

The Hospitality of a Hospital

By M. Rea Paul

A HOSPITAL, without hospitality is a contradiction.

Placing a hospital patient in a cheerless environment of white walls postpones his convalescence.

Asking his visitor to wait in the same sort of atmosphere cheats the patient of the heartening cheer which his friend can give him. (Still white walls congeal the cheerful, friendly spirit just when it is ready to flow in generous measure. Which is a condition not to be tolerated.

Hospitality can be expressed and at the same time the feeling of cleanliness in hospital waiting-rooms can be preserved by treating them in warm yellows and greens or in any harmonious scheme sufficiently light in tone. Such color treatments aid in illumination as well as white and yet are rich enough in color to offer a background as pleasant as that which is found in the well decorated club or hotel. And they will be a potent factor in causing the visitor to enter the sick room in a happier state of mind and so help the patient on the uphill road to recovery. Besides, each visitor who leaves the hospital favorably impressed increases its prestige.

The healing possibilities of scientifically selected color schemes are too important to be overlooked by medical men at any time. While intricate problems in decoration are the province of the expert

decorator, still the simpler aspects of color harmony with respect to its effect on both patient and visitor should be familiar to every hospital superintendent.

Briefly, color harmony is a combination of two or more colors, differing in area, hue, strength and luminosity—perhaps all four—which when assembled in proper relative proportion will give an agreeable and pleasing sensation.

The three terms just used—hue, strength and luminosity—are terms describing the qualities of any color. The word hue describes the particular color character itself, such as red, green, yellow, purple, etc. Strength has to do with the purity of the hue, or the quantity of the hue present. Thus if you take pure chrome yellow and mix white with it you do not change the hue but it becomes less strong. Luminosity describes the amount of white light reflected by the surface that the paint presents. It is practically synonymous with brightness. Luminosity may be affected without changing the hue or strength by changing the finish of a surface. Thus a piece of silk is more luminous than a piece of wool cloth of exactly the same hue.

The simplest forms of color harmony are those in which two hues or more differ in strength. Then again, the strength and hue may remain the same, while the luminosity alone is changed. The high-

est decorative effects, however, are obtained when two or more hues are combined as separate parts of a color scheme, blending in the eye to produce the feeling of harmony.

The effect on people of properly or imperfectly harmonized color is worthy of serious attention. In hundreds of cases a marked change in mental attitude has been noted in perfectly normal persons, when harmony has taken the place of clashing of colors. If the normal person is thus strongly affected—what about the convalescing patient? His nerves are more sensitive and it is not unreasonable to suppose that pleasantly tinted walls properly harmonized will help to hasten his recovery when trying white or a badly conceived color plan would retard it.

Add to expressionless walls of white a tint that is sufficiently warm in hue to be cheerful, high enough in strength to stimulate but not irritate, bright enough in luminosity to aid the lighting, yet

not so bright as to result in eye fatigue. The improvement in the patient caused by the more serene frame of mind which such an effect will produce will amply prove the wisdom of such a course.

This beneficial effect should not be weakened by allowing the ceilings to remain a plain harsh white. Some avoid using color in the ceiling to preserve the effect of height. Use a tint lower in strength and higher in luminosity than any of the hues in the room, and the same effect will be produced without the unpleasantness of the white.

The facilities and services of the Department of Decoration of National Lead Company are freely placed at the disposal of hospital managers desiring to inform themselves in detail with regard to their individual requirements. Inquiries addressed to the Department of Decoration, National Lead Company, 111 Broadway, New York, N. Y., will receive immediate attention.



The interior walls of the nationally-known Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York, N. Y., are painted with Dutch Boy white-lead and Dutch Boy flaking oil.