at ten feet, your vision would be 10/200. The numerator of the fraction is always the distance of the card from the eyes. The denominator always denotes the number of the line read. If you can only read the line marked 40 at ten feet, the vision is 10/40.
6. If you can only see to the fifth line, for example, notice that the last letter on that line is an R. Now close your eyes, cover them with the palms of the hands and remember the R. If you will remember that the left side is straight, the right side partly curved, and the bottom open, you will get a good mental picture of the R with your eyes closed. This mental picture will help you to see the letter directly underneath the R, which is a T.
7. Shifting is good to stop the stare. If you stare at the letter T, you will notice that all the letters on that line begin to blur. It is beneficial to close your eyes quickly after you see the T, open them, and shift to the first figure on that line, which is a 3. Then close your eyes and remember the 3. You will become able to read all the letters on that line by closing your eyes for each letter.
8. Keep a record of each test in order to note your progress from day to day.
9. When you become able to read the bottom line with each eye at ten feet, your vision is normal for the distance, 10/10.
10. The distance of the Snellen test card from the patient is a matter of considerable importance. However, some patients improve more rapidly when the card is placed fifteen or twenty feet away, while others fail to get any benefit with the card at this distance. In some cases the best results are obtained when the card is as close as one foot. Others with poor vision may not improve when the card is placed at ten feet or further, or at one foot or less, but do much better when the card is placed at a middle distance, at about eight feet. Some patients may not improve their vision at all at ten feet, but are able to improve their sight at twenty feet, or at one foot. While some patients are benefited by practicing with the card daily, always at the same distance, there are others who seem to be benefited when the distance of the card from the patient is changed daily.

**Fundamentals**  
**By**  
**W. H. Bates, M. D.**

1. Glasses discarded permanently.
2. Central fixation is seeing best where you are looking.
3. Favorable conditions: Light may be bright or dim. The distance of the print from the eyes, where seen best, also varies with people.
4. Shifting: With normal sight the eyes are moving all the time.
5. Swinging: When the eyes move slowly or rapidly from side to side, stationary objects appear to move in the opposite direction.
6. Long swing: Stand with the feet about one foot apart, turn the body to the right—at the same time lifting the left foot. Do not move the head or eyes or pay any attention to the apparent movement of stationary objects. Now place the left heel on the floor, turn the body to the left, raising the heel of the right foot. Alternate.
7. Drifting swing: When using this method, one pays no attention to the clearness of stationary objects, which appear to be moving. The eyes move from point to point slowly, easily, or lazily, so that the stare or strain may be avoided.
8. Variable swing: Hold the forefinger of one hand six inches from the right eye and about the same distance to the right, look straight ahead and move the head a short distance from side to side. The finger appears to move.
9. Stationary objects moving: By moving the head and eyes a short distance from side to side, being sure to blink, one can imagine stationary objects to be moving.
10. Memory: Improving the memory of letters and other objects improves the vision for everything.
11. Imagination: We see only what we think we see, or what we imagine. We can only imagine what we remember.
12. Rest: All cases of imperfect sight are improved by closing the eyes and resting them.
13. Palming: The closed eyes may be covered by the palm of one or both hands. 14. Blinking: The normal eye blinks, or closes or opens very frequently.
14. Mental pictures: As long as one is awake one has all kinds of memories of mental pictures. If these pictures are remembered easily, perfectly, the vision is benefited.

## **SUN TREATMENT**

Most ophthalmologists prescribe dark glasses to nearly all of their patients who suffer from the brightness of light. This practice, in my opinion, has been overdone. I remember one patient who was in the hospital for two years in a dark room, with both eyes bandaged with a dark binding day and night continuously. When she left the hospital she was in a very pitiable condition. She was practically blind in the bright sunlight. She went to a great many clinics and eye doctors and all they did for her was to give her stronger dark glasses. In time these dark glasses did not give her any relief. Instead of being helpful to her weak eyes, the glasses had the effect of making them more sensitive to the light than they had ever been before. It has been my experience that all persons who wear dark glasses sooner or later develop very serious inflammation of their eyes. The human eye needs the light in order to maintain its efficiency. The use of eye-shades and protections of all kinds from the light is very injurious to the eyes.

