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EDITORIAL

COLOUR plays an important part in our lives, and experiments are being made in this field not only in our working and home surroundings, but in hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. Our physiological reaction to colour may be of important therapeutic value.

Changes of taste and habit are evidenced by the trend in this century away from the heavy blacks, browns and dark greens towards the more general use of the primary colours in sometimes startling combinations. Design often goes hand in hand with contemporary ways of living, to-day noticeably blatant and even bizarre.

It is interesting that several factories and offices have been built recently with differently coloured walls and ceilings in an attempt to combat fatigue and eyestrain. Similarly, experiments are being made with colours and their reaction on patients. The use of green for its soothing effect on psychiatric cases is more or less established. Green is being used extensively in operating theatres for walls, gowns and dressing cloths, not for its effect on the patient, but because it is less fatiguing than white for the surgeon and others at work in the theatre.

Cream and green seem to be traditional colours for hospital walls, whether from habit or based on scientific investigation. In this country, our non-Europeans invariably seem subjected to dark brickwork with an occasional cream surface here and there. This would appear particularly inept when one considers their startling, though sensitive, use of colours in everyday life, and hence their probable association of health with them.

This colour association has often been discussed in the hospitalisation of children, who may grow up fearful of any one in a white coat, or carrying a black bag. To avoid this would mean using a variety of colours however, or the child would attach the same significance to any other colour, be it pink or blue.

There is the "pro-white" argument in that it is a clean, aseptic looking colour, but there is no reason why materials of other colours should not also have these attributes.

This subject offers considerable scope for research, and perhaps we may soon find ourselves working in Departments far removed in design from the present ones, and in clothes undreamt of by the staffs of our training schools.