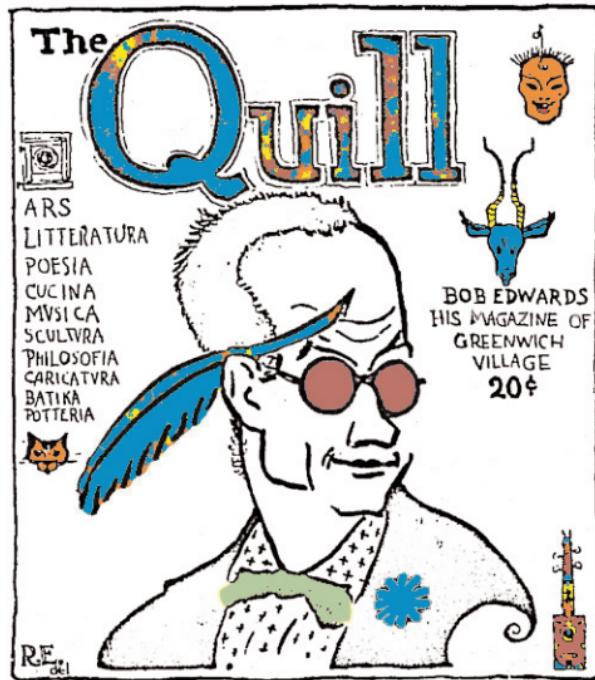


THE QUILL
M A Y , 1 9 2 3



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.



Greenwich Villagers

by Hans Stengel

PART IV

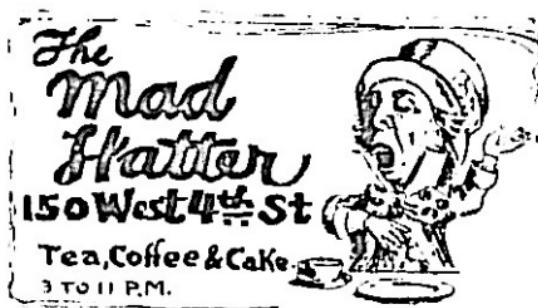
In the last two installments of this history we spoke of the Liberal Club and, perhaps brutally, of the quaintness of some of its members. We did

not say how it slowly disintegrated into a tea room and restaurant called the T.N.T. One Louis Weitzenkorn has written of this sad dissolution. The original members were Lincoln Steffins, Robert Hunter, Charles Edward Russell, John Spargo, J.G. Phelps Stokes, Robt. W. Bruere, Ernest Poole, Arthur Bullard, Wm. English Walling, Franklin H. Giddings, Charlotte Tellar and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. And, as Mr. Weitzenkorn says in the *New York World*: "The history of the world can't be written in detail without mentioning some of these names. Later, when the club had moved to 137 Macdougal Street (still we quote from Weitzenkorn) here came Floyd Dell, whose 'Moon Calf' was only in his heart then; here came Emma Goldman, to talk, not anarchic revolution but Shakespeare! Here came Alexander Berkman with the pallor of a Pennsylvania prison on his cheeks, and John Reed, hot with the fire of young dreams, full of the adventure that ended in his death for the newborn child of the newest liberty — the Soviet Republic. Here came Margaret Sanger when birth control meant jail on Blackwell's Island, teeth knocked loose by the gentle guards and forcible feeding. A row of portraits is in this ghostly gallery. Arthur Caesar, attorney for lost causes, friend of the East Side gangster,

soldier, dramatist, dreamer; Justus Sheffield, lawyer, the man who, with Caesar, defended Frank Tannenbaum and the hobo horde who invaded the Church of St. Alphonsus in the bitter winter of 1915—defended the downiest-and-outest looking gang that ever saw the effigy of Christ on a cross—and defended them in the shining shirts of evening dress! There in the old Liberal Club were Renee Lacoste, the most beautiful woman that ever graced the poker tables of the Village—let Murger write her story—there was Barney Gallant, press agent of Mexican revolutionists; there were the painters John Sloan, Arthur Davies, George Bellows—and there were the nameless girls of Bohemia, who shared the heatless nights, the foodless days when poverty stricken art was the never deserting Herbert Hoover—“

It will be seen from the commentary of this truthful journalist that there was a serious side to the Radicals, masked under much Freudian nonsense. Perhaps it was Freud and perhaps it was the war, and perhaps it was the constant petty persecution of the police that wore out the club and drove away the Radicals. Many went to war. We quote the sympathetic Weitzenkorn again: “The Liberal Club had thirty stars in its service flag. The attor-

ney for lost causes, Arthur Caesar, had won the Croix de Guerre and the Distinguished Service Medal for volunteering with five others to submit to trench fever germs. He lay blinded for six months in a French hospital. His teeth have fallen out. The war has hurt him and he fights no more in the courts for church raiders. 'Tyrants shall neer tread him down again.' Bohemia, when what was left of the thirty came home in 1918 and 1919, had changed. They were serving soft drinks there—or furtively drinking bootleg. The Liberal Club was a dance hall. A mechanical piano sawed off tunes and funny little women who couldn't tell the difference between a brewery calendar and a Burne-Jones were dancing to 'Tell mee, pretty Gypsee.' What women! What phantoms they evoked!"