Sunlight is as necessary to normal eye as is rest and relaxation. If it is possible, start the day by exposing the eyes to the sun—just a few minutes at a time will help. Get accustomed to the strong light of the sun by letting it shine on your closed eyelids. Later, when you can look down sufficiently, by gently lifting the upper lid the white part of the eye can be exposed, while the sun's rays strike directly on it. It is good to move the head slightly from side to side while doing this, in order to prevent straining. One cannot get too much sun treatment.

## CHAPTER I

### EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN

#### TOPSY

THE patients who come to our clinic do wonderful things, especially the school children. We can give each one of them, as a rule, only about five minutes of our time, and yet they are able to carry out their instructions at home, and to get results. This is a great tribute to their patience and intelligence.

Most of the children and adults are helped by palming, and remarkable cures have been obtained by this means alone. A little lad had been so injured in an automobile accident that he had only light perception in his left eye. It was some time before I could get him to palm regularly, but as soon as he became willing to do so many times a day, his sight began to improve rapidly, and he is now completely cured.

There are some patients, however, who cannot or will not palm. One of these was a little colored girl, with corkscrew curls, looking for all the world like Topsy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." She had been sent to the clinic because she could not see the writing on the blackboard, and the school nurse told me later that she was unruly, and a great trial to her teacher. She was something of a trial to me, too, at first, for I could not get her to palm for a moment, and did not know what to do with her. Then I discovered that she had an excellent memory when she chose to use it, and I resolved to treat her with its aid. I was able to improve her sight considerably.

Soon her teacher noticed such a notable change in her deportment, that on the next clinic day the school nurse came with her, to see what had been done for the child. Then I asked the girl to remember, with closed eyes, a letter on the test card as gray instead of black. This effort produced such a strain that she could not stand still a minute, and when she opened her eyes there was no improvement in her vision. Then I asked her to remember the blue beads she had around her neck. She did so for a few minutes with eyes closed, standing perfectly still all the time, and when she opened her eyes she read another line of letters on the test card. Again she closed her eyes and remembered the blue beads perfectly. In a short time, by alternating the perfect memory of the blue beads, with her eyes closed and open, her vision soon improved to 10/10.

The nurse was impressed by this demonstration, which proved to her that perfect memory improves the sight and relieves nervousness. She returned another day and brought a child that she herself was unable to benefit. Sometime later she informed me that Topsy was cured, and busy every day at recess teaching the girls of her classroom how to rest their eyes, and testing their eyes with a test card I had given her. The janitor of the school hid it away every day for her, until she was ready to play the game of curing eyes. With Topsy's help the janitor now gets along well without his glasses. I wish we had more like Topsy.

#### THREE SIMILAR CASES

George, Gladys and Charlie are three children who came for treatment at about the same time. They were of the same age, nine years, and all were suffering from headaches and had about the same degree of defective sight. They entered a very interesting three-cornered contest, in which each one tried to beat the others at getting cured. George and Gladys were colored and Charlie was a white boy of a most pronounced blonde type, with fair curls and blue eyes.

George was the first of the trio to visit US. He had been sent from his school to get glasses because of his headaches, and it was easy to see from his half-shut eyes and the expression of his face that he was in continual misery. My first impulse was to try to make him smile, but my efforts in that direction did not meet with much success.

"Won't you let me help you?" I asked.

"Maybe you can and maybe you can't," was his discouraging reply.

"But you are going to let me try, aren't you?" I persisted, stroking his woolly head.

He refused to unbend, but did consent to let me test his vision which I found to be 20/70 with both eyes, I showed him how to palm and rest his eyes. He continued to come to the clinic, but for three weeks I never saw him smile, and he complained constantly of the pain in his head.

Then there was Gladys, accompanied by her mother who gave me a history of her case very similar to that of George. Her vision was 20/200 and in a very short time I improved it to 20/40. At her next visit it became temporarily normal, and this fact made a great impression upon George. I saw him roll his black eyes and watch Gladys while I was treating her, and later, when he thought I was not looking, I saw him walk over to her and heard him say:

"You ain't going to get ahead of me. I came before you. I wanna get cured first. See?"

I separated the two children quickly, for I foresaw trouble; but all the time I was grateful to Gladys for having, however unintentionally, stirred George up.

