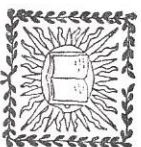


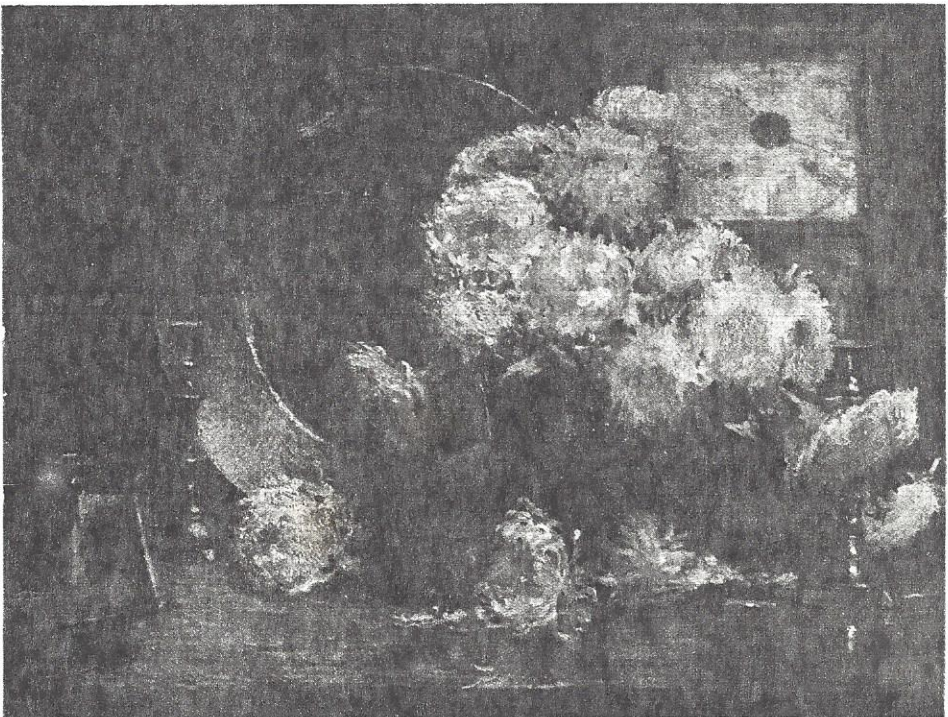
ART AND ARTISTS
OF INDIANA

BY
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE
WORK OF INDIANA ARTISTS
AND SCULPTORS



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This work was quickly followed by other murals in the City Hospital, where he gave full play to the joyousness of his nature and his understanding of the happiness of children. In the dining-room for convalescing children he painted all the toys known to childhood in one great circus frolic. It is almost worth a child's being ill to have one glimpse of such fun; and, once being ill, what child could resist the vigorous vitality of this mural by refusing to grow daily stronger in an altogether admirable manner? At the close of the school year in 1919 Stark resigned his position as Director of Art in Manual Training High School, also the class in composition at the John Herron Art School in order to give his entire time to painting.

T. C. STEELE

'It was an old Gaelic shepherd who said, 'Every morning I take off my hat to the beauty of the world.' Like the shepherd the artist worships the beauty of the world; for his whole life's work is an endeavor to make permanent that which endures so short a time. The hours and the seasons, under the magic of light, wave and interweave the world of effect. Happy indeed is the artist if he can grasp and give again the beauty and significance of an hour in the changeable miracle of nature and make permanent upon

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NEW FALLEN SNOW

T. C. STEELE

OWNED BY ART ASSOCIATION OF INDIANAPOLIS

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his canvas the poignant charm of that which is so brief."

This is the philosophy of Theodore C. Steele, one who has been given the power to conserve in part the evanescent beauty of the world, of the great outdoors at whose shrine he worships, not only one hour when subject and mood and light are at their highest, but through the days and through the seasons to make a permanent record of that ephemeral moment when nature is at her best and which, as he says, is all too brief. When he chose the location of his present home among the hills of Brown County, he found both nature and the inhabitants in a primitive and undisturbed state of quietude; here the roadways wind at the foot of the gentle slopes of the undulating country and the very atmosphere is filled with the mist that lends the picture quality to the surroundings.

