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Duncker's 1815 advice:

In 1973 Optometrie; Zeitschrift für Augenoptik und Optometrie reprinted the title page and 13 text pages of an 1815 booklet entitled "Belehrungen über Brillen, die Beschaffenheit, Auswahl und Anwendung derselben" (Advice about spectacles, their nature, selection, and application) with the subtitle, "Ein Noth- und Hilfsbüchlein für Alle welche der Brillen bedürfen" (A need and help booklet for all who need glasses). Included in the title page is its dedication by Duncker to the benefit of orphans of soldiers. Duncker is identified only by his surname and the phrase "Prediger in Rathenow" (Preacher in Rathenow). Introductory remarks by the editor of Optometrie identify the author as Johann Heinrich August Duncker (1767-1843).

The first six pages appear on pages 52-53 of the 1973 issue no. 2, vol. 21, of Optometrie, and the next eight pages appear on pages 177-179 of issue no. 5, same volume, with the to-be-continued notation. The continuation never evolved.

After unsuccessful attempts to obtain Duncker's booklet through interlibrary loan, letters to the editor, etc., I finally sought the help of a language scholar friend in Düsseldorf, Germany, who indulged in a bit of sleuthing on his own. Eventually he tracked down an 1820 second edition in the Carl Zeiss museum in Jena (formerly East Germany) and prevailed on the curator to send me a photocopy.

Whether photocopying there is primitive or the pages of the booklet are flimsy, the copies were most challenging, with the back-side letters showing through almost as clearly as the front-side print! Further, the 1820 print is old German, a challenge for me even when clear.

If you have read this far you must surely desire to know about the contents. The title and subtitle of the 1820 booklet are the same as in the 1815 edition except for its further identification as an enlarged second edition plus a section describing an improved patented hearing aid. Duncker is identified again as "Prediger" but also as "Inhaber" (proprietor) of the optical industrial establishment in Rathenow. The printer is shown as Johann Friedrich Flick under commission of "Theod. Christ. Fr. Enslin in Berlin." The dimensions of the 80 page booklet are approximately 9 1/3 x 12 cm of which 62 pages relate to spectacles and 15 to the hearing aid. The last three pages include a list of optical branches in 28 cities and towns where the lowest prices prevail.

The text is directed toward the lay reader, as an authority advising the uninitiated, with a complete absence of technical terms, diagrams, or photographs—truly a pocket book. After a brief prefatory justification Duncker poses four basic questions to be answered, as follows:

1. What are faulty glasses?
2. What are good glasses?
3. How should we begin to get the right pair?
4. When must we get a change of glasses?

Under no. 1 he discusses flaws, bubbles, waves, and opacities and how they distort vision and produce eyestrain. Under the topic of colored lenses he explains that the optician who recommends tinted lenses for ocular weaknesses is like an inferior medical tradesman who entices with a variety of colored medicines but fails to recognize a patient's true malady.

Several pages border on a bit of tirade over the low quality lenses being brought in from Paris, London, and Nürnberg and uncontrollably distributed by irresponsible merchants. They are variously unpolished or mass polished, molded, etc., and often given a superficial sheen that camouflages their flaws. Their strength assortments are typically limited to 7, 14, 20, and 36 "Zoll" (inch) focal lengths resulting usually in inadequate correction. Anecdotal evidence is given for the resultant increased costs and the damage they do to our eyes. One anecdote involved a pair of 3 1/2 Zoll focal length lenses furnished by a surgeon following cataract surgery. The patient should have gone directly to an experienced optician.

To illustrate the kinds of factors that an optician must weigh when he selects a patient's glasses, Duncker describes the weakest vision to be among persons with brown or black eyes.

On question no. 2 he points out that the spectacles can be satisfactory only if the glass is clear and the workmanship good. Besides describing possible flaws he lists six criteria.