Next week Charlie came. He looked very sad, and his mother who came with him was sad also. His headaches were worse than those of the other children and were actually preventing him from making progress in school. Promotion time was near, and both mother and child were anxious for fear the latter would be left behind. They hoped that by the aid of glasses this misfortune would be averted. Of course I explained to the mother that we never gave glasses at this clinic, but cured people so they did not need them. I tested Charlie's sight, and found it to be 20/100. I told him to close his eyes and remember a letter perfectly black, just as he saw it on the test card. He shook his head in dismay and said:

"I can't remember anything, the pain is so bad."

"Close your eyes for part of a minute," I said, "open them just a second and look at the letter I am pointing at, then quickly close them again. Do this for a few minutes, and see what happens."

What happened was that in a few minutes Charlie began to smile and said:

"The pain is gone." Alternately opening and closing the eyes helped him to relax and relieved the terrible eyestrain which caused his trouble.

I showed him how to palm, and left him for a while. When I came back his sight had improved to 20/70. I was very happy about this, and so was Charlie's mother, who was pleased to learn that he did not have to wear glasses.

Charlie continued to come regularly and became an unusual patient. One day he told me that he had been out sleigh-riding with the boys, and that the sun had been shining so brightly upon the snow that he couldn't open his eyes, and his head ached so that he had to go home and go to bed.

"Why didn't you palm for a while and remember one of those letters on the card?" I asked.

"That's right," he said, "I wonder why I didn't think of it."

The next time he came there had been another snowstorm, and he could hardly wait to tell me what had happened.

"I went sleigh-riding some more with the boys," he said, as soon as he could get my ear, "and the pain came back while I was having fun. But this time I didn't go home and go to bed. I remembered what you said, covered my eyes with the palms of my hands right in the street, and in a little while the pain all went away. I could look right at the snow with the sun shining on it, and I didn't mind it a bit."

From the start, the two colored children were greatly interested in Charlie, and thinking that a little more of the competition that had proved so effective in George's case would do no harm, I said, "See who beats." But they needed no urging on my part. Every clinic day, an hour before the appointed time, the black and white trio was at the hospital door. If a crowd was present the children forced their way through without much ceremony, and then started on a dead run for the eye room. There they practiced diligently until Dr. Bates and I arrived, and I fear they also squabbled considerably. There was no lack of smiles now, and as for George, he wore a grin on his face all the time.

Charlie was the first to be cured. In just a month from the time of his first visit his vision had improved to 20/10. Usually patients do not come back after they are cured, but this boy kept on with the practice at home and returned to show me, and incidentally his two rivals, what progress he had made. We had a visiting physician at the clinic that day, and I rather suspected Charlie of trying to show off, when he walked to the very end of the room, a distance of thirty feet from the card. To my astonishment and the great annoyance of George and Gladys, he read all the letters on the bottom line correctly. The colored children made haste to suggest that he had probably memorized the letters; so I hung up a card with pot hooks on it, such as we use for the illiterate patients, and asked him to tell me the direction in which those of the bottom line were turned. He did not make a single mistake. There seemed no room for doubt that his vision had actually improved to 30/10, three times the accepted standard of normal vision. Not more than one other patient at the clinic has ever been able to read the card at this distance. Charlie returned several times after this, not from the best of motives, I fear, and I took great pleasure in exhibiting his powers to the nurses and to visitors.

George and Gladys were cured very soon after Charlie, both of them becoming able to read 20/10. I was sorry that they could not have done as well as Charlie, but since their vision is now twice what is ordinarily considered normal, I think they ought to be satisfied.

It is about two years since George, my pickaninny boy, was pronounced cured, but he comes to see me now and then, just the same. About six months after he obtained normal sight, I noticed him standing in a far corner of the room apparently trying to hide. When I approached him finally and asked him if he were suffering again with his eyes, he answered:

"No ma'am, my eyes are all right, but I want to come and see you."

I said, "Oh, you just want me to love you a little bit, don't you?"

George looked very shy and rolled his big eyes as only a darky can, edging up to me until his kinky head rested on my arm,—just a little pickaninny boy hungry for love.

