



BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

I had supposed that I familiar with all the industries of the community, and it was indeed a matter of great surprise to me that morning when, in the course of my before-breakfast walk, I came upon this extraordinary institution. At first I could scarcely believe my eyes, and I rubbed them good and hard to make sure that they were not deceiving me, and still that glaring gilt sign across the front of the building remained:

THE UNITED STATES COMIC OPERA LIBRETTO MILL.

So it read, and so it continued to read, no matter how hard I pinched

myself to ascertain if I was truly awake and all was not a dream; no matter how many times I ran my eye over the simple letters that made up the strange legend. Once able to convince myself that the thing was really there it was but the work of a moment also to convince myself that I was in duty bound to investigate the institution. Hence two minutes later found me knocking at the office door, which opened almost instantly.

"Is the manager in?" I asked of the dimple checked damsel who appeared in response to my knocking.

"Doing a Rushing Business."

"I am in charge, sir," she replied pleasantly. "If you wish to leave an order I can take it, but we are very much rushed at present and I do not

think we can turn you out a finished libretto under two weeks' time." "Thank you," said I, "but I have not

oath, and consequently was shortly in possession of the desired permit, and a moment later on my way through the mill of this marvelous American industry.

"The first apartment" observed my guide, as she unlocked the door of a long, low celled room, "is where we manufacture opening choruses. We employ 150 hands here, evenly divided between men and women. Observe their costume. They are of every nationality, one pair of each. There, for instance, are two people from Hawaii, a young man and a young woman. We will see what they have turned out this morning. Kalakalulu, what have you to hand?"

In my then frame of mind I would have promised the lady anything upon

the desk young woman addressed those from her bench and modestly presented me with the following ingenious opening chorus, which my guide informed me is to be used in a musical comedy called "My Honey Honolulu," next summer.

The Ha-wa-see From Honolulu. We dance all day In the ocean spray. And live on candied Toot-loo— O Toot-loo, O Toot-loo, O Toot-loo.

"Rather fetching, eh?" said my guide. "A trifle conventional, you may think, but none the less effective, and based upon the most approved models. And do you never vary the form of your opening chorus?" I asked. "No, not this year," she said. "In you see" model is all the rage this season and we have adopted it as the hall mark of our product. You will

find it at all our best theaters and none will be genuine without it. We will now go into the patter room."

"Excuse me, the what?" I asked. "The patter room? That's where we turn out patter songs," she exclaimed as we passed on. "Good morning James," she added as the foreman of the department stepped forward to greet us. "How goes the work this morning?"

"Very good, ma'am," he replied. "I've shipped two dozen cases to New York this morning and expect to get four more for London this afternoon, which is good business, considering we are short handed. I had to discharge several hands yesterday for using false quantities and scamping their rhymes. What did you do with that man who wanted to rhyme All Baba with skyscraper?" asked my guide. "I fined him two days' pay and sent him over to the coon song department for a week," said James. "Good," said the manager. "You can't be too severe when you are making an example of a workman. If our work is to show its quality we must keep the hands squarely toiling the mark every minute. Please show this gentleman our model, James. He is a piano tuner and lecturer on Maeterlinck, who has come to inspect the shop."

Pattern for Patter Songs. "Certainly," said James, courteously. "This is the pattern for all our patter songs this season, sir," he added, handing me a printed card, on which I read as follows:

Oh, it doesn't really matter When you write a song of patter. If you leave all thought of logic quite behind, Keep your eye on your cadences, Do not bother what the sense is, If your rhyming but impenetrable, You can go on wholly, wholly blind, You must keep the thing a-going

With sheet nonsense overflowing 'Till the chap who sings the thing is winded quite. Then when he's about to stifle 'You can enter my patter room, my dear, Rather Frenchy—a la Eiffel, And you'll have a patter song that's out of sight.

"You see, sir," said James, "this model not only gives our operatives the form, but the formula as well." "Very clever indeed," said I, "but a la Eiffel—what is the exact significance of that idiom?"

Giving the Frenchy Twist. "It refers to the Frenchy twist at the end of the song," explained James. "Somewhat high and pointed, d'ye see?"

"Yes, I understand," said I. "I can testify to the excellence of your work, too, for I have enjoyed many songs of that precise kind. I was not aware, however, that they were produced by a purely scientific procedure."

"You should take the gentleman into the topical song department," said James. "He'll find that very interesting."

"Good idea," said my guide. "If you will step this way, sir, I will let you see our operatives as they turn out 3,000 stanzas a day for topical songs."

