

## How the Eyes Figure in Social Popularity

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**P**ERHAPS you are a tourist engaged in sight-seeing, or may be you are just indulging in a leisurely walk either for pleasure or for your health. What you observe in your path may sufficiently attract your interest, and you stand and gaze. Sometimes you even stare. Too long a gaze in one direction is strenuous on the eyes, and staring is a distinctly abnormal condition of the visual machine.

When you scrutinize a thing too closely, the muscles of your eyes undergo a strain. In a short time, perhaps before you are conscious of it, black splotches appear before your vision, and you are in the act of squinting. This signifies that you have exerted too much strain upon a single set of muscles, and your eyes need rest.

If you are out on a pleasure trip, or even if you are at home, and you find that you squint, or press your eyes, take some measure for relief at once. These acts become habits if you continue to practise them, and the habit is not only injurious to the muscles of the eyes, uncomfortable for you, but also unbecoming, and irritating to the individual or more persons in your company.

When you are engaged in a pleasant conversation with someone, and that person begins to constantly remind you of some one of his physical frailties or defects, your pleasure is spoiled, you become "fidgety", or "nervous," your mind is drawn from the subject of discussion to "feeling sorry for you, poor thing," and you are quite pleased to be released from that individual's society. What is true of that person, is equally true of you, when you begin to remind your associates of your eye-defect.

No person, and you are no exception, has the right to spoil the genuine pleasure of a person or a group who has sought your society for a few pleasant hours. When you squint, you mar the general pleasure by making yourself unattractive. You have often said to yourself in the secret of your unspoken mind, "she would be pretty, but her squinting spoils her." It not only "spoils her," but it also "makes you nervous." Physical defects are never admired, and the sooner a remedy is sought, the better it is for the eyes and for your social popularity.

You squint because your eyes hurt you; and then they are in need of rest. In your walks, and when you rest, never look too hard. If you look before you, into the horizon, and try to distinguish houses, trees, or things in the air, you subject the muscles of your delicate eye-machinery to undue hardships. When you find yourself looking hard—and then you are in the act of staring—close your eyes for a minute or two and put your hand over them. A little respite in the dark will do them good.

Do not open your eyes to the light too suddenly, because you thus make the pupils of the eyes—the little black round cavities in the center—contract too rapidly and cause the contracting muscles to work too hard. Open them gradually.

If you must read for pleasure, pastime, or because of necessity, have your reading matter at about the distance of one foot from your eyes. Do not try to boast that you can read from a great distance, for most any person who has normal visual powers can do that feat, but just as you, with quite a great deal of expense to the general well-being of the most delicately constructed complete piece of machinery in the human animal. Once a tiny screw is out of place, the whole machinery gradually becomes defected, and the breakdown is apt to come any time at all. One foot from the eyes brings the reading matter sufficiently close to the eyes not to involve undue strain on the muscles.

When you are reading, or when you are engaged in embroidering, or knitting, or in any occupation which taxes the eyes as much as the hands, seek a spot sufficiently shady, not to affect the comfort of the eyes. In a shady spot, during the day, the rays of light are uniformly diffused, and run parallel with the eyes. If this is not the situation, and there are oblique or perpendicular rays, the eyes bear the brunt of the uncomfortable spot. You can, as a rule, always tell whether the rays of light are suited to your eyes when they feel comfortable.

If you are engaged in handwork of some kind, in the afternoon, and you are at the same time in the company of your friends, do not appear so industrious as to make your work seem more important than they are. Your associates will be polite, to be sure, but they will be justly irritated to a degree by your anti-social industry.

Look up every once in a while from your work, and lay it down a minute or two now and then, and let your interest seem to be focused on your guest, and your eyes centered on him or her, showing a deep interest or concern, not in yourself, or your work, but in her or him. You will thus not only make your guest or neighbor feel more comfortable, but you will give your eyes a little rest by focusing in another position.

If you do handwork at night, be sure that you work under a good light. It has become quite the fashion to do this in good company and often you are asked to perform a double piece of work, to do with your hands, and at the same time not become a bore with your silence. If your light is poor, you not only become a social bore, but a social menace, for in addition to your seeming lack of interest you display tendencies of physical discomfort.

Arc lights are vulgar because of their glaring rays, and exceedingly injurious. A shaded or mantled light is the best duplicate at night of diffused daylight. The electric bulb should either have a dome or a dark paper shade. A gas light composed of mantle and bulb, produces a good diffused light, and when placed high enough near the ceiling, does not injure the eyes.

If, on account of careless strain or other abuses, you find that your eyes squint, or you press them with your fingers, or if they seem to suggest redness or inflammation, consult an oculist at once. You may need glasses, or you may need another form of treatment. Do not delay, for you cannot replace a pair of eyes when they break down, as you can, for example, in poor fashion, a set of teeth.

An oculist is an expert in eye treatment, and is the best person to consult regarding the discovery of eye ailment. He will not prescribe glasses if they are not needed, for glasses under these conditions may cause irreparable injury. He will not drop atropine into the eyes unless absolutely necessary, and so will not cause you needless discomfort and social hermitage for several days.

Glasses may not be very comfortable at the beginning, and they may not appeal to the sense of beauty of the social pet, but they are far more beautiful, far more esthetic, than a pair of unsheltered squinting, or blood-shot eyes. Not only are they more beautiful than these, but they are more comfortable, and will thus render social popularity an easier accomplishment.

### Nature Was Improving

James A. McNeill Whistler astounded many people by the egotism he frequently displayed in his conversation; but those who knew the artist best realized that many of his conceited remarks were inspired by a love of mischief rather than by vanity. Here is an example:

At a house-party, an effusive lady approached the artist. "O Mr. Whistler," she said, "I have just been up the river, and it reminded me so much of your pictures!" "Indeed!" Whistler replied, calmly. "Then nature is looking up."

### A Safe Hiding-Place

A parson who paid more attention to the pleasures of life than to his sermons, was taken to task for his worldliness by a Quaker friend. The rebuke, says the New York Tribune, was none the less effective for being tactful.

"Friend," said the Quaker, "I understand thee's clever at fox-catching."

"I have few equals and no superiors at that sport," the parson replied, complacently.

"Nevertheless, friend," said the Quaker, "if I were a fox, I would hide where thee would never find me."

"Where would you hide?" asked the parson, with a frown.

"Friend," said the Quaker, "I would hide in thy study."

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