### **JOEY AND PATSY**

An Italian boy named Joey, nine years old, was struck on the head in an automobile accident and injured in such a way that he became almost totally blind in the left eye. From Joey's brother Patsy it was learned that when the accident occurred Joey was at the head of his troops, conducting a well ordered retreat after a fierce conflict in which he had been obliged to yield to greater numbers. His face was to the foe and the automobile was behind him, yet Joey did not know that an automobile had struck him. He thought that

more enemies were attacking him from the rear. Later when he found himself lying on a hospital cot and realized that he was hurt, his first remark was, "Let me at the guys who soaked me from the back."

Patsy told me later what an awful time he had convincing Joey that an automobile and not his enemies, had struck him. What a punishment it must have been to Joey to lie there on his cot! To suffer pain was bad enough, but more painful to him was the knowledge that his gang was without a leader.

A week later he was brought to the hospital clinic by his aunt. Dr. Bates examined him and found that he was suffering from an injury to the optic nerve of the left eye, as a result of which the vision in this eye had been reduced to mere light perception.

The child was then brought to me for treatment, and never have I seen a more forlorn little specimen of humanity. I did not know then that a gang of street boys had once looked up at him as their leader, and I never should have suspected it. There was not the shadow of a smile upon his face, and he had not a word to say. Both his face and his clothes were dirty. The latter were also ragged, while his shoes were full of holes. His teeth were wonderful, however, and beneath the grime on his small countenance one could catch glimpses of the complexion of perfect health, I told him to rest his eyes by closing and covering them with the palms of his hands, and after a few minutes he was able to see the largest letter on the test card with his blind eye at five feet. The vision of the right eye was normal. I told him to rest his eyes by closing them six times a day for five minutes at a time, and to come back on the next clinic day.

The next time I saw him not only had he made no progress, but he was as blind as he had been at the beginning. His aunt said: "You scold him. Tell him you will keep him here, because he will not palm or do anything he is told to do at home."

I answered, "You do not wish me to lie to him, do you?"

Joey, so sad and worried, looked up into my face, waiting for me to defend him again, as his aunt replied: "Well, I will leave him here and not take him home again."

"All right," I said. "I live in the country, and perhaps Joey would like to go home with me and play in the fields and watch the birds build their nests. Maybe he will learn how to smile then as boys should."

It was good to see his dirty little face flush up with excitement and pleasure. I really meant what I said, but Joey did not give me a chance to take him to my home, because he did not come back after his eyes were cured. However, when I noticed that he began to take a little interest in what I was trying to do for him, I said, "Joey, you are going to love me a whole lot, because I love you already, but you must mind what I say, because if you don't you will go blind."

Joey consented to palm for a few minutes, and his sight improved so that he was able to see the large letter of the test card three feet away. He now made an effort to see the next line of letters but not only did he fail to do so, but he also lost the large letter. The strain had made him blind again.

How I wished I had more time to spend with him. But the room was full of patients, and more were coming continually. I had to attend to them. So I asked Joey, very gently, to palm and not take his hands from his eyes until I came back to him. After ten minutes or so I returned and asked what he could see. To my surprise he read five lines of the test card with the blind eye. Much encouraged I sent him home and he promised to palm six times a day. He stayed away almost a week and I worried about him, for I knew he would forget what I had told him to do. Then one day he returned with his brother Patsy. My, how Patsy did talk! Joey had not a word to say, and did not smile until I asked him. Patsy said that Joey did not practice, and that his father hit him on the head and threatened him with all sorts of things to make him do so. It was quite evident that he had not practiced. When I asked him to read the card, all he could see was the big letter at the top at three feet.

Poor little Joey! I gathered him in my arms, patted his dirty face and told him that if he would count six fingers for me and practice palming as many times every day, I was sure Santa Claus would have some toys for him at Christmas time. Joey was all smiles, and stood with his eyes covered for a long time. When he again looked at the card he read the fifth line, which is called the forty line letters. In the meantime Patsy was telling me all about the rest of his family. His big brother was going to be married, he said, but not until another brother, eighteen years old, was out of prison. Patsy talked like a man and his voice sounded like a foghorn; but I saw that he had a gentle nature, and I enlisted him as my assistant for Joey. I asked him if he would not try to get Joey to palm more, and told him that he must always speak kindly to him. The father was warned not to hit Joey on the head again, because that made the hemorrhages worse and Joey would go blind. Bless Patsy's heart! He promised to help me all he could, and I am sure he deserves much of the credit for what I was afterward able to do for his brother.

