

# FEMINIST INHABITANTS OF A FEMINIST VILLAGE

Even as Greenwich Village Isn't an Ordinary Community, So Are Its Women Inhabitants Unusual Persons—We Introduce the Village Dressmaker, "Sally" White, Who Tells of Its Feminine Camaraderie.



*"Plays Are Given as Often as Any Playwright in Our Midst Wants to Present Anything, and He Can Coach, Produce, and Even Designs His Own Scenery."*

leading distinctive lives, distinct individuals, yet bound by a beautiful, unreluctant camaraderie?

Many are the women unknown to fame who enjoy the privileges and

trying to find myself. I have certain ideals and I will not part with them. Ideals should be a part of every little task. They are not separate and discouraging clouds. You will find that all the members of this little community agree with me in this."

Greenwich Village, Miss White explained, is a little magic spot, to which kindred souls are inevitably attracted. To call it the Latin Quarter of New York would be to give a slightly wrong impression. There is less of the joyously starving pupil, more of the ear-

others who need it.

"Many people of accepted fame are dwellers or frequenters of this community, both men and women. Actors, poets, writers, painters, a few musicians, educators. All are socialists, some are philosophic anarchists and all are feminists. Why, I am even a feminist dressmaker. I have made dressing gowns and studio frocks for men. They liked them, too. There is nothing here that a man does that a woman does not do.

"But it is the atmosphere of the

on the other hand, if he wishes to be alone no one bothers him.

"Plays are given as often as any playwright in our midst wants to present anything, and he can coach, stage, produce and even design his own scenery for it. Audiences are willing, attentive and encouraging. If he wishes his books published, a publisher is right in our midst.

Everybody Welcome: No Questions Asked.

"New inhabitants are always wel-

no one questions. He just moves up town, and that is the end of it.

Villagers Indifferent to Convention.

"Unconventional? Yes, I suppose so. But that is not because we hate conventions. We are only indifferent to them. We have standards of our own, very high ones, too, but they do not always coincide with those of others. You have noticed that we all seem young? We are not. We only look young, and that is because our enthusiasms and our strong interests keep us young. I am thirty-eight," said



*"Can You Imagine a Person Leaving His Key on a Nail Outside His Door in This City?" That Happens in Greenwich Village.*

THE VILLAGE Dressmaker is not an ordinary dressmaker; neither, on the other hand, is her village an ordinary one, nor are the people quite usual beings. She is a dramatic dressmaker. And Greenwich Village is right in the middle of New York City, somewhere west of Washington Square. And the village people are free souls, square pegs—aye failures, strivers, thinkers, idealists.

the costume that is designed for her just how the expert has read her character.

Dressmaking a Fascinating Game.

"It is a fascinating game. And it is so human. When people come to me for dresses I dramatize their personalities, and they are really astonished with the results. Women have often said to me, 'I have never felt so at home in a dress; it fits me as if it had always been there.'

"Clothes should fit psychically as well as materially. I won't work for anybody who wishes merely conventional clothes. Not that I try to be different or unfashionable, but the person, her character, her occupation and her style should be potent modifiers of reigning fashions.

"Clothes are inefficiently made, too. It takes the busy professional woman an unnecessarily long time to close her dress, and there are many other inconveniences which I have deplored—with others—and have done away with. I have found so many interesting ways of making quick fastenings. Detachable and washable linings, detachable founcies and detachable buttons to underdresses such as are now popular, are really a boon to the woman who has not many clothes and to the woman whose time is valuable."

Seeking Soul Expression.

This dressmaker's name is Miss Sarah White—"Sally" White, in the vernacular of the village—and being not an ordinary dressmaker, she hasn't the ordinary reason of making her living to account for her present occupation. "Sally" White is seeking a perfect expression for her soul, and this is the direction of her latest experiment. And she has come back to an old-fashioned occupation because women are going back to the humbler professions and infusing into them a certain amount of art. I am a feminist, but I have turned to dressmaking as a profession because there is a great human equation to be worked out in it.

Dramatizes Herself.

It is to her dramatic instinct that Miss White attributes her power of getting so much fun out of life. She is now dramatizing people's clothes. She always dramatizes herself. "That seems to me to be a terribly necessary faculty. I have always dramatized myself. Whatever occupation I have entered, and," she smiled, "they are many, I have worked out the character, just as an actor works out his roles, first imagining and then crystallizing his conceptions.

"The mental attitude with which one works at a task is a tremendous factor for success or failure. Whether you are to be a shopkeeper, an artist, a cook, or a plumber, you can strive for a certain ideal. You can dramatize your part, and you will find that it works pleasantly and efficiently. Galsworthy was absolutely right when he said, 'Character is destiny,' but you can even make your character."

