

pity. We are conscious of no deficiencies in our intellectual existence. If other parts of the country choose to discuss other subjects, amuse themselves with other recreations, that is their right, which is no less and no more clear than is ours to do and think as we please. Mr. Sinclair Lewis wrote a book about us once. We wore out seven copies of it in the public library and our general verdict was that he may have tried to be fair, but he wasn't, at least to the Robertsville of today. We don't feel that we need reforming; but any of our girls coming home from college with Mrs. Carol Kennicott's ideas for improving things, wouldn't need to be lonely. After all, most of the young married women in town have also been to college and would agree with her—that is, within reason.

It is worth remembering, we think, that never in the history of the world did small towns exist in any large numbers with such a high general level of education and behavior as in the Robertsvilles of the Middle West today. If our material progress has somewhat outrun our development in artistic and "cultural" lines, after all we feel it is better that way than with the reverse condition. Also, every one of the traits Mr. Sinclair Lewis pokes fun at exists just as much among ninety-five percent of the inhabitants of every big city as it

does out here among the cattle, corn and wheat. The New Yorkers go to the same bad movies, read the same trashy books, play the same bridge as ourselves. We can't see that they have any right to laugh at Robertsville; nor has anybody else. We are honest, hard-working, sober: if these are qualities which are to be despised then the world, we think, must certainly be coming to an end. We say grace at our tables three times a day without shame; we pay our debts when the government follows a policy which permits us to do so; and we give our children the best education our prairie colleges know anything about. It's pleasant, I agree, for you to hop on the 4:33 train and slide away from the little town, with its jealousies (certainly we have some), its gossip (which is terrific, I admit, being the natural product of active minds with too little to do), its daily round of the same few short streets, the same familiar faces, the same jokes in the barber shop, the same smiling stupid amiability at the church supper. But it is fair to remember that if you had been born here, almost certainly you would be here yet, making the best of it. Also, that if the rest of us didn't stay here the pickings would soon be very poor in those big Chicago restaurants you are so proud of. Goodbye. Come again.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

The Creative Type

LANGUAGE grows and stretches. A war mints new words, an invention broadcasts a whole new vocabulary, and there is always the rising—and sometimes the enrichment—from yeasty slang. But there exists a deep unmined wealth of words undreamed of in the philologies of even the very latest dictionary editions.

This source was divulged to us by two animated typewriters, named Errata and Frenzy, for cause. Sturdy little machines, these, but sly. Under the meek guise of obedience they tapped out our Serious Articles, but all the while, with their tongues in their cheeks, they were Living Their Own Lives. And bit by bit they forced our attention upon their potentialities, and upon those of their kind.

Many words have flowed over the keys since two such strong creative instincts have been found as in the slight vessels of these portables. To the new forms of literature, whether to the stutterings of verse or the remorseless dots and dashes of Georgian prose, can now be added vivid novel contortions of words, done from the subconscious, with the sure sharp clarity of type. Take *slient* for example. How much quieter, smoother, and really

hushed it is than *silent*. And consider the subtlety of that word *twince*,—double the value of *twinge*, because you see the victim wince from the original twinge. And compare the distress of *toruble* with the paleness of *trouble*.

The added strength that this letterary manipulation contributes can be seen in the opening passages of *The Melodrama of the Burned Document*: Fointing to the dotted line the famiky lawyer mubled, "It must be singed, it must be singed!" "Ounce more do I refuse" snouts pack the herwo. "Foru times have I said No,—foru, foru! On my scared oath my psat is slean. I am no Socialiet, no Sovist ones my sowl!" The Heroin tares her slik hair with gree, that this should be her happy potion. "Thnaks, drery," she clies hystrecially, "thnaks vrey mush!"

Sometimes this rare gift is more subtly displayed by the change of a single word in an episode. In a modern fling of Frenzy's called *White Buffaloes*, she describes a *Morewegian* woman of sixty dreading old age, standing on the hills at spring-tide, watching science rise with the sun, offering her the *gland* tidings of renewed youth. And conversely the carefully preserved Beau Brummel, proud of his disguise of youth as of his matchless wit is

shocked and grieved to hear in her flattering tone, "How wonderful is your *conservation!*"

As you have seen, their creative gifts were not without a dash of malice; yet we bore patiently with them, even when Errata spoiled a passionate love scene by setting it in a flagrant evening, and making the hero call the heroine "My previous noel!" instead of the far safer "My precious one!"