Thereafter, Joey's progress was steady. He responded to kindness as a flower responds to the sun. But if I ever forgot myself and spoke to him without the utmost gentleness, if I even raised my voice a little, he would at once become nervous and begin to strain. One day I remonstrated with him because he had not done what I had told him, and a few moments later when he read the test card with his left eye, he said, "I can only see the large letter." I explained how important it was for him to see with both eyes, because he might be a great man some day. He smiled and palmed, and in a short time he again read five lines of the card.

At a later visit he was very conspicuous because he had had his face washed. I could see that he wanted me to notice this, as of course I did, giving him high praise for his improved appearance. He smiled and started to palm without being told, and his sight improved more rapidly than at any previous time.

His last visit was a happy one. He saw all of the bottom line at ten feet without palming. Dr. Bates then examined his eyes with the ophthalmoscope and found that the retina had cleared up, and that there were no more hemorrhages. The optic nerve had become normal.

One day Patsy appeared at the clinic wearing spectacles.

"Patsy, for heaven's sake, what are you wearing those things for?" I inquired.

"The nurse in school said I needed glasses and my father paid four dollars for them—but I can see without them."

His vision without glasses was 20/200. After resting his eyes by palming five minutes, his sight improved considerably.

"Do you want to be cured without glasses?" he was asked.

"Sure, I don't want to wear them."

"Well, you ask father's permission and I will cure you."

Fortunately, father had no objection, and now Patsy sees much better without glasses than he ever did with them. He says that the blackboard looks blacker than it used to, and that his lessons do not seem so hard.

Patsy continued to come with Joey for treatment until both were cured.

Christmas time was near at hand and when the day arrived for our Christmas party, the boys appeared at the clinic two hours ahead of time, to be sure that they would not be disappointed. Never did I see two kiddies happier or more grateful than they were, as they marched out of the room with their gifts and candies.

## HYMAN

Hyman, a Jewish boy, aged ten, was not a patient, but his mother's escort. She was having her eyes treated because of headaches, but her trouble was not half so bad as that of her son. His poor eyes stared painfully behind his thick glasses, and in order to see through them at all he made the most awful grimaces. His head moved constantly in all directions, and later on I learned that he had chorea, or St. Vitus' dance. He was an unusually bright boy, and was never satisfied unless he saw everything that was going on in the clinic. Whenever he was in the room he would stay as close to me as possible, listening eagerly to every word I said and watching every movement I made. One day I said to him:

"Look here, young man, I don't mind having you watch me, but I don't think the patients like you to stare at them so much. If you want to know how I help people, why don't you let me treat you so that you won't have to wear glasses?"

"My teacher says I must wear glasses, because I cannot see the blackboard without them," he replied.

Later I told his mother that I was sure I could help not only his eye trouble, but also the nervous twitching of his head. She did not seem to understand me, and appeared to doubt my ability to do anything for him. She had been told by a doctor that perhaps some day he would outgrow his nervousness. The boy himself seemed to be equally skeptical, but was, nevertheless, much interested. He was evidently curious to know what I would do for him, and quite willing to let me entertain him.

I tested his sight with his glasses on, and found that he was able to read only 10/50, all the rest of the card being a blur. I took the glasses off, and noticed that he stared less without them. With his glasses on, his face looked hideous and wrinkled like that of an old man. When Dr. Bates examined the glasses, he said it was quite evident that they caused the St. Vitus' Dance. Straining to see through lenses that were not suited to him, produced this nervous condition.

I told the boy to cover his eyes with the palms of his hands so as to exclude all the light and to remember one of the letters of the test card perfectly black. He seemed to think this was a game of hide and seek, and kept continually looking through his fingers. My patience was tried considerably, but I did not let him know it. Instead I told him that I was especially fond of little boys, and wished to help him. He squared his shoulders and made an effort to keep his head still, but failed. Finally I succeeded in making him understand that if he wanted to stop the twitching of his head, he must keep his hands over his eyes until I told him to remove them. He became as serious as I was myself, and though I watched him while I was treating other cases, I did not once see him uncover his eyes, or peep through his fingers. No doubt the fifteen minutes that he spent in this way seemed like hours to him. When I was able to return to him I said very gently:

"Now take your hands from your eyes, look at me, and be sure to blink often to atop your staring."

