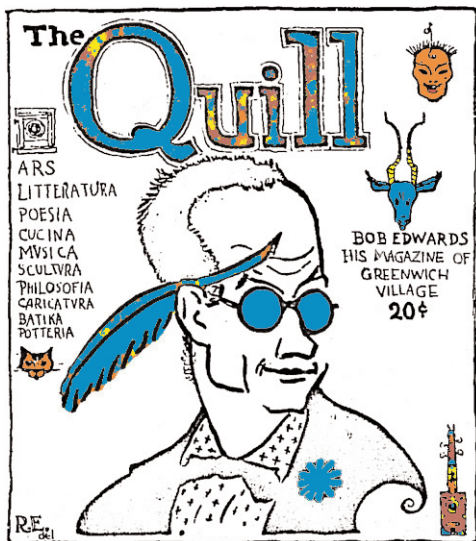


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The **STORY of GREENWICH VILLAGE**
compiled from most original sources and
written comprehensible to both
morons & other artistic
folk.

By ROBERTVS EDOVARDVS B.P.L.

IX

THE MARIONETTE MOVEMENT

Having finished the survey of the Little Theatre Movement, we pass on to the Marionette or Puppet Movement, for which calamity Tony Sarg is chiefly responsible. It seems that though celebrated as one the great English Humorous Illustrators, Mr. Sarg was really a German — very much like our vaunted “Leviathan”. At any rate, Mr. Sarg came to America when the war started. Here he was pestered by editors, demanding a continuous flood of pictures. By a lucky chance, Mr. Sarg concealed himself in the Village — safe from all editorial annoyance — for it is well-known that no editor will accept anything from a Village artist, if he can help it. Somehow Mr. Sarg took to amusing himself making dolls and hitching string to them. The little urchins looked in his back windows and were very much thrilled. Finally one said to him “Aw, Tony, make a show fer us.” And Mr. Sarg, being a very kind soul, promptly made a show for them, according to his great gifts and unlimited ingenuity

Everything would have been all right except certain of the Landed Gentry heard that there was a "Marionette Show" in the Village – perhaps down in the Italian Quarter. Why there should be anything fashionable in a Marionette Show history is unable to comprehend. But Society was obdurate and poor Sarg was dragged out of retirement and forced by some ineffable social pressure to present his show to the rich children and their mothers, who were pleased no doubt to witness a performance where they might talk their fool heads off without being shot at by any live actors.

Meanwhile a bright Italian boy named Remo Bufano watched Sarg's progress with condescending fascination. "After all," thought Bufano, "Sarg is a low brow. Why put on that Hans Anderson stuff when Snitzler and Wedekind remain unpuppeted?" Soon Remo had built a theatre and made the dolls. He condescended to do the Great Italian Epic Orlando Furioso for such dumbbells as could not be expected to grasp Snitzler. Bufano did not know his public as well as the astute Sarg who realized only too keenly that nowhere except in the

poorer districts could anything highbrow have a chance. Bufano innocently thought that the standard of intelligence of the rest of the world was almost comparable with that of the Village. He did not realize that riches and social standing insidiously stultify the soul and the cerebral activity.

So he went his modest way, from back yard to back yard, and was pestered, routed and confiscated by the police, the revenue officers, and such other bullheads as are ever ready to murder any uncus-tomary enterprise they cannot “shake down.” Occasionally he did a private entertainment and finally landed in Greenwich House, a bulwark of respectability that no police detective, garbage inspector, or gunman dares to invade.

Eventually Sarg made puppets for the Movies and Bufano went traveling about in a caravan, producing art for art’s sake to the gaping country folk, who do not resent what they cannot grasp.

Having finished our survey of the drama, big, little and minute, we pass on to the various distinctively “village” arts and crafts that were being perfected during this golden era – namely, “batik,’ dec-

orating tinware and beads and snappy story fabricating.



Bob Edwards
painting ukeleles
in an ancient
Village studio,
before the invasion of the stock-
brokers.

BATIK

To the lay mind “batik” means anything that is done in bizarre colors supposedly in a casual fashion. This idea is quite as erroneous as most of the ideas the sensational press have promulgated concerning this unfortunate locality. On the contrary batik is a distinct method of dyeing cloth in patterns, wherein the whites or lighter shades are cov-

ered with wax to prevent the dye from acting upon such portions of the ill-fated fabric in hand as may suit the fancy and intent of the operator. It does not include stamping, stenciling, sign painting, cubism, tie dyeing, tatting, knitting, rag rug weaving or post impressionism.

This distinctly Village craft—it was in a Village studio that the American process was developed – was introduced by Piet Mijer, a young Hollander, who came from Java shortly before Hendrik Van Loon, another Hollander, sought out the Village as a quiet place wherein to compose his world-famous history of Ninevah and Ireland. Young Mijer watched the natives making a rude Javanese batik with their native machinery and wasted so much time when he was supposed to be planting tea that he was shipped home by the irate foreman of the tea hacienda. There he taught the Hollanders to make batik, and for that was banished to the Village.

In a studio on West Tenth Street Mijer began to make hangings which were greatly admired by the nobility of the Square; especially after the Baron de

Myer and Frank Crowninshield had put the stamp of approval on these fascinating fabrics. Ladies accordingly demanded Mijer's masterpieces and very brutally made them up into gowns. The craving grew to be so furious that Mijer was obliged to employ all of the Dutch and Belgian refugees who happened to be in town at the time. Finally in despair he taught the art to several spinsters, and they taught it to others, and then the art spread like wildfire all over the Village. John Murray Anderson used it in his first Follies, which started the theatrical managers after Mijer. In fact, everyone pestered the unfortunate Mijer, who no doubt longed for the quiet of the Javanese tea plantations, where batik was only a side issue. The demand for batik did not abate until it leaked out that it was a Village product. Mijer wrote a treatise on the "Art of Batik" which is the standard work on the subject. It is for sale at the Washington Square Book Shop, the Village Book Shop, and at any other bookshop, especially Helene Mullins', to say nothing of Shay's Performing Parnassus Wagon.

(to be continued)