New Women Turn to Old Occupations.

"There are other women in this village who have turned to the 'old-fashioned' interests because they find them congenial. We have more than one need, professional housekeeper and interior decorator—what is that but caring for the home? Home industries are merely put on a professional basis, and people find that they can work at them more interestingly and artistically."

Proud of Her Title.

Miss White is very proud of her title "Greenwich Village Dressmaker," because she feels that she is filling a definite need, in the same way that some of the other feminist home workers of the village feel that they are filling a definite want. But under the cover of dressmaker she fills a triple role, and the same, she avers, should be the attempt of every wise dressmaker in the world. She is fortune teller, she is efficiency aid and she is the technical provider of raiment.

Miss White's Evolution.

Miss White has worked in many spheres before she entered that of the village dressmaker. She has been very active in social work, teaching dancing in settlement houses and investigating by personal labor the conditions of the shoppings during the rush of Christmas shopping under orders of the Consumers' League.

Not very long ago she was professional housekeeper at one of the popular vacation hotels, but that was too technical for her creative mind.

She was for time an interior decorator. "Mine," she said, "is the tragedy of the unspecialized woman. I am just

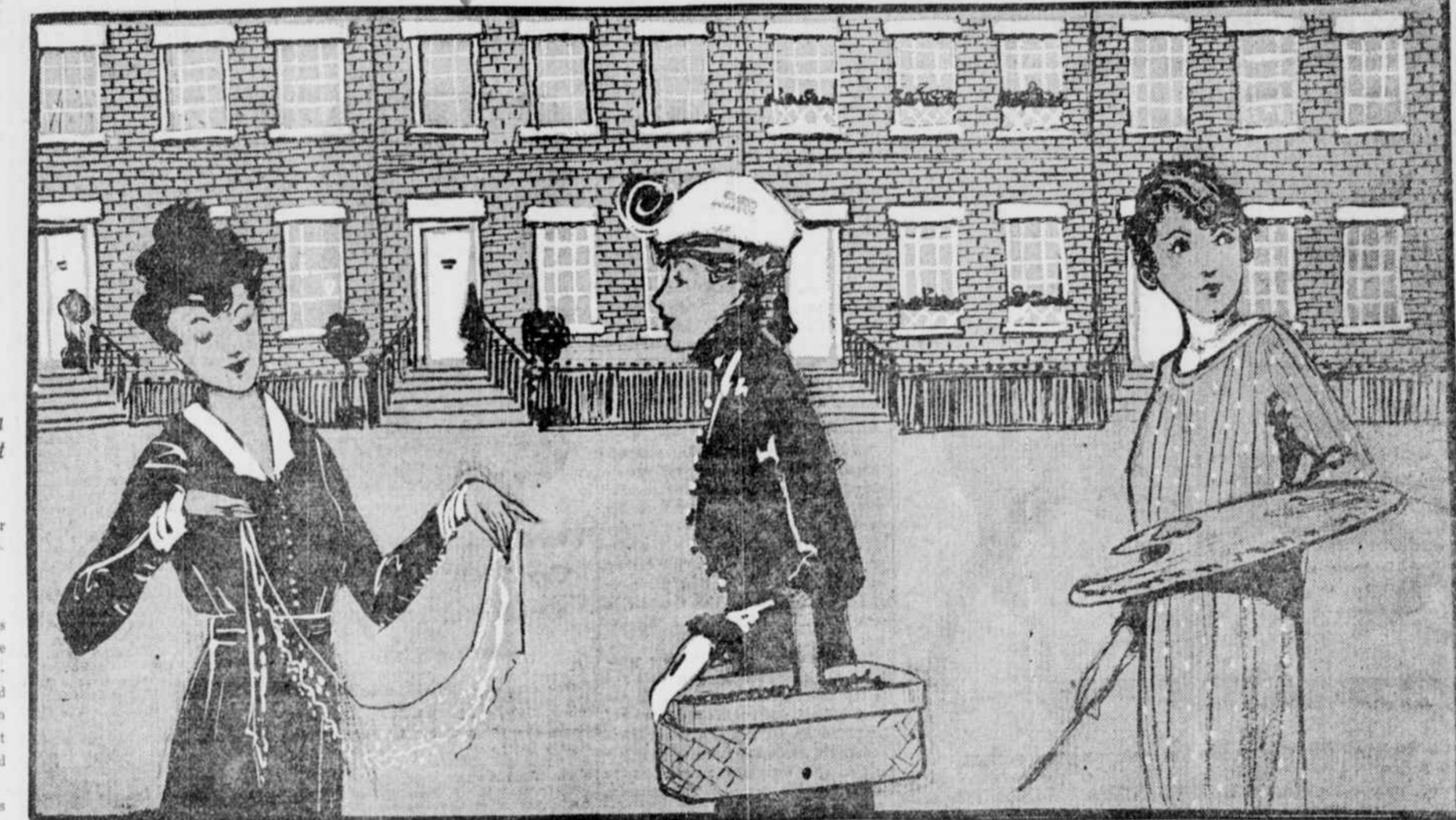
next worker. It is less a gathering of artists than it is a group of social thinkers.