He did so, and to my surprise his head was perfectly still. Then I told him a story—being careful to preserve the same gentle tone of voice—about a boy who lived in the country town where I live and who stole some delicious big apples from a farmer. He ate too many of the apples, and soon began to feel that there was something wrong with his stomach. The farmer caught him and punished him; so he suffered both inside and out, and came to the conclusion that stealing apples was not very much fun. I took as long as I could to tell this simple tale, for my object was to keep my patient from thinking of himself, or his eyes. He seemed to find it hugely amusing. His eyes beamed with fun while he listened to me, and his head never moved once.

"Now," I said, "do some more palming for me, and then we will read the card."

When he uncovered his eyes the second time, his vision had improved to 10/30. His mother's indifference vanished. She did not know how to show her gratitude for what had been done for her boy, but promised to

see that he spent a sufficient amount of time palming every day. The next clinic day she told me that the twitching of the head had become less frequent. She was instructed to watch the boy, and have him palm at once whenever she noticed the twitching. This always relieved the trouble.

Hyman was anxious to be cured before vacation began, and was quite willing to do as he was told. He and his mother practiced reading their test card every day for an hour at a time. During the summer they came quite regularly and the mother was cured of her eyestrain and headaches. Hyman looked like a very different boy, and in the fall when school began he was apparently cured because the twitching had ceased, and his vision had improved to 10/10.

### **BETTY AND JOHN**

Betty, aged 13 years, usually found a convenient corner of our room where she could watch the patients having their eyes treated. She had no trouble with her eyes, but always came with her school chum who was under treatment. She listened attentively as I encouraged the patients, but was never troublesome nor did she ask any questions at any time. Somehow, she obtained a Snellen test card and helped some of her playmates recover their vision. She brought several of them to me to make sure that they could get along without their glasses.

One of the children was a boy, twelve years old, named John, who had worn glasses for five years and was very near-sighted. The school doctor had ordered glasses for him at the age of seven. Dr. Bates examined them and discovered that the boy was wearing far-sighted glasses for myopia, or near-sight. When they were changed the year before, the optician who sold them had made a terrible error. No wonder Johnnie was willing to have Betty help him! She told me that he could only see the fifty line of the card ten feet away without his glasses. When I tested Johnnie he placed himself fifteen feet away from the card and read every line of letters without a mistake. He told me how Betty spent an hour with him almost every day for three weeks, until he became able to read the card at any distance Betty desired him to read it. I am sorry she stopped coming to the clinic. Her parents moved away, and I lost a very good assistant.

### **MARJORIE AND KATHERINE**

#### **MARJORIE**

Then a mother came to the clinic with her two little girls. Marjorie, the older, had been to us some years previously and was cured. The younger child was sent home by the school nurse and told to see a doctor about her eyes. Dr. Bates told the mother to wait for me, that I would test the children's eyes. The mother kept looking at me, smiling all the while. She asked: "Don't you remember me? Don't you remember my little girl? I brought her to you and Dr. Bates six years ago. She had alternate squint when she was three years old, and Dr. Bates cured her without an operation."

Hundreds of cases had been treated and cured in that time, and this dear little girl had grown from a wee tot of three years to a big girl of nine. The mother waited patiently for me to say yes. I tried my best to remember, for my memory is usually good, but I failed this time. Before I knew it I answered, "Yes, surely I remember." How grateful this mother was because I did not forget her child, and how sorry I was because I told a fib. She just knew that I would not forget, so I could not convince her that I did. If Dr. Bates had had his retinoscope handy, he would have found that I was made near-sighted by telling the fib. When one tells an untruth, the retinoscope always reveals the fact.

Marjorie's eyes were as straight as mine, but everyone in the clinic who would listen to the mother that day, heard how we had cured her child of cross eyes.