Graver still was Frenzy's attack of sedition, for, for a long time she insisted, whatever the subject, on writing it *The Untied States*. Errata aided and abetted her with the *Spureme Court*. And then they got entangled in International Complications. The *Swiss* Frenzy libelled *Swill*, while Errata called the Turk *Truk!*

But our patience broke when, writing staidly on immigration in Vienna, Frenzy got a Freudian streak and tapped it out "the *sexpression* of the government officials in the *Blakans*." That was too much. Something must be done. She had always written it *Blakans*, and of that vividness we approved. But *Sexpression*—no! That was going too far. She must be removed at once from the shadow of Freud. Yet trying to fathom and satisfy her unfulfilled desire, we bought her a new blue and red ribbon, and took her gliding down into the Balkans on the next Danube steamer. It was not enough. Both she and Errata succeeded at last in conveying to us that what they wanted was to Make their Contribution to the Anglo-American language.

"And what's mroe," they demanded stuvvornly, "we want Slef-Determination, and we wnat to be Rocegnized!"

VIOLA PARADISE AND HELEN CAMPBELL.

Italian, Russian

La Locandiera, by Goldoni. Jolson's Theatre. November 21, 1923.

The Brothers Karamazoff, Scenès from the novel by Dostoievsky. Jolson's Theatre. November 19, 1923.

GOLDONI'S *Locandiera* began with the Moscow Art Theatre in a scene that was charmingly painted, the table, the walls, the upper gallery, the doors. A charming place but, considering the nature of the play, too loud. The gentlemen began to talk, in very full voices, to swish and move around. The mistress of the inn herself—Olga Pizhova—came in; her face, her carriage, her voice were lively and hard. She laughed, a laugh that was engaging if you like but fairly mirthless and certainly not sunny or sweet. More talk followed, and a good deal of noise, together with much energy. It was clear that the company had set out to give us a lively occasion and that their conception was to turn Goldoni's comedy into a farce or shall we say a hearty, sure-footed harlequinade. The cues were wonderfully taken: the extraordinary ensemble of the Moscow Art Theatre appeared; every crossing on the stage went off in due time; and every individual, pair or group

was perfectly disposed of. Much effort in the long training, much thoroughness, were apparent everywhere. There were energy, movement, loud voices, busy limbs, active eyes and animated lips. And yet with it all there was not much joy. Judged by itself the performance was amazingly thorough without being very infectious.

Judged by itself that was. Judged by the quality of the play it was pretty much all wrong. One does not ask a Russian company to give us something that is Italian, any more than one expects from an Italian company a Russian surface to Chekhov. But Goldoni's play has a characteristic quality and point of view, which is there even when the more immediately Italian elements are set aside, as they should be by any foreign company. What the Moscow Art Theatre missed in *La Locandiera* as a play was about everything that distinguishes it from a lively farce. What they missed about it as a piece of life was about everything that makes it civilized, light, suave, sweet and full of gay dignity. They took a play that comes out of an old civilization, a gracious and cynical tradition of social culture, and made it lively, empty, laborious and a little boorish. They had noise rather than joy, and they translated into mere animal activity what in Goldoni is the flower of good temper and high spirits. Madame Chekhov was infinitely laborious but heavy and ungraceful. Stanislavsky's Ripafratta was a great fellow who had done with women, boorish and heavily laid on. Tamiroff's Fabrizio was not warm, not simple, not lovable. And Mirandolina as mistress of that inn perpetually forced; she acted in spots, with little continuity. As expert acting the players were all good, busy, careful, well trained. As creations they were all slightly harsh and never lovable, gracious or quick-witted.

How different from Goldoni, Papa Goldoni, with his invulnerable cheer, and his sweet delight, his comical decorum and eighteenth century hint of formality! *La Locandiera* is one of those things in drama that moves in a kind of super life; it takes its people and events and sets them in a smiling air, far up above the necessities of our familiar humdrum lots; it creates a happy flowing logic of living; it shines and struggles and laughs; it bristles with secure, unwounding epigrams; and deals out retributions and fates at last that coax us toward sanity and fair humor. And Ripafratta is a gentleman, however provincial, who descends from an old cynicism and grave art of getting through life. His dislike of women comes out of this, not out of crude manners and impetuosity. And Mirandolina, the mistress of the inn, is a sweet wild creature, impish, untouched, in and out among these pursuing gentlemen like a glancing shrewd light. She has her own logic, her own methods of managing men, but at the same time she has her own busy, kindly life, the pressure of her own simple affairs. And above all she has a dignity on which her charm may rest. Mirandolina is one of those rôles that an actress who is barely passable can play. But at the same time the shining life set forth, the bustle, the charm, the folk poetry and blunt purity in the part commend it also to great artists. Duse used to play it, as everybody knows, and many another actress great and small. To see it so cut down as it is in this Russian performance to activity, technical skill, engaging effort, hard laughing and artful minx, is to see the whole play lost, however lustily it may go roaring on as a rather conventional farce with an old and obvious situation. Twenty years ago I am willing to believe that the Moscow Art Theatre players were closer to Goldoni's comedy. I have