

THE COLOUR OF HAPPINESS

ALL through my happy childhood I wore blue ribbons in my hair. My brown-eyed sister wore pink, and I sometimes envied her, but even when I became old enough to choose my own dresses, they remained for the most part blue, not because people told me it "brought out the colour in my eyes," but because I found that I felt happiest when wearing that colour. In certain ecstatic moments I crave for rose-colour or pale pink—I should never dream of buying blue for a ball-gown, it is not sufficiently exciting—but for daily wear and soul satisfaction my choice will always be blue, a blue that, whether light or dark, leans towards green rather than purple.

Evidently my choice is not universal, or people would not complain of "having the blues." Scientists tell us that a blue light has a soporific effect, that yellow stimulates, while red excites and enrages. By combining these primary colours we can see the effects of their derivatives: thus green (which is blue to which a little yellow has been added) would be less depressing than blue; orange would be more exciting than yellow. Purple is suggestive of smothered passion; white and black should both be neutral, but as a matter of personal experience I find black most depressing. If I sew on some black material for an hour I become convinced that nobody loves me and that the future holds no happiness. To be constantly in the company of people who wear black reduces me to the depths of gloom, and during the time I have worn mourning I have found it necessary to put on gay-coloured dressing gowns as often as possible in order to rest my nerves.

Few people realize the importance that colour plays in their daily lives. They all have a favourite colour, but seldom take pains to surround themselves with the colour that brings them the greatest happiness. They choose carpets and wallpapers for their pleasing patterns, and even when they work out a "colour scheme," they seldom consider this colour in reference to the effect it will have on their spirits and health. For some sensitive souls it is just as bad to live in a room the colour of which they dislike, as to persist in eating food that does not agree with them.

AN artist arranges the colours on his palette with white in the centre. On the left he puts the cold colours—blue, green and black—on the right the warm ones—yellow, red and brown—and when we start to furnish a room we should first decide on whether we want to make it look warm or cool, restful or stimulating. Have you ever noticed the sun playing on a white-washed wall, making it look yellow where the light strikes it and blue where it is in shadow? It can only be a blue whiteness that we get on our walls indoors, for they are perpetually in shadow. By adding a touch of yellow, making it the colour of cream, can we simulate the cheerful white that we see out of doors. Yellow will bring sunshine into a dull room, green will soothe and rest jaded nerves, so, to a lesser degree, will yellow if it is subdued and darkened into brown. Black will form a pleasing background, but red is always objectionable unless it is confined to small objects or softened to a rosy hue, when it may arouse a pleasing excitement, and should be employed in rooms devoted to pleasure or entertainment.

IN the homes of my friends are yellow rooms, green rooms, brown rooms galore, gray rooms with violet hangings, pink bed-rooms with rose sprayed chintzes; there is even the much-detested red wall-paper, made bearable only by many well-stocked book-shelves, but of blue rooms I know very few, and that is why I am going to tell about my rooms, which are blue, a blue that is almost green, like evening skies and peacock's eyes and robin's eggs. If you put royal blue in them they look green, but in contrast with yellow or orange, they remain emphatically blue.

By ESTELLE M. KER R

When my friends are about to re-paper their houses they ask my advice—they never take it, for I am sure to suggest blue. "I love a blue dining-room, the colour goes so well with mahogany," I told somebody the other day.

"But it fades so!" she replied. "I bought a blue ingrain paper once and now you would never know it, unless you moved the pictures—the rest is a yellowish brown."

"I had blue denim curtains in a summer cottage once and soon they were a dirty gray," said another.

"A friend of mine had a reception room hung in blue brocaded silk, and that lasted fairly well," remarked another.

"Oh, well, if you're a multi-millionaire it doesn't matter whether it lasts or not," retorted the first speaker.

"But, I'm not a semi-demi-millionaire, and I still advocate blue," I persisted.

"You must spend an age hunting for the right colour," said the second.

"No, I don't, I mix them myself."