#### **KATHERINE**

Her Sister Katherine, aged seven years, stood by, wondering what we were going to do with her. Both girls were dressed with the greatest of care, and Katherine looked very much like a big French doll with her head just covered with curls. Dr. Bates examined her and said she had myopia, but not a bad case. I placed her ten feet from the test card and she read every letter correctly down to the forty line. As I walked over to where the card was placed to assist my little patient, the mother got ahead of me, and in a soft tone of voice, encouraged Katherine to palm and remember the last letter of the forty line of the card. Katherine did so, but she had only covered her eyes for a minute when she removed her hands and opened her eyes to read again. I wanted to tell the child that she had not palmed long enough, but before I could say a word, she began to read the next line of letters as her mother pointed to each one. After each letter was read, her mother very gently told her to blink and that would help her to see the next letter without a strain.

When Katherine had finished reading all of the thirty line without a mistake, the mother did not stop, but kept right on to the next line, pointing to one letter and then another until she read all of the twenty line.

Then the mother advised Katherine to swing her body from side to side, and to notice that everything in the room seemed to move in the opposite direction. While her mother was advising her what to do, the child did the best she could to read the card. The mother smiled when she saw how amazed I was to see her improve Katherine's eyes without my help. I asked: "Where did you learn how to do it?" She answered: "From reading your articles in the 'Better Eyesight Magazine.' I have been a subscriber for a number of years."

Some months later I saw them again. Katherine's vision was 10/10 in each eye. It is interesting to report that the child was cured entirely by her mother.

### **STARING**

Staring is one of the greatest evils. Children demonstrate this repeatedly.

A little Jewish girl had been coming to us for a year. On her first visit, she told us that the school nurse insisted that her eyes should be examined for glasses. Her mother was with her and begged me not to put them on the child, as she had a great dislike for them. She also believed that glasses could not possibly cure her. I was glad that I did not have to spend time convincing the mother that her little girl would not need them.

I tested the child's sight with the card and found that she had 20/70 with the right eye and 20/100 with the left. The girl stared constantly while she read the letters and I drew her mother's attention to this fact. I instructed the child to look away in another direction after she had read one or two letters of a line; she then improved her sight with both eyes to 20/50. Her mother was a valuable help to me in supervising the child's practice at home. No matter what the child was doing, or whenever she read a book or studied her lessons, the mother told her not to stare.

The directions for treatment at home and in school were simple. For instance, when she was asked to read something on the blackboard, she was not to look at the whole of a word or a sentence at one time. She was to look at the first letter of a word and blink her eyes. It would then clear up, and she could see the whole word without staring. In order to read a sentence without staring, she was to look at the first letter of the first word and then look at the last letter of the last word of the sentence, and to blink her eyes frequently while doing this.

How proud I was when she was promoted into a higher class without the aid of glasses I She was very grateful for what we had accomplished. Her school teacher, who had a very high degree of myopia, was so impressed by her marked improvement that she also became a patient of Dr. Bates, and is now enjoying good sight without glasses. Proof of her cure may be seen in the wonderful needle work which she is able to do.

## MEMORY

A school nurse brought us a child who was causing her teacher a great deal of worry because she could not remember anything. It was thought that glasses might help her. She was very nervous, and her face plainly showed a strain. At ten feet the letters on the bottom line of the test card were only black spots to her. This little child did not like to palm, so I asked her to look at a letter on the bottom line, which was a C, and with her eyes closed imagine it had a straight top. She said she could better imagine that it curved. Then she found she could imagine two other sides, one curved and one open, and when she opened her eyes she saw the letter C distinctly. I also noticed that she had stopped frowning.

By the same method, she became able to read all the other letters on the bottom line, demonstrating that her imperfect memory had been due to eyestrain. She had unconsciously seen the letters, but the eyestrain had suppressed the memory of them. With her eyes closed the strain disappeared, and she became able to remember, or imagine the letters.

It should be emphasized that palming regularly is a great help not only to the sight, but also to the mind. What a pity it is that all school nurses do not know what can really be accomplished in a few minutes each day, for the relief of eyestrain in school children. Teachers are always grateful when their pupils are cured of eyestrain, for after the children are cured, it is much easier to teach them.

