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CONTENTS

Cover	by Bobby Edwards
Editorial	by the Editor this time
Marionettes	by Cleanthe Carr
St. Valentine	Drawn by Zoltan Halmi
"Harry Kemp is Going to Spain!!!"	Toreadaurie by his friend R. E.
Painting	by Lew Parrish
Vetses	by Helene Mullins and Gretchen Hood
Sand Print	appears to resemble a female nude by Jacobsen
Edgelow, very good this time	
The Story of Greenwich Village	History, by Robt. Edwards
Ancient Map of the Village	drawn by R. E.
Society	by Jane Whosis
Cou-cou Song	adapted by the Editor
Speaking of Books	by H. H.
John Decker Debuts as an Art Critic	
Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Gallant, horrid picture	by Decker
Chatter for Lowbrows	from here and there
Mr. Quill's Guide, with a heading by Hendrick Van Loon	28

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FEBRUARY, 1923

The STORY of GREENWICH VILLAGE

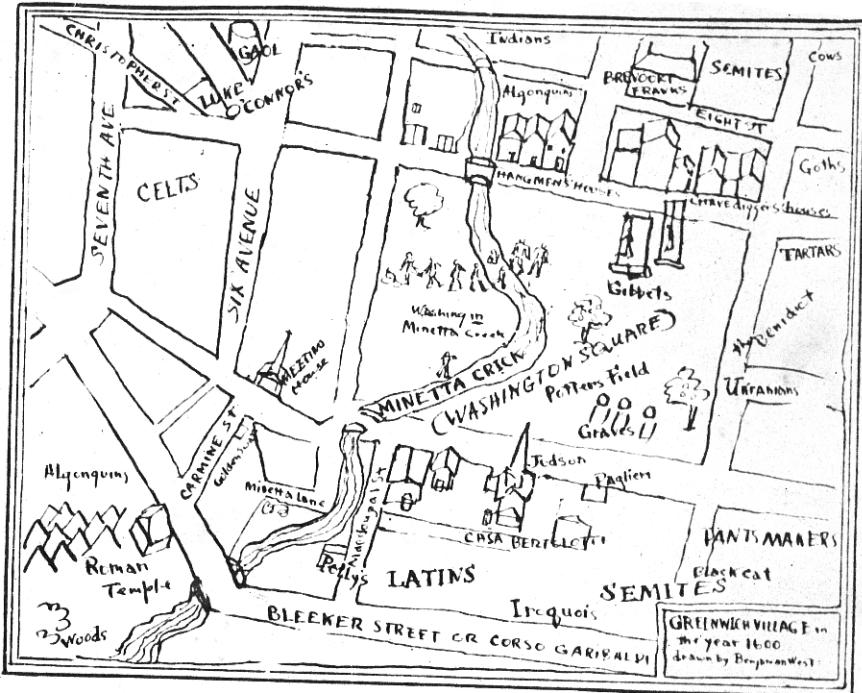
Compiled from most original sources and
written comprehensible to both
morons & other artistic
folk.

By ROBERTVS EDOVARDVS B.P.L.

From the earliest signs of culture to the Golden Age of Art, Literature and Batik—including the lives of Eugene and Rose O'Neill, Nave Ben De Casseres, Lucien Carey, Sinclair Lewis, Harold de Polo, Hendrick Willem Van Loon, Mary Heaton Vorse, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Nancy Boyd, Floyd Dell, Harry Kemp, Max Bodenheim, Thomas Edgclow, Nina Wilcox Putnam, Bobby and Marjorie Jones, Will Zorach, Zoltan Hecht, Tom Phelan, Tommy Hunt, Jig Cook, Piet Mijer, Eddy Ward, Clara Tice, Mark Toby, C. Fornaro, Hugh Ferris, Ethel Plummer, Norman Jacobsen, Mary Carolyn Davies, Wynn Holcomb, Dougie Macdougal, John Sloan, Art Young, Bobby Locher, Ira Remsen, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, Orric Johns, Susan Glaspell, Don Corley, not to mention many of Frank Shay's near celebrities.