Greenwich Village the Wonder Spot.

"People who live here, surrounded by the business section, by the park, by the oldest aristocracy of New York, are those who are willing to and do starve for an ideal. Many failures, in the common sense, are living here. Restless entities, dissatisfied, bitter and hopeful, gather almost unconsciously about this centre, sure of finding helpful and encouraging listeners and willing to extend sympathy and support to

place that is so charming. Can you imagine a person leaving his key on a nail outside his door in this city? That happens here. Or they don't bother to have keys at all; they just leave their doors unwatched for their friends to come in.

"When one friend is in need all the others pitch in and help, and when luck comes the unfortunate's way he will turn round and help, too. Five or six of them band together and hire a community housekeeper to take care of their homes. One is always certain of having good friends at his call, but



THE DRESSMAKER—THE PROFESSIONAL HOUSEKEEPER—THE INTERIOR DECORATOR Since Most of Its Women Inhabitants Are Artists, Writers, Social Workers, Professional and Business Women, Greenwich Village Carries on Most of Its Home-making Occupations in the Manner of the Future.

come. No questions are asked. They pass on their own merits. The village is absolutely democratic. Whether he or she is a musician in a café, a stenographer or a figure in the economic world, they are equally pleasing. But if they are not sincere they drop away. No poseur, pure and simple, has ever remained in our midst. Each person's aims are entirely distinct from those of the others, but they are all sincere in their aim to work out their own destinies in the way they choose, not the way the world chooses. If any one decides to part company with the rest,

Miss White proudly, and she really looked not a minute more than thirty, slender, small, gracefully poised before the mirror and watching interestedly the work of her employes, who soon are to work on a co-operative basis with her. Her gown is loose and her hair knotted simply at the nape of her neck. She is vivacious and full of live interest, the epitome of youth.

Greenwich Village is really a wonderful spot. Did you ever hear of such a spot, surrounded by the direst poverty and the most aristocratic wealth, in the midst of everything, with people

and other officials, a military organization of women was formed as a defence in case of the invasion of England.

If these movements grow and find favor among our rulers, we may look forward to a time when married women workers will be granted leave of absence with pay in order to perform their military duties, but will be instantly dismissed for asking leave of absence without pay in order to bear a child.

No one, however, need worry over the permanence of such a situation—after a few years there won't be any soldiers to drill.

THE LUXURY OF BEING SUPPORTED.

THE most significant fact to consider in asking whether the protection of women demands the dismissal of all mothers from their jobs is that pointed out by Miss Mary Snow, of the Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations. She says that 55 per cent of adult males in this country earn less than \$500 a year.

## ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By ALICE DUER MILLER.

A Lady's Option.

HER old love in tears and silence had been building her a palace. Ringed by moats, flanked by flowers, he had set it on a hill. "Here," he said, "will come no whisper of the world's alarm and malice. In these granite walls imprisoned, I will keep you safe from ill."

As he spoke upon the highway there came riding by a stranger. For an instant on her features he a fleeting glance bestowed. Then he said: "My heart is fickle and the world is full of danger," and he offered her his stirrup, and he pointed down the road.

JUSTICE AS HE IS ADMINISTERED.

THE Roman father had power of life and death over his children. In Rockland County this appears to have extended to sons-in-law. Women are too sympathetic, we have sometimes been told, to sit on juries.

Sympathetic to whom? The criminal, or the victim? Ours, however, is not the only country where intoxication is admitted as an excuse for crime.

In England, at the Kent Assizes for November, a man charged before Mr. Justice Lawrence, with indecent assault on a little girl of seven pleaded guilty and gave intoxication as an excuse for his conduct. He was let off with a sentence of twelve months.

In the same court, before the same justice, a man charged with forging a check of 22 pounds 18 shillings was sentenced to five years' penal servitude; a crime evidently five times more serious than the preceding one.

NOT FIGHTING FAIR.

TURKISH women, it is reported, have been engaged in an anti-war demonstration. When a military guard was sent to stop their rioting, the women tore their garments and threw them away; thus compelling the guard, under Islamic law, to retire.

Question, Who was using force?

PUBLIC SERVICE.

