

BLOND ARTISTS PAINT BLUE.

Brunettes Run to Reds and Yellows—
So a French Doctor Says.

Special Correspondence THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PARIS, May 6.—Dr. Fortin, a well-known French scientist, has just been explaining to the Academy of Sciences why blond painters make their pictures too blue, while their brethren of the South have a tendency to reds and yellows. The learned doctor attempts to put the whole realm of painting on a scientific basis. His theories are being followed with great interest, particularly this moment, when the national salons are attracting public attention.

In the first place, he has much which is interesting to say about the color of shadows. In this connection he has evolved a complex theory of complementary colors. For example, if the shadow of a glass tube is thrown on a wall by a red and white light simultaneously, he says, two shadows will result—one red and the other green. Another interesting case which he cites is that of an object looked at through a thin white veil. If a knife, for example, is placed against an orange background and covered with a piece of white tissue paper, it will appear blue.

This experiment, the doctor says, explains a number of ocular phenomena—for example the blue tint of the veins. The charming azure hue seen on a white shoulder should, in reality, be a dull gray. But this gray is seen on the yellow and red background of fatty and muscular tissue through the transparent veil of the skin. So the gray changes into the complement of the yellow-red and becomes blue. For the same reason, dark tree-trunks, seen against a bright green background, when there is a slight mist, become red or even violet.

Another series of observations cited by Dr. Fortin has even a wider application. The eye, he says, is encased in a red socket, so that when it is exposed to the light it conveys an impression to the brain as though one were looking through an orange-tinted glass, adding to everything observed the "ions" of blue-green. The eyes of those painters who are blond have membranes only slightly colored, the doctor says, so that they do not easily absorb the blue rays. Therefore, the painters see blue or violet in everything they look at. In this respect, differing altogether from the painters of the Italian schools whose choroide membrane is so rich in pigment. As everybody knows, a pervading violet hue is one of the characteristics of the Scandinavian school of painting.