1. Uniformity of lens thickness.
2. True sphericity of concave and convex surfaces.
3. No burnished edges on facets.
4. Printed matter should appear sharp and black through both the middle and periphery of the lenses.
5. Freedom from surface flaws.
6. No tint for the myope and greenish or bluish lenses for only the postcataract, weak, and farsighted eyes.

Following this is a brief harangue on business patterns versus professionalism, necessitating a buyer beware attitude, even in enlightened Berlin where both competent opticians and unscrupulous vendors operate.

Next he discusses frames. He warns against those that clamp on the nose because their distance from the eyes is unreliable and they irritate in various ways. Temples are preferable, though costlier. He lists four frame criteria, as follows:

1. The lens aperture should not be too small.
2. The center-to-center distance should correspond with the interocular separation.
3. The bridge should put no pressure on the nose.
4. No pressure should be against the temple bones.

He then gives a series of reasons why these criteria are important and how the correct choices of frame material can help solve problems. A footnote points out that the Rathenow optical establishment provides a wide assortment of sizes, materials, and strengths to enable the conscientious optician to do a professional job.

For question no. 3 he classifies ordinary vision in three categories—short, long, and weak sight. He then describes the functional symptoms of each and the circumstances of time of day, lighting combinations (windows and candles), types of work, health conditions, age, etc., in which the symptoms emerge. When the need for glasses is apparent the reader should consult the well equipped optician and be prepared to report one's symptoms in detail. At about this stage one should be able to detect the optician's competence. For example, occasionally the competent optician may even refer the reader to a physician because a health problem is indicated. Testing may have to be done at different times of day. Separate glasses may be indicated for lamp-light wear. Differences of the two eyes may have to be accommodated. Caution must be taken to prevent over-correction of myopia. Selection by mail may be contra-indicated but advice is given on how best to do it if necessary. Etc.

Question no. 4 is discussed in terms of subjective symptoms of which seven are listed as follows.

1. The need to hold objects further away.
2. Distant objects blurring.
3. More light required.
4. Small objects look hazy.
5. Printed letters wiggle like ants.
6. Eyes need frequent closing or refixation.
7. The sight weakens after many hours of awake time.

Considerable warning is given about the dangers of negligence and delay. Following the main text a six-page postscript is given about the optical establishment in Rathenow, its origin, development, products, and philosophy. Perhaps this was not in the 1815 edition.

The photocopy of the 1820 edition will be filed with ILAMO.

Nonoptical criteria in eyewear:

Collectors of antique eyewear, and probably dispensing opticians, seem to be much more sensitive to the role of aesthetics, style, and status symbolism in eyewear than are optometrists and ophthalmologists. Indeed, the early history of spectacles is revealed not in the optical and visual science documents but in the graphic arts and classic literature and in the products of the artisans' handiwork. Such continuing history is even unfolding today right before our eyes says Henry Allen, a staffwriter for the Washington Post, in the Style section of the December 10, 1991, issue in an article filling most of pages D1 and D2.

With front facial views of 13 well known glasses-wearing public figures such as Douglas MacArthur, George Burns, Benjamin Franklin, and Gloria Steinem he interprets what their glasses do for them visually, not optically. Similarly, when Tommaso da Modena painted a fresco showing Hugh of Provence wearing glasses in 1352 he provided a symbol of wisdom and prestige, hardly an optical correction. For Henry Kissinger the glasses became a trademark. Around 1927 in America, "the psychic clout of eyeglasses was such that the press took note when Calvin Coolidge changed from black-rimmed glasses—a Trotsky or James Joyce look that made him nervous, possibly—to a pince-nez, with more of a captain-of-industry look."

The article is so succinctly comprehensive and well written as to suggest it as a pleasant but meaningful reading assignment somewhere in the optometry curriculum.

Help for would-be collectors:

Ronald MacGregor has produced another manual for collectors of ophthalmic antiques. 56 paperbound pages, 15 x 21 cm, dated 1992, and titled "Collecting Ophthalmic Antiques," it is published by the Ophthalmic Antiques International Collectors Club, 47 Chapelwell Street, Saltcoats, Ayrshire, KA 21 5 EB, U.K., at £3.75 plus postage and packing.

