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## THE GLASSES WE WEAR

### CURIOS FACTS CONCERNING SPEC-TACLES AND THEIR USE.

The Eye Like a Photographic Camera. How It Receives Impressions and Art Aids Nature. The Discovery and Manufacture of Eyeglasses.

[Copyright by American Press Association.]

"Have you ever had occasion," said my friend, a physician, as we sat in the club the other evening, "to observe how many persons wear glasses? Look around us, for instance." There were about thirty gentlemen in the room. "Nearly every man you see above 40 years of age either has an eyeglass perched upon his nose or dangling over his shirt front. Stroll up Broadway on a sunny afternoon, or watch an audience in a classical concert, and note what a fat it has become among the young people, especially the young ladies, to look owl-like and learned through a pair of gold mounted 'pebbles.'

"Observe also the young swells, who affect to be 'so very English, you know.' One in a hundred may have learned how to keep a monocle in place without much



SHOOTING SPECTACLES AND LENSES.

facial distortion, but the other ninety-nine will look as if a stroke of paralysis had drawn their features out of shape in an endeavor to 'make the thing stay put.' In fact, with a certain class, it is only an idle display—a fashion rather than a necessity. Defective vision, however," continued the doctor more seriously, "has greatly increased of late years, particularly in our large cities, where are to be found so many persons engaged in sedentary occupations—students, bookkeepers, clerks and others, who are subjected to the influence of bad light and air. This is one reason why you see so many people wearing glasses."

"It is only within the last half century that we have made the delicate organism of the eye a thorough scientific study, but so much has been learned in that time that the specialist is now enabled to treat intelligently and with general success almost every disease with which it is afflicted. Inventions of the scientists now permit us to illuminate the inside of the eyeball and see the beautiful structure of its deep parts—the optical nerve itself—as clearly as you see the print on your newspaper, and we are no longer in the dark while diagnosing an optical derangement. In a plain, common sense like way let me tell you something about it.

"The eye is like a photographic camera. In it is a certain membrane known as the retina, on which is received the impression of external objects exactly like the sensitive plate of the camera. From this sensitive plate the impression is transmitted by the nervous apparatus to the brain. It also has a focusing quality whereby rays from an object are converged, making a distinct picture upon the retina. The lens produces the same effect in the camera. In the photographer's instrument this lens is capable of being moved backward and forward so that objects at different distances may be brought to a focus, but in the case of the eye this is accomplished not by moving the lens but by increasing or diminishing its power; that is, by making it more or less convex.

"Rays coming from a distant object for practical purposes, say over twenty feet, enter the eye parallel, and are exactly focused. Within that range they do not enter parallel, and therefore require a change in the focusing apparatus in order to produce a clear picture, the power of the lens increasing as we approach the eye. As we grow older this focusing apparatus loses a certain quality, or what is technically known as the power of accommodation. Our 'near' point recedes from us, and we cannot see things distinctly. This is due to a loss of elasticity in the lens; in other words, it becomes flattened. It is now that the deficiency must be supplied by a convex lens outside, through spectacles. This is the condition in all old people, and it keeps on increasing, making it necessary to make a corresponding increase in the power of the glasses every few years.

"Then of course spectacles are required for abnormal conditions of the focusing apparatus of the eye. For instance, a person may be what is termed long sighted, or as some people describe it weak sighted,



meaning by this that they cannot maintain vision for near objects without becoming tired or producing headache. They can see perfectly at a distance, but their focusing is overtaxed by near objects, therefore they must supply this deficiency by a convex lens worn for near objects.

"On the other hand a person may be near sighted and able to see only objects that are very close. This is also due to a defective condition of the eye, the parallel rays not being brought to a focus on the retina, but in front of it. Such a person has to use the opposite kind of glass; that is, with a concave lens. These are the two chief and important glasses, and they are numbered according to their range in power. Besides these are other forms of lenses, which are intended to supply peculiar defects, but it would require much technical description to make you understand them. You can see what they look like in any work on optics."

"Who invented spectacles, doctor, or how did the idea originate?"

"Don't know; nobody knows," was the sententious reply. "There were hints of optical instruments among the Babylonians. Burning glasses were used 400 years before the Christian era, and it is a

matter of history that Nero had defective vision and looked through a glass in watching the gladiatorial games. He wore a polished stone in a finger ring, and it is not certain whether this stone was used as a mirror or a lens. Genuine spectacles did not appear until more than twelve hundred years afterward, and like many important articles they came to the surface in different places. England and Italy both claim them.

"Roger Bacon is said to have invented them in 1280, yet on a Florentine tomb in Italy, bearing date 1290, is this inscription: 'Here lies Salvino degli Armati, inventor of spectacles. May God pardon his sins!' In the Fourteenth century spectacles were frequently used, but only by the very wealthy, and being highly prized, were bequeathed with elaborate care. In 1500 they were made in Holland and Germany, and later appeared in Spain, but instead of being worn to aid defective vision were there used as a matter of fashion. This habit rapidly spread to the rest of the continent, and brought about the transformation from the old Thirteen. A century spectacles into eyeglasses, and eventually into the monocle."

"In pictures of the celebrities of the last century I notice that many of them wore glasses," said the writer.

"Yes, nearly all the great writers of that day used spectacles as they grew old, but you must have observed that the lenses were very large and the frames massive. Oliver Goldsmith had a pair of this kind, and half the time he was so absent minded that he would hint the house over only to find them on the top of his head. He was lazy, too—used to go to bed in his dressing gown, and when he got tired of reading would turn his spectacles back over his nightcap and throw his shoe at the candle to put out the light."