Steele was not willing simply to enjoy the attractive landscape, but in the midst of this eternal charm he has made his home. In 1907 he purchased a piece of land of two hundred acres. Perhaps it never had been or could be used for agricultural purposes, so it was in that attractive state in which great trees towered over the hillsides and the undergrowth was undisturbed. Here, with all the abandon and interest of youth, Steele and his wife have built for themselves a

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home in the midst of a country abounding in beautiful picturesque woods and hills and valleys. On a hill six hundred feet above the surrounding country they have built a bungalow and studio, which one approaches by a winding roadway outlined by a row of varicolored irises. On the left is the vegetable-garden and a hedge of peonies; to the right clumps of shrubbery. Nearer the house the driveway enters great pergolas covered with scandent wistaria, fragrant honeysuckle, and climbing roses. Then the culmination of the hill is reached, an elevation of eleven hundred feet, and you come to the house, which has been appropriately named the "House of the Singing Winds." In the large living-room one feels a subtle interest in every picture on the wall, in every book on the shelves. In the ingle-nook is the ruddy glow and warmth of a wood fire. Over the fireplace Gustave Baumann has carved the slogan: "Every morning I take off my hat to the beauty of the world." Here one finds the pictures and books, soft old shawls, and richly colored rugs that betoken a long life in the environment of art. One turns and through the great north window catches a first glimpse of that marvelous nature that frames a constant picture, giving one a foretaste of what is to be found in the immediate neighborhood. Another interesting feature is the very large

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studio in close proximity—the culminating aspiration of every artist's desire. Here the sea-son's work gradually accumulates and the large number of visitors that are received show the appreciation in which the artist is held. No day is without its expedition or some work accomplished, until one is led to believe that the fountain of perpetual youth and eternal energy may be found in the delectable environs of this charming estate. There are wide porches on every side of the house, which is on the apex of the hill. The railing is adjustable so that it may be removed at any point to free the view from obstruction.

There are three studios situated in different parts of the place, where materials and canvases are kept, and where diversified subjects invite attention and where shelter and outlook in rain or snow can be found. Steele finds so much of interest in the wooded hills and pleasant valleys, deep ravines and country roadsides, that he seldom goes beyond the boundaries of his own land in search of scenery. From early spring till late December he lives here, free from the interruptions or distractions of the city life, and probably his best work has been produced under these favorable conditions. The day is all too short to seize and record the transient beauty of the land. The fleeting hours, the transforming

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seasons, bring with them new pictures and suggestions that are never to be exhausted or depleted.

There is probably no county in the state that is crowded so full of the picturesque and the beautiful as is that one small section. Steele was the first artist to settle in this region, which has since become noted for its attractiveness to painters, many of whom have located permanently or spent seasons at the village of Nashville, the county-seat of Brown County.

Theodore Clement Steele was born in Owen County, Indiana. Four years later, his family moved to Waveland, Indiana, where he received his early education, which included some instruction in drawing. After graduating from the Waveland Academy he spent a short time in Cincinnati and Chicago, picking up what he could in the way of instruction in painting. He began to paint portraits when he was meagerly prepared for this difficult art. This he followed for a number of years, locating in Indianapolis in 1873. In 1880 it became possible for him to go to Munich and take a regular course in an art school, where he remained for five years.

In the meantime he had become interested in landscape, and after returning to Indianapolis his time was divided between landscape and portraiture. His portraits include many of the most



A SPRING MORNING

T. C. STEELE, A.N.A.

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eminent men and women of the state. In the list may be mentioned Benjamin Harrison, Charles W. Fairbanks, James Whitcomb Riley, W. H. H. Miller, Mrs. May Wright Sewall, Miss Catherine Merrill; five of the governors of the state, Porter, Gray, Matthews, Hovey, and Chase. He has painted portraits of professors and presidents of the State University, including Presidents Bryan, Jordan, Swain, and, of the older professors, Kirkwood, Wiley, and Ballantine; also Dr. Smart of Purdue University and Dr. Parsons of the State Normal. For a number of years Steele gave almost his entire time to portrait-painting. Then, as opportunity presented, he gradually devoted more time to landscape work, in which he finds greater delight. It is probable that he is better known to the general public in this field of work, on account of being represented by his landscapes in current exhibitions throughout the country.

