

therapeutic standpoint not only would any given colour call to be considered, but all the gradations of that colour, the tastes, temperament and physical condition of the person whom it is proposed to influence, the way in which he may perceive any given shade and perhaps the associations with it that may exist in his subconscious mind. All such considerations, too, would lead to the conclusion that if colour were to take an important place in therapeutics, certain rooms in the hospitals would require to be set aside for certain forms of disease, for a colour suited to a very excitable patient would be quite different from that which one would expect to influence a patient exhibiting symptoms of another kind.

#### WHAT INFLUENCES THE PATIENTS.

But this leads us deeper still, and we ask the question whether it is the colour actually visualised which influences the patients or its complementary colour? If the latter, then we nurses must submit to having some of our accepted theories on colour completely overthrown. Grey, for instance, which has been so popular a colour for the sickroom walls, is at once put out of court for its complementary colour is black. Here, indeed, we touch upon what, to me, is a very subtle point in a most complex subject, for we have to deal with the fact that the colour visualised *outwardly* appears to produce its complementary colour *inwardly*. Say, for instance, that one looks for a time at a certain shade of red and then closes the eyes and directs them on to a piece of white paper; a beautiful shade of blue-green will appear, one of the most harmonious shades to be found in nature. Now, will it be this colour or the red which will influence the person in whom it has been evoked? It seems to me that the sense of the colour created in and by a person's own physical organs is that which will affect him most, and here the subjective mind would come largely into play. May it not, therefore, be that the correct standpoint is that the colour selected as part of the treatment for some condition should be that which will evoke *inwardly* the complementary colour judged to be most suited to the patient's state? On this assumption a red room, hitherto regarded with some disfavour, would actually, after the first few minutes, produce the effects which one would have expected from its complementary shade of green. In support of such a theory we might refer again to the supposed "restfulness" of grey; yet where will you find conditions more depressing than those offered by a "grey day"? There is nothing restful or soothing in a sky of thick, soft grey cloud.

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

On the other hand, Mr. Kemp Prosser, as suggested in the article referred to, which appeared in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, probably, through his blue ceilings, conveys to patients the sense of infinity and space given by a blue sky. Indeed, in his idea there is food for further thought, for I believe that in the Roman Catholic Church a beautiful shade of blue is always asso-

ciated with the Virgin, and the complementary shade to this is the wonderful yellow which the masters used in painting the halos of their saints. Those old masters had an understanding of the influence of colour lost to the artists of later times. In some peculiar way it is the colour of a great masterpiece which affects us as much if not more than its lining. Half the feeling of the picture is lost when we look on a representation of it without colour. Yet, when we come to analyse these colours separately and from the point of view of perception alone they cannot in themselves be said to be more beautiful than those of the present day. May it not therefore be the feelings which those colours create *within* ourselves which give to the pictures such power? Perhaps the masters' understanding of colour was more inspirational than actually intellectual, for we find that in the case of each the lining is as characteristic of the artist as his colours, but this fact will not hinder us from finding in their pictures object lessons in still new fields for intellectual activity and for more than mere conjecture on the influence of colour upon the mind and, through it, upon the health of the body and the cure of abnormal conditions.

I. M.

#### NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

As many members are changing their appointments at the present time, we would remind them of the necessity for forwarding at once to the office notice of any change in their address, as failure to do so always involves considerable correspondence which could be avoided if members would just send at once a postcard telling of any fresh appointment or alteration in an address which they have previously used.

#### THINGS THAT ARE DAPPLED.

In the sweet crystalline time of colour, the painters, whether on glass or canvas, employed intricate patterns in order to mingle hues beautifully with each other, and make one perfect melody of them all. But, in the great naturalist school they like their patterns to come in the Greek way, dashed dark on light—gleaming light out of dark. That means also that the world round them has again returned to the Greek conviction that all nature, especially human nature, is not entirely melodious nor luminous, but a barred and broken thing; that saints have the foibles, sinners their forces; that the most luminous virtue is often only a flash, and the blackest-looking fault is sometimes only a stain; and, without confusing in the least black with white, they can forgive, or even take delight in things that are dappled.

You have, then, first, mystery. Secondly, opposition of dark and light. Then, lastly, whatever truth of form the dark and light can show.

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