

CARE OF THE WOUNDED.

THE INFLUENCE OF COLOUR.

As some people have greater perception of harmony and are more deeply moved by "concord of sweet sounds" than others, so some are more susceptible to the influence of colour and more consciously take pleasure in its effects. Yet subconsciously there are probably few people who are not influenced by it, and more especially the sick, who lie day after day in the same surroundings, which may depress them and retard their recovery, or inspire them to persevere on the road to recovery, and to regain the mental poise and concentration which for a time they have lost.

Nurses who have worked in a hospital where the walls are a drab colour, with perhaps a dado of brown paint chosen for its enduring quality, and who have escaped in their off duty time to the National Gallery, or one of the other great picture galleries, as a relief from their monotony, will realize their effect upon the mind, and the importance of the work for the sick and wounded of Mr. P. H. Kemp Prossor, who, having studied "colour-medicine" and the influence of colour on children and adults, is so convinced a believer in its benefits that he has closed down half his house, given up his motor car, and is devoting himself to arranging and supervising colour wards in military hospitals. Mr. Prossor's faith extends beyond the æsthetic effect of colour to its therapeutic influence.

We have already described the "Colour Ward" in the McCaul Hospital for Officers, and it was recently the good fortune of the writer to visit Section IV of the Maudsley Neurological Clearing Hospital at Denmark Hill, where shell-shock and kindred cases are received.

Imagine the change of being transported from the tortured battle-grounds of Europe, desolate, and reeking with the carnage of war, to these wards where "all the air is thrilling with the Spring," for that is the message of Mr. Kemp Prossor's colour wards, and the colours are nicely adjusted to the individual needs. The ceilings are in every case a soft firmament blue, and there are wards with apple-blossom pink walls—so many people need pink, says Mr. Prossor—with anemone mauve curtains, introducing the note of concentration and maybe Spring-green quilts, the bedsteads being painted the same colour, even the regulation army lockers are coloured to harmonize; and the picture-frames are the same tone as the walls; white sheets are not yet abolished, but that may come. Incidentally Mr. Prossor believes that much of the bad eyesight of to-day is due to the fact that so many people are constantly looking at white. No browns or mauves or reds are permitted; "the men have seen far too much of those colours," says Mr. Kemp Prossor. Just at that moment the discordant note of red is introduced in the regulation red-bordered cape of the Territorial Sister,

which sets one wondering why the War Office does not invite him to design a uniform for Sisters whose work lies amongst the mentally sick, which shall suggest peace and not war.

Why not?

In a corridor on the officers' floor one gets a charming effect of sunlight and brightness. But the corridor really is dark, and it has been obtained by the sunlight yellow curtains to the window at the end, and will be further accentuated when the walls have been coloured a primrose yellow.

It should be known that Mr. Kemp Prossor is prepared to supervise a colour ward in any hospital, and under no circumstances will a fee be charged. All success to him in his important contribution to the work for the healing of the sick. He tells of a sleepless patient who fell asleep at once in a colour ward, and a letter received from a sergeant was eloquent in appreciation of the benefit he had received. The colours are all washable. Lastly, it is essential that they should be blended "with brains."

Lest it should be thought there is anything new under the sun, it may be mentioned that Aristotle was acquainted with the therapeutic influence of colour.

A BLACKGUARD NATION.

The German Army (says the *British Medical Journal*), which we are often told is one with the German people, is filling up the cup of its iniquities. When the Germans bombed hospitals the excuse was made for them that the buildings were not properly marked with the Red Cross, though the apologists forgot to add that the Germans used the Red Cross to protect their corps headquarters. A month or two ago an order was found to have been issued directing troops in the advanced line to shoot down stretcher parties collecting the wounded, not so much with the object of killing them, but, as was explained, to ensure that the wounded were left out so long that they would be beyond the reach of the surgeon's art. In this way it was sought to diminish allied effectives. The Ministry of Information has now sent through its wireless service particulars of certain gross outrages committed by the Germans upon British prisoners and wounded in March last. The stories have no doubt been seen by all readers, and it is only necessary to say that the sworn statements of soldiers belonging to a Scottish regiment are to the effect that, under the orders of a German officer, a soldier who accompanied him turned a stream of liquid fire down the trench in which prisoners and wounded (16 men, of whom 10 were wounded) had been lined up. Some of the unwounded escaped, but all the wounded must have been either suffocated or burnt. The British Government has caused to be conveyed to the German Government a protest against the offences described, but, as they appear to be part of a deliberate policy, it is hardly to be expected to have any effect. The *Cologne Gazette* recently said that the Germans are a blackguard nation, and the epithet seems well chosen.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)