

Art Center In Business Section Of Baltimore

"The Lord Of May" Lures Artists Of Marjorie D. Martenet's Studio To Pose Models And Paint In The Open.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.

"There are two kinds of artists in this world; those that work because the spirit is in them, and they cannot be silent if they would, and those that speak from a conscientious desire to make apparent to others the beauty that has awakened their own admiration."

ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

IN May the heart of the world beats responsive to the call of Mother Earth, for in May, Earth, by her overwhelming beauty, compels response. Men and women, stirred by an impulse they can scarce explain, feel they must get out to woods and fields and "see the spring." It is a poetic, idealistic yearning manifesting itself potentially despite materialistic duties and urban environment.

But who would expect to stumble upon a branch of blossom of May, to catch a glimpse of the radiance of spring within a stone's throw of the Baltimore Postoffice and at the north end of the Vansant Building? Offices and business desks everywhere, men on business thoughts intent hurrying hither and yon, but suddenly a doorway of artistic decoration suggests a studio and the quiet instruction, "Please knock," indicates that across that threshold one enters upon something a little different from the workaday world.

And so it proves. A student in artist's blouse responds to the rap and the visitor steps from the corridor of commercial life to a small oasis of idealism and art, for one is within the studio of the Martenet School of Painting, of which Miss Marjorie D. Martenet is the instructor.

Apple blossoms show delicately pink and white in a tall vase upon a desk, violets nestle, deeply blue, in a shallow bowl and lilacs, the beloved old-fashioned flowers that make spring so sweet in all Maryland gardens, diffuse fragrance from a great jar upon a nearby table. Two chubby, flaxen-haired children, as full of vitality as quicksilver, are posing for a picture, and Miss Martenet is directing the efforts of a group assembled with palettes and brushes, endeavoring to transfer the faces and forms of the mercurial young creatures to canvas.

Miss Martenet is an artist, born in Baltimore, whose ability is recognized both in her native city and elsewhere, and who has established here a school of painting after the manner of the studio classes conducted by the late William M. Chase. Miss Martenet studied at and graduated from the Maryland Institute School of Art and Design and was a pupil of William M. Chase and of Cecilia Beaux. She also studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and was awarded for six successive years the Pennsylvania Academy School scholarship. She was also awarded by the Pennsylvania Academy the William Emlen Cresson European scholarship, the

Thouron prize for composition, First Anatomy and other prizes. She has been an instructor of drawing at Drexel Institute, instructor of advanced class drawing and painting in Philadelphia and was at one time president of the Three Arts Club of Philadelphia. She also contributes to current exhibitions.

To meet the artist herself is to feel that one has found a woman whose ambition is to pass on the torch of inspiration handed her by such masters as Chase and Cecilia Beaux and who has quiet purpose that will carry her to achievement. Sincerity envelops her as an atmosphere and unconsciousness of self as a garment. A woman so engrossed in giving out the best that is in her, as to be unconscious that she is prodigal of effort for others and generous in appreciation of the achievements of her associates.

To such an one the most natural thing has been to assemble about her a class of artists and art students; to establish a studio that will, she hopes, have a distinctive mission in Baltimore. At present Miss Martenet is resuming her outdoor sketch class, a class started several years ago, but interrupted by the World War. This class has the distinction of being "the first class in Maryland to pose models out of doors." By this method the instructor thinks students get a comprehensive variety of subjects for landscape and marine painting. Sketching will be done among the Windsor Hills, about picturesque Mount Washington, and along the waterfront. Also models will be posed in the flower garden of Miss Martenet's home, Ridgewood avenue, West Arlington, which is within easy access of Baltimore by trolley.

"I have traveled widely over Europe," said Miss Martenet, "and I have found no region more beautiful to paint or more inspiring to artists than the immediate environment of Baltimore. An artist's studio should really be a center of information concerning beautiful localities. The other day a poetess called on me who had recently come to Baltimore from New York. She desired a few suggestions as to the most picturesque hills around Baltimore. She desires to build a stone bungalow and wants to have a flower garden and is charmed with Baltimore. Some would say she should have gone to a real estate agent, not an artist, for information. But it was not valuations she wished, but advice concerning the relative and characteristic beauty of the country in and around this city.

"What brought the Outdoor Sketch class into existence a few years ago and demands its continued existence is the old law of demand and supply. There are many who wish to study art, who wish to paint in Maryland and about Baltimore, especially in May, when blossoming buds and sail boats a-wing

invite. We are getting our canvases stretched and our sketching easels out. Those limited in time will only sketch Saturdays, others more continuously and we will continue most, or perhaps all, summer. The heat will not deter us, because you cannot have color without warmth—and I love color.

"Art schools such as mine are not really new. They existed in Greece, they are new only here. Peter Paul Rubens had a school of this kind where artists as well as students came to work under one instructor; also Hales, Chase and Henri. The need, as I saw it, was for a real art influence, a studio where students may develop their talents untrammelled by the wrong kind of instruction, which is worse than no instruction at all, where their originality and individuality may be strengthened and developed; where they may be taught drawing and painting and trained technically, the purpose being to put their talent to use, to establish and maintain an Art Center where students may feel the inspiration of big art truths and are encouraged to develop idealism. The student must be trained to think right before he can paint right. High thoughts come before high art—one has to think and feel it before they can paint or write their message with eloquence, grace and power.

"There never was a period richer in opportunity for art than the present in our country. It is all ahead of American artists and art students, and art is needed as an uplifting, spiritualizing, joy-giving influence in our country, and right here in Baltimore. For all branches of art there is demand; portraits, landscapes, illustrations, mural decorations, posters, commercial art.

"Many go to New York and Chicago to purchase paintings. We can make our local art important and splendid, and patrons will also come to Baltimore to buy works of art and place commissions and people living here will not go elsewhere to place their commissions. All this is surely worth working for, and we are getting results. It is to make my teaching, as well as my painting, an influence in Baltimore and to extend it beyond local environment that I remain in Baltimore. I live here because I think Baltimore a wonderful place in which to live. There is so much work to be done here relative to the arts—the field is so immense! I enter into teaching with deep enthusiasm, believing it to be a part of my work. Already a number of my students have and are meeting with success. I hear of this one as a successful illustrator in New York, another as a landscape painter in Washington, a third as achieving success as a portrait painter elsewhere, while a number are making good here in Baltimore and run in to see me from time to time at the studio. These things all show me that the Art Center is producing results."