A few of the 46 topics listed in the table of contents include commentary and helpful hints in Collecting, Antique Dealers, Prices, Investment Potential, Display and Storage, Leading Auction Houses, Museums, etc.

The previous publication, "Restoring Ophthalmic Antiques," 1990, is now sold out, though the British College of Optometry may have a few in stock.

HET OOG WIL OOK WAT:

Previously mentioned in Hindsight is an attractive booklet with the above title which, freely translated, means something like "The eye also needs help," or perhaps even more freely, "Vision

aids are a necessity." It's subtitle OPTIEK DOOR DE EEUWEN HEEN may be expressed "Optics through the centuries and since."

Being 20 x 21 cm and having 30 pages of glossy paper in full colors, the 1990 copyrighted booklet displays dozens of items from the collection of its author Kees Kortland. The descriptive text is in Dutch but the photo captions are all translated into English on page 29. The illustrations include a 1000 B.C. plano-convex Lesestein (reading stone), a 1352 A.D. portrait with the subject wearing glasses, a 17th century picture of a spectacle maker, another of a spectacle seller, one of a lens-grinding machine, and a pair of leather nose-supported spectacles. Later items include lorgnettes, tortoise-shell spectacles, and various refractive and surgical instruments.

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O.A.I.C.C. Newsletter notes:

The July 1992 issue, no. 40, of this antique collectors club newsletter is again primarily of interest to collectors, as intended, but nevertheless includes several items of broader historical significance. We learn, for example, that, under endowment by the Thackray Trust, a new museum of medical history is being developed in Leeds, England, and that it seeks an Ophthalmic Advisor. At Bonham's Chelsea sale in June the B.O.A. Foundation purchased an 1839 oil painting of "a gentleman wearing a pair of Silver D-Spectacles with smoke side-visor" at the "bargain price" of £400. One member sent the club a photocopy of the first issue (1880) of the first optical newspaper in Germany, the Central Zeitung für Optik und Mechanik. One page of 13 advertisements is reproduced. They offer a variety of optical and mechanical products among which Brillen (spectacles) appear to be a very small share.

The feature article is by Colin Fryer in which he describes the use of tradesman's cards, or trade cards, by opticians in 18th century London. Supplementing this is a detailed commentary by Derek C. Davidson on the identifying signs hung at the fronts of shops in the same era. There being no place numbers at that time a shop sign could be identified by its miniature reproduction on a trade card.

Another feature is a one-page article on Stanhope lenses by Douglas Jull. A Stanhope lens is basically a short segment of a cylindrical glass rod flat at one end with a convex surface at the other end having a focal length equal to the length of the rod. It was invented by Charles Stanhope, the 3rd Earl Stanhope in the later part of the 18th century, to serve as a simple microscope. Well into the 20th century a great variety of objects containing

'Stanhopes' were manufactured from such materials as ivory, bone, wood, or metal.

Douglas Jull's booklet "Collecting Stanhopes" can be obtained for £5.95 directly from the author at 7 Cissbury Drive, Findon Valley, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 ODT, England.

Optometrists organize:

On page 191 of the August 1, 1907, issue of The Optical Journal, vol. 20, no. 5, is a directory of 66 representative optical organizations, four of them classified as national and interstate, 42 as state, and 20 as local.

The dates of founding are shown parenthetically for 50 of the organizations, and these range from one in 1894 (New England Association of Opticians) to two in 1907 (Idaho and Omaha). Otherwise there were two or more societies organized in each of the 14 years with a maximum number of 11 in 1903. The Gaussian statistical distribution suggests that a few more would be formed during the next immediate years.

