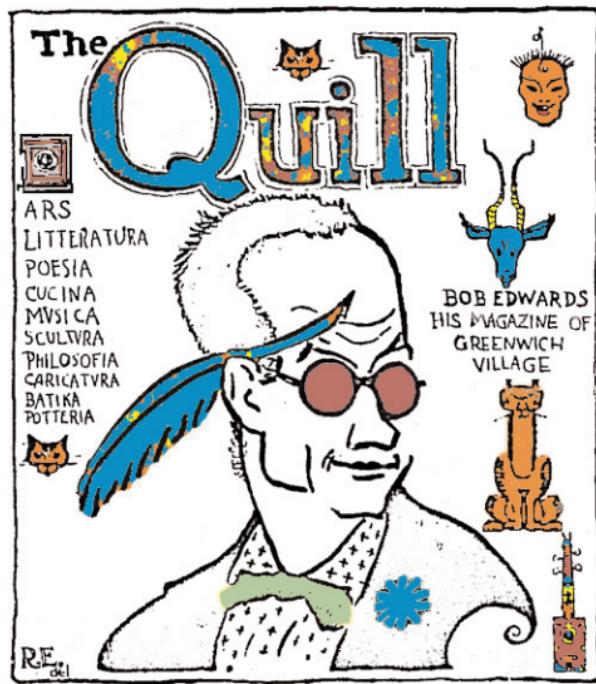


THE QUILL  
June, 1924

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.

**Robert Edwards**

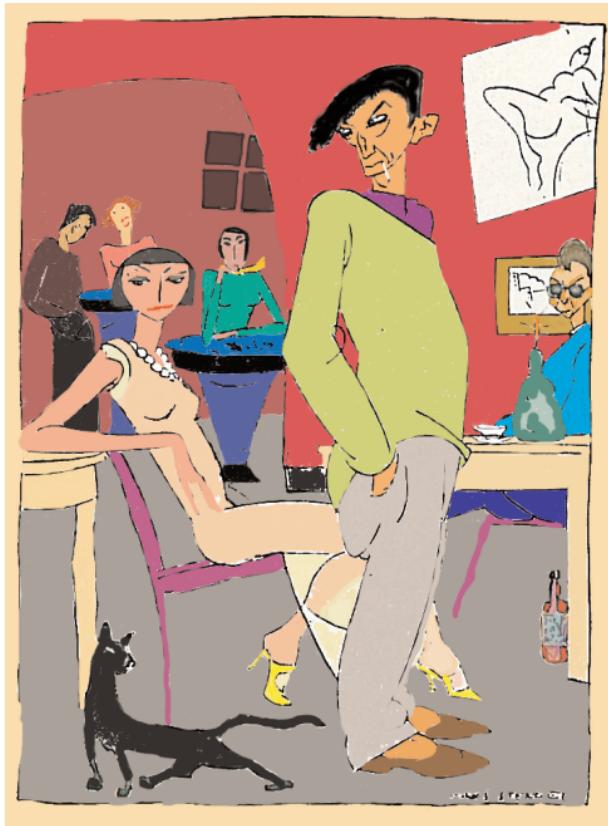
**The  
Story of  
Greenwich  
Village**

**Part XVII**

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There has been much talk about the moral and social status of the Village of late, as if the two had anything to do with each other. Though what that ineffable quality is, on which hangs social integrity, History has never been able to determine.



She "It's no use thinking so hard the only unconventional thing left for us is to get married."                   Hans Stengel

## EARLY SOCIETY LIFE

In the early or legendary times Greenwich Village was eminently respectable. It was not fashionable until later (for fashion is not synonymous with respectability) when the north side of Washington Square was built up on the old Whosis farm, now a part of Sailors' Smug Harbor.

However, it is written in the early papyri that the residents of Minetta Lane were very much incensed at the projected Potter's Field that was being installed in Washington Square - which was not named as yet, as Washington had not been born, nor had his great name been smirched by the scoundrels in Congress. It would seem that the early residents of the Minettas, even at the prehistoric date, were cherishing social ambitions. Of course, a Potter's Field is a thing to be discouraged, as it invariably attracts medical students.

Washington Square did not become socially effulgent until public executions, whippings and hangings were staged there for the benefit of General Lafayette and other genteel foreigners who happened to be in the land of liberty at that time.

These Neronian exhibitions, though they were hardly reputable, proved to be very smart. Society came in flocks, the whole north side of the Square was built into houses for the very extra elite, and the taverns were within easy reach on the back streets—streets that were apparently laid out by wayfarers whose sense of orientation had been confused by strong drink.

TOM PAINÉ

It was Tom Paine “the infidel” who gave the Village its first black eye. Of course, Paine was not an infidel any more than Edgar Allan Poe was a drunkard, but the respectable Dutch Bourgeoises took a dislike to Paine because he was always fighting for some cause or talking some jargon of freedom they did not understand, and the socially elegant did not take him up because he would not stand for it. Paine definitely connoted the Village with freedom, and as we all know, freedom is an element in direct contradistinction to respectability. Besides, freedom is the world’s greatest inducement to greed, envy, and malice.

Tom Paine's life was hell in the Village, and many a good man's life has been so maligned for living below Fourteenth Street. Noble souls have suffered from the acrimonious comment and vile imaginings of a dumb and sordid world of vicious respectability. Even to this day there is an altruistic minstrel, who strums his lays for no other gain than the lofty feeling that he is amusing the weary and heavy-laden. Do they reward him with their loyalty? History will tell the world they do not.

Of course the Radicals, as soon as they were kicked out of the French Revolution, or wherever they came from, had to go to the Village. They fancied themselves Paines, Aaron Burrs, John Browns, or they would have - had not their ignorance precluded.



The Solar and Planetary system by Charley Smith.

Now directly after Stanford White built the Washington Arch, to celebrate Washington's election to the presidency, nobody ever thought of being interesting, socialistic or boring. But in a few years it was considered smart to be radical — that is, in the parlor fashion. The curse of bridge and Volstead drunkenness had not come upon society then. It was just before the great war the Village was really smart. Then New York's most inner inmost came nightly to mingle with the Bohemians at the Old Black Cat with tonsorial artists, men modistes, advertising writers, manicurists, Armenian rug merchants, inferior pianists, and other commercial musicians.

But alas! it did not last long. Society soon tired of the simple delights of the Village. Prohibition brought drinking into the home, making the saloon unnecessary. The glamour that was shed on the old Village by the sheen of the Ritzy motors of Mammon soon failed to bedazzle the Bourgeoisie into toleration. They got their hammers out again. Besides, the whole country had gone fanatical. The Puritan idea had festered, and produced a sort of

spiritual gangrene through evangelical religion. Apparently the type of mind that brought on prohibition was being catered to by the politicians, also the great newspapers began to appeal to the same brutal Bourgeois world. Love, kindness and Christianity perished for a time—automatically the term “Villager” became an aspersion.

#### PRESENT CONDITIONS

At the present writing the social status of the Village is in the ascendant, mainly because of the high rents. The public suspects that there are no artists or writers left, and that the magnificent new duplex studios are only rented by the rich for entertaining and dubious reasons. Of course, Respectability does not worry about any sins except that of producing arts and letters, and going about like saints and martyrs in tatters—or, as the immortal James Stephens says, in the “whiskered breeches of the bard.”

*(To be continued at all costs)*