

He genuflected before the altar and knelt down at the altar rail. Slowly crossing himself he bowed his head and silently prayed.

Bohemians: from the Four Corners of the Land

Maurice F. Kenny

GREENWICH VILLAGE is the major home of the American Bohemian. Though he may be found in certain sections of New Orleans, Chicago, and San Francisco, his main and rightful capitol is New York City. There he may pursue the life that he sees fit to follow. There he may walk the streets bearded and shabby with his easel and canvas, or his volume of Amy Lowell's verse beneath his arm. He may drink himself into obliteration, or shout his curses to and for the world in Washington Square.

I do not believe there is another section in New York City that is so mysteriously fascinating, colorful, or tragic as the Village. Not even Harlem with its brooding atmosphere, honky-tonks, and slums, nor Chinatown with its oriental hues and smells equals the dramatic Village for suspense, laughter, and tragedy.

The Village, in its physical structure of pavements and buildings, is a bit of Europe in America seemingly transplanted almost house by house and street by street. There are little passageways, like those of Paris, far too small for an auto to pass through safely. A tourist may find shops filled with wrought-iron objects of art; windows crowded with copper and brass jewelry; dozens of dusty book stores; dismal and exciting bars, and cafes serving almost any type of cuisine he may care to sample.

The people of this settlement are greatly different from any other American group. For the most part they are the neglected sons and daughters of the rich. Some of these people have been disinherited by their conventional parents for giving way to liberal ideas and unorthodox conceptions of religion. They are artists who are as sincere in their love and respect for their chosen fields and philosophies as a minister for his creed and congregation, or a mother for her home and family. Few of these people condescend to work, and consequently few have money to spend. Seldom are they sufficiently fed, clothed, or housed. Many of these artists are drunkards, and a smattering are dope addicts . . . but all are staunch believers that they are the masters of art, and should be endowed with both fame and fortune. It is a mere handful that attain the royal heights of their profession. Perhaps one reason for this is that these people are

inclined to be lazy, not shiftless (as some of us might like to think), but just always too busy conversing to do much constructive work in any field of endeavor. They are always about to settle down to a job, to write the great play, or to compose a symphony to put Bach to shame. However, the only works that are accomplished are the verbal inspirations, anticipations, and ideas that are split upon the tables of the many gloomy bars.

To the Bohemian, life is often not worth living, and a minority find themselves turning on the gas jets in their cold attic rooms, or dramatically hurling their ragged and pitiful bodies from a high window to the grey street below.

A question arises . . . in what way are the Bohemians different from, say, the inhabitants of Peoria? They differ in the fact that the greater number of the people in Peoria, or any other American town, seek a higher standard of living . . . "chickens in the pots," furs for the ladies of the houses, new cars each year for the masters, and college educations for their offspring. The people of Greenwich Village seek something far greater and finer than material gains . . . they seek life, love and the true God of man. These people search for a life (good or bad) to write and paint of. Even though they may come to the belief that there is a great deal of evil and suffering in this "fad-crazed world," they do not care for wealth and power with which they may fight their difficult way through life. Though they may wish for immortality, they are content with a candle to burn, and a glass of wine to drink.

I cannot say that all Bohemians are the best of citizens, or that their theories should be devotedly followed, for if I should, my statement might prove false, and would offend men who believe their way of life to be the right . . . and what method is *the* right method? There is too much liquor, dope, and lewdness; too much filth, shabbiness, and laziness in this settlement to make *it* the ideal life. But perhaps, there is too much striving for material gains, and not enough sincerity in the thoughts and lives of those other strictly conventional men, for me to believe their method is *the* ideal.

Thank God!

Shirley Jo Waltz

CAROL stumbled out of the house, the car keys gripped fiercely in one hand, almost blinded by tears. As she opened the door and scooted in under the wheel, she felt almost like a person living in another world or a bad dream, or perhaps this was the way one felt when in the throes of death. Numbly, almost mechanically, she