What prompted this relatively sudden movement? Might a study of the early minutes of these organizations reveal a common stimulus that did not prevail previously? Fifteen years later on another page of the same journal, then called The Optical Journal and Review of Optometry, vol. 49, no. 25, June 22, 1922, p. 43, appeared the following interesting item:

"On December 10, 1896, a number of opticians from various parts of the State of Indiana, who had a keen interest, not only in their individual work, but also in the advancement of the profession as a whole, came together for a meeting at the capital city, Indianapolis. This meeting, which was held in a little room at the Denison Hotel, was called to order by John Wimmer, of Indianapolis, now deceased. A medical bill having been introduced into the Indiana State Legislature, which, upon investigation, proved to be adverse to the opticians, all of the men present felt the need of an organized and effective body to advance their profession and disseminate knowledge concerning it.

After some discussion, a motion was carried to form an organization to be known as the Indiana Optical Society, composed of the following charter members: . . ."

Did the optometrists of other states have similar reasons for organizing?

Old and new:

"A History of Cataract Treatment" is a featured article by Robert Augusteyn in pages 22-23 of the first issue of a new journal

entitled Vision Asia-Pacific, Vol. 1, nos. 1-2, March-June 1992. Dr. Augusteyn traces the treatment back many thousand years, both surgical and nonsurgical.

From minutes of the guild:

The following entries are selectively excerpted verbatim from the 1671-1833 minutes of The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers by Mr. Hugh Orr, Honorary Curator of the British Optical Association Foundation Museum.

At a Court held on 3rd August 1671: Mrs. Elizabeth Bagwell was found "glasses and frames not fit for sale" and by a jury were found bad and deceitful and by Judgement was executed accordingly in Cannon Street on the remaining part of the London Stone where the same was with a hammer broken all in pieces.

At a Court held on 20th January 1695, James Mann of Angal Street, London, was fined for making and selling thirty one pairs of white spectacles ground only on one side, and five pairs of black spectacles, being unlawful and bad wears. In 1697 he was expelled and disowned as an assistant, for selling a great quantity of improper wears, viz frames without glasses to a person not a Freeman of the Company. In 1702 the Court of the S.M.C. having rescinded their decision, it was ordered that frames without glasses may be sold without action being taken. Mann was reinstated as an Assistant of the Company.

A petition from Mary Bollen of 1, Coppice Court, St. Dunstons Hill, London, widow of George Bollen, stated that her husband was made a Freeman of this Company on 7th October 1790 and who died in St. Thomas Hospital, London on the 12th October 1820. That she was left with two little children and nothing to support her but her own labour, and humbly prayed for any relief that the Court might be pleased to bestow.

The Court—Having taken the same into consideration and seen the petitioner and finding that the deceased was a registered Freeman in their books and had paid his quarterage nearly to his death—Resolved that 10/- be given for her present relief, and that she be placed on the Pensioners List and at 5/- per quarter.

At a Court meeting 28th June 1827, a communication from a Mr Dolland was read stating—That Matha Williams one of the pensioners of The Company died in February last, and that he was induced to give the last donation of £1. to her finances, to adjust in defraying her Funeral expenses, hoping at the same time it would be met with the sanction of the Court. Resolved that the said sum of £1 paid by Mr. Dollond for adjusting in defraying the funeral expenses of the deceased

meets the approbation and Sanction of this Court, and that Mr. Dollond be reimbursed with the £1 sum.

At a Court meeting 3rd January 1833. A Petition was read from Irminor Warder widow of the late Robert Warder a Freeman of this Company, stating herself to be very distressed Circumstances, and that in March 1831 while spraying over London Bridge, had the misfortune to fracture his leg, which has and is likely to render him incapable of obtaining a livelihood. Under these circumstances humbly praying relief from this Court. It appears that her late husband was admitted a Freeman of the Company in the year 1816 and that the quarterage was paid regularly to the time of his death.

Resolved—The sum of £1 be presented to her for the present relief and that the name be added to the list of Pensioners of this Company at £1 per quarterage.

Mr. Orr reminds us that the London Stone is still in Cannon Street, London, protected by an iron grid over it. Also, that the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (S.M.C.) was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1629.

Virtually all of the earliest records of the S.M.C. were destroyed in The Great Fire of London in 1666.

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