After his return from foreign study Steele lived for a number of years in the old Tinker homestead. This property was later purchased by the Indianapolis Art Association for the permanent location of the John Herron Art Institute. In 1899 he and J. Otis Adams purchased a house in the suburbs of Brookville, where they built studios. For six years this was their summer home, and here many of Steele's

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best pictures were painted. Before this several summers were spent at Old Vernon, Hanover on the Ohio, and on the Muscatatuck River, as well as on the Pacific coast.

Steele has served upon many important art juries at home, in Chicago, and in Cincinnati as well as on the international jury for the acceptance of American paintings for exhibition in Paris in 1900. He was a member of both the Jury of Selection and Awards at the exposition in 1904 at St. Louis and the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Early in 1910 there was a retrospective exhibit of his paintings, showing about seventy canvases, covering the entire range of his work from 1873 to date. It marked his development through the different periods and showed how he has been influenced by his environment and the epitome of the trend of contemporary art. His work is to be found in the permanent collection of many museums.

In 1898 Wabash College conferred upon T. C. Steele the honorary degree of Master of Arts and at the commencement exercises of the State University, June 20, 1916, a worthy tribute was paid to the high esteem in which he is held by the people of Indiana as an artist, a citizen, and a gentleman of fine scholarly tastes by conferring on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

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The international jury of the American Federation of Arts asked the privilege of including works by Steele in their exhibitions which are sent throughout the country. The name of Theodore C. Steele was presented by Gardner Symons to the National Academy of Design for membership as an "Associate" at the annual meeting in New York City in April, 1913. Ben Foster said he received the first applause for any speech he ever made in his life in eulogizing Steele's paintings. There were thirteen other names presented at the same time, and Steele was elected an A. N. A. by the highest vote accorded any of the candidates, with the single exception of Ralph A. Blakelock, who was unanimously elected. To qualify, every member must present the Academy with his own portrait in oil colors, to be preserved in the gallery of that institution. To comply with this unalterable law, Steele went to Boston to have his portrait painted by Frank H. Tompkins. There was some discussion between the two artists over the pose, which ended by the painting of two portraits, one full face and the other in profile. One was retained, and the other sent to the gallery that contains the most famous permanent collection of portraits in America.

With the first appearance of spring, Steele's winter sojourn in the city is quickly ended and

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he returns to the country to watch the development of the season from beginning to fruition, living close to nature in all her changing aspects and her infinite variety of moods, and analyzing the opalescent tones and colorful haze of the atmosphere that lingers over the hills.

His work shows the artist's sympathy and technical grasp of his subjects and a comprehension of the majestic aspects of nature. He produces the effect desired with a freedom and apparent facility that seem to be the result of most perfect accord with his subject and a skill disdainful of all difficulties in landscape-painting.

Steele's self-instruction outweighs in vast proportion all he has received from others. He has not ceased to grow with the years. Each season's exhibition of his work shows a constant advance, a keener appreciation, a greater love for and a better understanding of that country where he takes off his hat to the beauty of the world. Tolstoy has said: "If one has a marvelous experience in life or comes in contact with nature in one of her sublimer moods, we feel we must give it to others; if we succeed we are artists." It is the particular faculty of presenting nature to us in the sublimer moods and making us feel the vast expanse of beauty by which we are surrounded that is the particular charm of Steele's pictures. They present a sympathetic and single-



HUNNICUTT VALLEY

T. C. STEELE, A.N.A.

OWNED BY T. C. HARRINGTON, RICHMOND, INDIANA

T. C. STEELE

minded understanding of nature, with much feeling for the influence of light and atmosphere.

The roadway winding down the hill, with its six-foot border of blooming shrubs and flowers, is the result of the artistic planning of Mrs. Steele. Departing guests pause at the gateway, loath to leave the delightful atmosphere and generous hospitality of the "House of the Singing Winds."