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Physical examination
of candidates for the
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PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVAL AND MILITARY ACADEMIES.

MR. EDITOR,—Members of Congress when having the right of nomination in their districts generally ask some physician to examine the young men who apply for the position. Such examination includes that of the visual power and color sense of the candidate. As only a certain amount of hypermetropia or of myopia will be passed by the United States medical examining boards and no degree of color-blindness by the naval medical board, it is pretty important that defective vision for form or color should be detected by the doctor certifying to the young man's physical condition.

It is more than mortifying to young men, who pass an excellent examination, to be afterwards thrown out for physical defects. Cases have applied to me, and I have heard of others, of excessive myopia and color-blindness, when months were wasted in preparing for the ordeal. If the physician originally applied to cannot be sure of the degree of hypermetropia or myopia, it certainly would be better to send candidates to the nearest ophthalmic surgeon who can decide, than to have the young man rejected by the medical board afterwards.

Defects of the color sense may readily escape detection by methods of testing ordinarily used, as asking the names of colors, etc. The surest means is to apply Professor Holmgren's test with the worsteds, as will be done to the candidates by the medical board. They, however, will have a proper collection of worsteds, but exactly the same can be procured of N. D. Whitney & Co., 129 Tremont Street, Boston, with whom I arranged to keep on hand type collections, at the request of the American Ophthalmological Society.

Physicians have written to me from different parts of the country complaining of their utter inability to apply Holmgren's test as described in my manual. On investigation I have found that they did not have a proper set of worsteds, but some of the imitations advertised and sold in New York and Philadelphia. An examination of these imitations showed that they could not possibly be used to properly carry out Holmgren's test. I hasten to say that I have no pecuniary interest in Mr. Whitney's sale of worsteds. I am desirous that the now necessary application of Holmgren's brilliant invention should not be interfered with by tradesmen's ignorance or cupidity, and that physicians should not be imposed on.

Yours truly,

B. JOY JEFFRIES, M.D.

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