EARLY LEGENDS

We have very few authentic writings of the aboriginal dwellers of that part of our commonwealth known as Greenwich Village. So many times has that romantic region been submerged by invasions of wandering tribes, who ruthlessly destroyed the incipient culture of the unfortunates they dispossessed. There is, however, a legend that the early founders of art and literature in America came from all over Manhattan, Boston and New Haven to bathe in the antiseptic waters of Minetta Creek, as a prevention against smallpox. Now, of course, we all know that among



Pre-Bohemian Map of Greenwich Village

the ancients, bathing of any sort was but a pre-sabbatical pursuit, a sort of religious cleansing, a scanty ceremony rather than a thorough sopanescoous immersion as is done now in our degenerate days. But, of course, it is obvious that any kind of washing tended to make our hardy progenitors immune to anything. There is reason to doubt that these early washers did much to found any culture at all. Most scientists insist that washing is the greatest possible deterrent to civilization. Pepe and other Village historians give us very meagre details of this great ablutional pilgrimage. Still, we venture to add that it is one of the greatest ironies of history that this prophylactic invasion should

THE QUILL

FEBRUARY, 1923

have precoured a strictly non-washing bohemian contingent that was to be the beacon light of culture in the new world, so to speak. But this took many years.



Pre-Bohemians Bathing in Minetta Creek

There are other legends to the effect that grave diggers from the potter's field, and hangmen who officiated in the early colonial festivities, having chosen the marshy regions of Washington Square as their seat of activities, built rude huts for themselves, and have, with their descendants, steadfastly resisted invasion from the various herds of barbarians who have since again and again inundated this fertile region.

THE CELTIC INVASION

It was not long after, when Bolivar was marching in triumph on Peruna and Chow Main was driving the Manchus and Samurais out of Cochin China, that the first great Hibernian or Celtic invasion occurred. Now, it is not known whether any art flourished at this time, but the supposition is that the early Celts busted the spots out of any unfortunate who had the outward appearance of being effete. These wild people renamed the Village the Ninth Ward—and it remained the Ninth Ward until the Radicals renamed it "the Village"—but that will be told later. As yet no national solidarity had been developed among the Villagers, so that along with the Indians, the Hollanders, and the

hangmen, they were defeated at every street corner. So it was that these verile Celts, by some stroke of diplomacy or brute force, became the ancestors of all the policemen in New Amsterdam.

CELTIC CULTURE

The Celts, very much as the Teutons, were wont to establish a system of outposts for the spread of their civilization. These were called Sample Rooms, and played a part similar to that of the monasteries in Medieval Europe. Statecraft and the science of boxing were developed in these coteries, all of which was done away with in the great fanatical movement that swept the country later. Now the stage is set for the appearance of the sturdy forerunners in the cause of art and literature.

The Celts were not destined to have everything to themselves forever, for new tribes began to surge about the old ninth ward. Latins came in great hordes to the south of them, and Slavs, Semites and Huns appeared mysteriously in the Eighth Street region. The Latins traded in tropical fruits with the Semites, who fashioned the furs they bartered from the Indians into muffs, capes, etc. It was not an unusual sight in Washington Square to see the Latin trading the banana and the lime with the Semite fur merchant until the Celt drove them out just to show his authority.



PURITAN PERSECUTION

It is probable that things were about in this state when various people versed in the arts and crafts began to seek shelter from puritan persecution. As we all know, most of the then explored continent was under the sway of this stern witch-burning sect. Many writers who refused to write in the style of the Elsie and

THE QUILL

FEBRUARY, 1923

Rollo books had been rudely expurgated from Boston and Lynn. It was considered a Christian duty to boil anybody who painted pictures on the Sabbath, or any pictures of secular subjects. Likewise traveling fiddlers were barbecued by the K. K. K. in Virginia, Maryland and Kentucky. It was with the Franks and Ligurian tribes that these struggling artistic people eventually found shelter. The artistocrats on North Washington Square were too busy playing at the new game "Society" to notice these poor renegades, and the Celts had become absorbed trying to steal the city and Albany in a form of civilization they invented called politics.

ITALY TO THE RESCUE

Now it would not seem probable that the opening of a few cheap Italian restaurants could so alter the surface of American culture, but such was the case. Over a pot of steaming spaghetti, fortified by Chianti, the Great Culture of Greenwich Village was born.

(To be continued)