So then they asked for the recipe. Now, like people who are "natural born" cooks, I don't like to give a recipe. I just keep on mixing until I get the right shade, but roughly speaking, in kalsomining a fair-sized room, I would use about 7 lbs. white, 1 lb. deep bluish green (French Permanent) and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of Prussian blue mixed in two pails with water and allow to stand over night. For kalsomining, use dry colour, and for painting, when one coat only is necessary, the same quantity should be sufficient, the pure colour ground in oil may be bought in half-pound tins, mixed with white lead and diluted with equal quantities of oil and turpentine. It is impossible to get ready-mixed paints in the right colours or consistency.

EVEN in war-time we can't get along without a few new clothes, neither should our homes be allowed to become shabby or they would affect our mental outlook. Perhaps a few suggestions for brightening the home will not be out of place, and

then, if you are disposed to try it, you can substitute the colour of your happiness

for mine and, armed with a wide, flat brush for white-washing, and a smaller round one, for painting, you can array yourself in the very latest design in overalls and do it yourself.

When we moved to our new house I was allotted a wide room in the upper story, with small, deep-set windows and low, sloping walls, which had been recently papered in brown ingrain, so dark as to appear almost black. I lost no time in splashing them over with deep cream-coloured kalsomine, incidentally also my clothing, shoes and the few strands of hair not covered by my dust-cap. But kalsomine will wash off, and when I had removed the colour from those things which I ought not to have done and covered the spots I had left undone, the result was fairly satisfactory in day-time, but at night the walls looked dazzlingly white, too great a contrast to the mahogany furniture. I left it that way for a year, and then invested in about a dollar's worth of kalsomine (according to the above recipe) and tried it again, and the result is charming! In spite of the two coats of kalsomine the colour does not rub off and the texture of the ingrain paper gives it a nice surface. I have seen it employed very successfully over ornamented paper where the design shows through the kalsomine without revealing the colour. The curtains are terra cotta that is fading to a still prettier shade of orange, they are of mercerized cotton, shirred on rods with little frills between each pair. The book-shelves are curtained with the same material, the portieres and couch covers are of velours in a deeper shade, and the Turkish rugs and Japanese embroideries seem to harmonize with their surroundings. It was so successful (and so cheap) that my brown-eyed sister invited me to come to her summer cottage and help her paint the living room, and this time by using oil paint and deeper colour we mixed an even more luscious shade than that which adorns my room.

The cottage walls are covered with panels of beaver-board divided by strips of brown-stained pine, and the fireplace is of gray stone. The beaver-board had previously been covered with shellac, so we used oil paint, and it needed but one coat of my favourite blue, which looks lovelier than ever in the dark pine setting, but it seemed a trifle too rich and dignified for the summer cottage. We wanted things to look bright and gay, so we painted the furniture as well. The round dining-room table and chairs we did in blue, the cane seats we stained bright yellow, and on the backs of the chairs and legs of the table we painted many-hued flowers. The furniture that stood against the wall, the dinner-waggon, writing-table and one or two other articles of furniture, we painted yellow, ornamented with conventional blue roses with brown leaves, and the yellow window curtains, cushions and couch covers added the necessary excitement to the dreamy blue walls. No one has called the walls anything but "blue," and yet in mixing the paint we used a far larger percentage of green. All the Prussian blue needed was contained in two "studio" tubes of artists' colour, yet it dominated the whole mixture.

Once started, it is hard to stop painting, especially when you have plenty of brushes and rags and all that is necessary, so we ended by painting nearly everything in sight. Stone jars, that had performed the most utilitarian duties in the cellar, covered with a coat of Chinese red and shellaced, now grace the mantelpiece, and a gilded glass vase we always hated, provides the note of colour needed on the other side of the room. Even the shabby waste-paper basket is now a thing of beauty, and the China bowl on the brass lamp, once an eyesore, looks rather wonderful, now that it is coloured robin's-egg blue, and glows beneath a Chinese lamp-shade.

In case you don't like blue, gray is a very satisfactory colour, and the prettiest shades are mixed with white and the three primary colours. In a cold gray blue predominates, but for most rooms a warm gray is desirable. Cream woodwork looks well with gray walls, and the hangings may be rose or blue or violet, or gaily flowered cretonne.

"I splashed the walls—and incidentally everything else—with kalsomine."