THE TEA ROOM ERA

We are now reaching the Tea Room Era of the Village, which incepted during the decay of the Radical period. The Jazz period was due to the deterioration of the Tea Room into a dancing parlor.

THE BIRTH OF “THE MAD HATTER”

Quietly, with no publicity, for some reason we have never been able to analyze, Miss Edith Unger opened a place in a cellar which she called “The Mad Hatter” with a supplementary title “Down the Rabbit Hole.” Somehow the embryonic gangsters of the neighborhood failed to regard the “Mad Hatter” with proper solemnity. They came to derive constant joy in shouting “Down the Rabbit Hole” and casting defunct domestic animals down the “Hatter’s” doorway. They also told their mothers that they saw ladies smoking, which had direct historical bearing on the persecution of the Village. For the first weeks Miss Unger was not only visited by stray missiles of deceased fauna, but also every manner of petty inspector from every city department, including the Department of Parks, came snooping around, inventing most absurd cavil. Miss Unger, in despair, sold the “Hatter” to Miss

Jimmy Criswell, who was of sterner stuff. She had the gift of making even the chief of police seem hopelessly beside himself. The "Hatter" prospered immediately under a patronage of the saner people of the Village, to the exclusion of the intelligentsia intellectuals and the gas inspectors.



Then other Tea Rooms started. Grace's Garret, Romany Marie's, the Aladdin Shop, and the Pirates' Den, which did not boast of a band until later.

It is proper to ask now, as many times the police and the Ninth-warders have asked: "Why is a Tea Room?" The answer, divested of all mystery and charm, is surprisingly simple. Yet the most complicated reasons for the existence of this popular institution are invariable fabricated by the police and other pseudo-scientific investigators of vice and crime. In the first place, Tea Rooms do *not* exist to sell hooch or coke, neither are they primarily depots

wherein are consumed illicit beverages. Chess, bridge and idiot's delight are the only semi-vicious manifestations of Tea Rooms. Nor is the popularity of Tea Rooms merely due to romance, glamour and desire for tea. There is in this congested city a need for a place of recreation for the young that will be cheap, quiet and not require muscular or mental effort. The girl of a New York apartment has no place to entertain her beau. Papa or the other sisters have the parlor to themselves, or little Willy has been put to bed in the dining room, so she and her steady are forced to seek privacy out in the cold world. The Tea Room offers a place where the intimate confidences of youth can be harmlessly exchanged in accordance with the laws of nature and civilization.



Tea Room in operation

drawn by R. Edwards

Now for such as are active enough to enjoy dancing many combinations of Tea Room and Dance Hall were founded, but with a certain romantic distinction that is lacking in the commercial dance hall. Probably the electric piano of the Liberal Club gave Charley Reed the idea of permitting a phonograph to operate in "The Purple Pup," the first of the Dance-and-Tea Rooms. Thereafter terpsichore ran riot all over on Sheridan Square. Then the Village became "the Coney Island of the Soul." Then Don Dickerman introduced the Pirate Jazz Band into his hitherto quiet emporium. That was the last straw.

The long-suffering Celts of the Ninth Ward whose little children had beheld ladies smoking in cellars of iniquity sought action from the police. Not being able to sleep before 11 P.M., one cannot blame them. Some nameless gang of reformers burnt up the "Vermillion Hound" and the "Pirates Den," perhaps because the pugnacious Dickerman had handled some of its members ruthlessly. There had been a little friction before, to be sure, and some young hero had bounced a paving block on the bean of said Dickerman in a most offensive manner, because Dickerman wore earrings, which was taken as a sign of effeminacy, also the coffin Dickerman

used as a sign was deemed sacrilegious by the clergy. It is only lately that the feud has been settled by an Inspector of Police, presumably a friend of the underworld, pinching the ancient cutlasses employed by the romantic Dickerman, on the ground that they were a violation of the Sullivan law. Which, we understand, was a statue passed to give the police the power of "framing" crooks and Bohemians by planting guns on them. After the underworld crusaders had set fire to the "Pirates' Den" the police completed its destruction. They also trumped up outrageous charges against other tea-shop keepers, which were all dismissed in court—but only after a series of indefinite postponements had busted up the business of the unfortunates who had dared brave the bigotry of those dark times. Even before the persecution of Dickerman two loathsome detectives had arrested the "Purple Pup" on what was proven in court to be the most untrustworthy and empirical observation of professional fabricators of evidence.

Meanwhile Pete Mijer was experimenting with Batik, a process of dyeing he had learned in Java. Batik is not a cult, a mental disorder, or an obliquity of gender, as is thought by the general public. It is merely a delightful craft, and perfectly

healthy. Lin and Joan had opened the "Jo-Lin Shop," where the "Pepper Pot" is now. They began to decorate objects of wood and tin. Moritz Jagendorf discovered Freud—from whom God spare us—all of which will be touched upon in our next issue.

(to be continued)



Maria Samson

by Z. Halmi