"By the way, a valuable invention was made by Ben Franklin. It was a glass bisected horizontally, for use in special cases in which there was both far and near vision. Probably he was himself affected in this way. He called them his 'comfort glasses,' and the name has come down to the present time, many of our old people still clinging to the big round tortoise shell frames that were the fashion in the early part of the century. Glasses have first made on scientific principles—that is to say, with reference to their focal power—under the direction of Felix Fontana, a celebrated Italian philosopher and mathematician, who is buried by the side of Galileo, in Florence, and modern opticians have more or less followed his principles."

"Where do the best glasses come from?"

"Commercially speaking, they are made in Paris, although we are beginning to excel in America. Many glasses are also made in Germany, where the government at one time paid a subsidy for their manufacture."



FRANKLIN TESTING HIS INVENTION.

FACTURE. The material of which the lenses are made is either glass or quartz crystal, the latter sometimes called pebbles, but from a hygienic point of view there is no material difference between them, so that a proper magnifying and minifying power is obtained. Spectacles made of ice or gelatin would be as good as long as they lasted. The only advantage pebbles possess is that they do not break or scratch as easily as lenses made of glass, and the idea that they are more cooling to the eye is nonsensical. Spectacles, you know, have different names.

"There is the 'comfort glass' of Ben Franklin; then the cylindrical glass, for irregularity in vision; the surgeon's glass, the sportsman's glass, which by shading a space outside of the center permits a greater concentration of light; goggles, for the use of workmen, or for persons who are driving in the dust; snow glasses and protective glasses, for sheltering sensitive eyes from an excess of light. The popular notion that green is a good color is erroneous. It is a stimulant to healthy eyes, but trying to diseased ones. Smoke color or blue answers much better, and should always be selected, as they are simply worn as a protection from bright light."

"One word more—where do the frames come from?"

"Well, they are now largely made here, although they were formerly imported from France and England in large quantities. The business of grinding lenses is just beginning in New York, and there is another optical company in Massachusetts. These are practically the two concerns that are successfully competing with the foreign market. And now," concluded the doctor, "that's all I know about spectacles."

FELIX G. DE FONTAINE

A PROSPEROUS AND USEFUL LIFE ENDED. Mr. A. D. Bullock, the millionaire merchant who died recently at his home in Cincinnati from cerebral apoplexy, was long a prominent figure in the commercial circles of the west. He was born at Philadelphia fifty-five years ago, and after leaving school was given a thorough training in the woolen business. When barely of age he established himself in the Queen City of Ohio, and there resided until death's summons came.

While yet a young man he married Miss Wilson, a famous local belle, and from the union two sons were born, who still live. Mr. A. D. BULLOCK.

Bullock laid aside the cares of business some four years ago. He had amassed a fortune, but lost his health, and that neither money nor care could restore. But up to the last hour of existence he continued active in good deeds. As a friend remarked: "He was a member in good standing of the grand old church of the golden rule. He went about doing good, and strictly obeyed the Scriptural rule of never letting his left hand know that which his right hand did." Every solicitor for charitable organizations, every society for the relief of the poor, every institution reared to alleviate suffering and distress, knew his good deeds, but the world was kept in ignorance of them."

## THE BISCUITS MISS FLANIGAN MADE.

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Words and Music by C. FRANK HORN.

*Con Spirito.*

1. One day as I laid on my sat-in di-van, Mis-ter Fog-ar-ty call'd up-on  
2. "Just cut one in two," says Ma-lon-ey to me, "And slash on the but-ter for  
me,..... Say-in', Mis-ter Gil-hoo-ly, I'm want-in' a man, To go with me to Plan-i-gan's  
life;..... I.... tried just as faith-ful as ev-er could be. Till the foil-re flew off of my  
tea,..... We wint, an' Miss Da-ly met us at the door, Where the ta-ble for tea had been  
knife,..... Then Gal-li-gan broke off a cou-ple of teeth, An' tould me that he was n-  
laid,..... "O'Gil-hoo-ly, just plaze an' try some of these. They are biscuits Miss Flan-i-gan made.",.....  
afraid,..... That we want-ed a wedge, and an ax or a sledge, For the biscuits Miss Flan-i-gan made.....

**REFRAIN.**

*Allegretto Moderato.*

Oh my! say what you will, But the biscuits were snowy and flak-y, Whin I think of them still, It  
makes me feel tremby and sha-ky. Oh, my! made up to kill, Of my life I am sad-ly  
fraid,..... Since I swallow'd such ter-ri-ble nuggets of lead, As the biscuits Miss Flanigan made,.....

3 I handed them up to a healthy young chap, Whose name was John Peter McGraw, He shut down his teeth with a vigorous snap, An' the splinters flew off of his jaw: While I to believe him done all in my pow'r, I was tould by young Hector McDade, That Helena O'Brien had injur'd her spine With the biscuits Miss Flanigan made.

4 I took a few biscuits, and started for home, I scarcely knew whither nor how, And I knocked a big hole in the Custom-house dome, And murdered McGittigan's cow.

5 I was fearfully sick, an' my heart was quite sore, When the news kem around the next day, That a contractor's cart was at Flanigan's door, An' was takin' the biscuits away, They may send them to Germany, Russia or France, But I'll bet you the treats, they're payin' the streets With the biscuits Miss Flanigan made.

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