AN AUXILIARY force of women has now been added to the London police, as a result of conditions incidental to the war. A few days ago, under the indorsement of the Lord Mayor of London

and other officials, a military organization of women was formed as a defence in case of the invasion of England.

If these movements grow and find favor among our rulers, we may look forward to a time when married women workers will be granted leave of absence with pay in order to perform their military duties, but will be instantly dismissed for asking leave of absence without pay in order to bear a child.

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THEIR PLACE NOT ALWAYS THE HOME, AFTER ALL.

CONGRESSMAN Bartholdt, of Missouri, in opposing prohibition in the House on Tuesday, said that he knew many saloons "where a gentleman might take his wife and daughters."

But with such a united family, why leave home?

ON THE HOBSON AMENDMENT.

(With apologies to James Whitcomb Riley.)

A GREAT big Gobbler in the House, the blackest ever made, It's after all the Congressmen, and, oh, ain't they afraid! It seeks 'em in the offices, it seeks 'em at recess, It seeks 'em in committee rooms, and everywhere, I guess. They're skeered to answer 'aye' and even worse to answer 'nay.' It isn't safe for 'em to die, or pair, or stay away. Oh, pity our poor Congressmen, they need it without doubt, Prohibition's going to get 'em

Et they Don't Watch Out!

## Recreation for Stenographers

How a Corporation Executive Pointed the Way to Physical Well-Being for His Woman Employes.

A STENOGRAPHER, who combined the ability and efficiency of the twentieth century business woman with the frail delicacy of the nineteenth century girl, asked her employer's advice regarding courses of instruction in the evening—which, in his opinion, would be of most value to her? This is the way he solved the problem:

He told her that after spending the day in the office engaged in mental activities under high nervous tension she was in greater need of physical activities possessing recreative features than of additional mental activities. He pointed out that she had gained by experience a more comprehensive grasp of the subjects usually taught to stenographers than she could ever expect to obtain from theoretical evening courses in business English, secretarial duties and the like.

His suggestion that she join a class in folk dancing, which would give her the physical exercise and recreation which would be of greater benefit to her, appealed to her sound business judgment. Inquiry of the colleges and universities of the city revealed the fact that none of them offered late afternoon or evening classes in folk dancing. Their classes in folk dancing, intended primarily for college students and public school teachers, were held in the early afternoon, with a view to discouraging the registration of office workers, for whom these institutions believed they lacked the necessary facilities.

Considered Improper Use of Corporation Rooms.

Unable to find the necessary facilities, the executive to whom the stenographer had appealed turned his attention to their creation. His suggestion that the corporation with which he was connected permit the stenographers to organize a dancing class in the evening in one of the large rooms of the corporation was met by the objection that such a use of the corporation's property might be considered an improper use. His suggestion that a dance expert be employed to teach the stenographers was discouraged on the ground

that it would savor of commercialism. Undeterred by these setbacks, he continued his efforts, meeting each objection as it was presented, until he succeeded in organizing for the stenographers the educational and recreative activities which he believed beneficial for their personal welfare and their business efficiency.

Through the co-operation of the professor of physical education of a large university in the city he was able to secure the services of a student who offered to teach this class for the experience which it gave her. Through the co-operation of the secretary of the city's recreation commission he secured the use of one of the city's gymnasiums one hour a week in the evening at a time when it was not in use.

An organization meeting was called and invitations were sent to a few of the stenographers in the employ of the corporation. The night selected for this meeting proved to be an extremely stormy one, with rain, sleet and a high wind. The gymnasium was situated about a quarter of a mile from the office, in a section of the city which had a bare reputation. Under these circumstances the organizer when he trudged his way to the gymnasium at the end of a heavy day's work feared that very few would attend the meeting.

He was agreeably surprised to find that almost all of those to whom invitations had been sent were present and eager to organize the class. A president was elected. It was decided to hold weekly meetings on Monday evenings from 5:30 to 6:30 o'clock. The class decided to engage the services of a pianist at \$1 an evening, and to contribute equally to pay the young woman selected for this purpose. A treasurer was elected to attend to these details.

Extended Invitations to Other Stenographers.

It was decided to extend invitations to the other stenographers employed in the same building to join the class, with a view to extending the benefits of the class to them, and incidentally reducing the per capita cost. Half of each hour, it was decided, would be devoted to folk dancing, and half an hour to the latest social dances.

The ability and tact of the teacher won the admiration of the stenographers. The complete freedom and relaxation which they enjoyed during this hour was a novel and most pleasurable sensation. The return of a healthy, ruddy color to cheeks which had been pale from confinement in the office and the transformation of the careworn faces of the business women into fresh, radiant, buoyant girlish expressions were ample compensation to the organizer.