## WHAT MEMORY DID FOR JENNIE

Jennie's mother was informed that her daughter needed glasses. I told the mother that Dr. Bates did not fit glasses at the clinic, and in order to get them she would have to come another day and see another doctor. The mother could not speak very good English. Her first question was: "I get der glasses fer nottink, yes?"

"No," I replied, "I am sorry to say, you must pay for them."

She started to leave the room, when I called her back and tested Jennie's sight. I felt sorry for the little girl, because she was very pretty, except for her eyes, which were partly closed most of the time.

"I don't like to wear glasses," she said. "I wore them for two weeks and then I broke them. Please help me so that I won't have to wear them again."

The mother seemed bewildered at first, and then she said, in a burst of confidence:

"You know, nurse, if der glasses was fer nottink, I should worry. But all der time money, money for glasses, when all der time she breaks dem."

I told the poor mother not to worry, because her child could be cured and that she would not need glasses, if she would do what I told her.

"Sure, sure," she replied. "Det's all right, lady. You fix my Jennie's eyes, yes? Ven ve don't buy glasses ve got more money to buy someding for der stomach, yes?"

An Irish woman was standing by, and she roared with laughter. To keep peace in the room I had to use some tact and I thought it best to usher the Irish woman outside until I had treated the little girl, who turned out to be a very interesting patient. Jennie had never seen a test card before, and after palming was able to read the thirty line at fifteen feet. Below this, the card was a blank to her. I told her to follow my finger, while, with a rapid movement, I pointed to the large letter at the top of the card and so on down to the ten line. I directed her to palm, and pointing to the last letter on the ten line, which was an F, and quite small, I asked her if she could imagine some letter her teacher had written on the blackboard that day. She replied:

"Yes, I can imagine I see the letter O, a white O."

"Keep your eyes closed," I said, "and imagine that the letter I am pointing at has a curved top. Can you still imagine the O?"

"No," she said, "I can't imagine anything now."

"Can you imagine it is open, or straight at the top?" I asked.

She became excited and said: "If I imagine it has a straight top, I can still remember the white O."

"Fine," I said. "Can you imagine it has a straight line at the bottom?"

"No, if I do that I lose the O. I can imagine it's open much better."

"Good," I said. "It is open. Now imagine the left side open or straight."

She replied: "I can imagine it is straight. I think it is an F."

And when she opened her eyes she saw it plainly. The fact was that, although she had been unable to see this letter consciously, she had unconsciously seen it for a fraction of a second, and could not imagine it to be other than it was, without a strain that caused her to lose control of her memory. And when she imagined it correctly she relaxed so that when she opened her eyes, she was able to see it. Jennie continued to come for treatment until she was cured. A month later her vision became normal and she had no more trouble. It would be very wonderful if all patients had as good an imagination. In that event the cure of imperfect sight would be much quicker.

## ALICE

For a long time Alice, aged nine, had been complaining of headaches. She did not like to wear glasses, and her mother was also opposed to them. Her vision with each eye separately was 10/20. I told her that she could be cured easily, and directed her to palm for a little while. She began to weep, and then I asked her a few questions. I learned that she stood in fear of her teacher, but I soon realized that her fears were unfounded. She said: "In the mornings, before school, I feel perfectly well. After playing in the street with the other children, I also feel well, but when I go into the class-room and start to study, my head begins to ache. It also aches when I am doing homework, but not so badly."

Again I asked her to read the test card at ten feet, and unconsciously I raised my voice a little. Immediately I saw her start as though some one had scared the very life out of her. I guessed at once just what was the matter, and lowering my voice, I told her as gently as possible that there was nothing to be frightened about.

"What you are not able to read on the test card today, you will read next time," I said.

She was encouraged to palm, and I left her for a time by herself. Coming back in a few minutes, I told her to remove her hands from her eyes, and tell me what she could read. I made my voice as low as I could, not much above a whisper. I placed her fifteen feet from the card this time, and she read all the letters without a mistake. Her vision was more than normal, and she said that her pain was gone. She came to the clinic several times after that to report that her headaches did not come back. She had practised palming her eyes many times a day and remembered to blink all the time she was awake.

Alice confided to me that an unruly scholar in her class disliked her teacher, and influenced Alice in the same way. I asked her if she could tell the number of scholars in her class-room.