A moment later we entered the room alighted by a crowd of busy workers, every one of whom was engaged upon work of the kind that is so effective with the galleries, each humming a distinct little tune of his own, except two, who sat off in a corner together and were bawling out the refrain:

O Mister Dooley, O Mister Dooley, The greatest man the country ever knew, O Mister Dooley, O Mister Dooley, O Mister Dooley, only dooley.

"We keep those Dooley chaps running night and day, turning out verses for funny men all over the country," said my guide. "The others are working on separate themes."

Love Lyric Interpolations. "And have you no department for the manufacture of love lyrics?" I asked.

"Oh, no, indeed," replied the guide; "they are never good when manufactured. They are only successful when interpolated."

"Ah! I see," said I, "and one other thing before you. How about plots? Where do you get your plots?"

"Plots?" said she, with a puzzled look on her face.

"Yes—plots—stories—you have shown me no plot, you know, I stammered, not liking the lady's look.

"Really, sir, I don't know what you mean," said the dimple checked manager of the Comic Opera works. "I have heard in this business for ten years and I never heard of anything of the kind in this connection."

And she looked at me with mild eyed wonder.

As for myself, I thanked her for her courtesy of the morning and wandered back home again, much impressed with all that I had seen and heard, and marveling at my own foolishness in asking the manager to show me any vestige of experience as consumer of modern comic opera, where they got their plots. Any idiot with half an eye can see that they never get anything of the kind from anywhere.

# Bulldog Did Some Effective Electric Engineering

Said Col. Mulberry, recalling some of his political experiences the other day, "There's a score of different ways of getting to congress, and you don't have to always be hangin' on the coat-tails of them bosses, the chairman and their committees. There's certain forces the bosses can't control, and a great deal depends upon who's boostin' you. The strangest case of whippin' them in line I ever witnessed was that of a bulldog who lifted Josh Hapgood from his position of road supervisor in Shilling county, which he had held for fifteen years straight, into a soft seat in congress, in all that time in the face of the opposition of the famous Brookville gang. The Brookville crowd, under the leadership of Big Pete Bowers, was none of your shootin' crews and were not noted particularly for any prominently bad features save that of bulldozing candidates into keepin' them in drinks and of shoving into office men who would keep them in supplies during all the year round. I don't suppose one of them carried a gun, and if they did they did not know how to use it.

he was passing the depot this dog ran out, jumped into the wagon and curled up on some blankets. It was said that the dog was the property of an actress who in her haste to catch a train had got aboard and forgotten him. The supervisor made several swings at him with his plow shoes, and the dog with wildness in his eyes walked up and took a seat beside Hapgood, giving him to understand that he preferred heart-to-heart talks to speaking with a dog's tongue. "So Hapgood would do nothing more than take that dog along home and once he got him there he couldn't get rid of him. He obeyed no commands, he sat where he pleased in the house, he went along every time Josh went to town and he always rode on the seat beside him. The only time he ever wagged his tail was when Hapgood was talking politics with Cap Hemperly.

At the convention when Josh was nominated there was a big fuss, and the deluge of free, then bench upon home swearing they would bolt the ticket. The trouble was that they didn't get all the plums they figured out for themselves, and the way in which they acted made the situation look rather bad for the men on the ticket, for the Brookville gang could command enough votes to make it warm working for any politician, no matter how strong and orange trees. "Josh was rather slow looking up

votes, and his electric engineering was confined to several neighbors who would have voted for him anyhow, while the other candidates were doing the best they knew how to heal over the sore spot. In Brookville, Free beer and scores of promises could do a great deal, and soon the enmity of the Brookvilleites was confined to one man, Josh Hapgood, who had not so much as furnished them a single drink. "Josh did have some cards printed announcing himself as a candidate. These he kept in the barn, save a few which he carried in his vest pocket for fear his wife might haul him over the coals for squandering his money. But what queered him was the fact that those cards began disappearing, and soon one box of 500 was empty. He didn't dare to say anything about robbers, for that would have given the whole matter away to his wife, so taking the second box, all the while thinking how much money those cards had cost him, he hid it in the haymow one evening in the presence of no one but the bulldog. The next morning when he looked there were ten cards missing as usual, that being the average number that disappeared each night.

It made Josh shake in his boots, and when he heard them taking out the vengeance on the smokehouse he got down on his knees. After a little while, when they thought they had him good and scared, the leaders of the mob quieted their men and yelled to Josh to show himself. "Josh put his head from the door and asked, 'What do the gentlemen want?' " "We've come up to see what right you've got to squander our night and steklin' your card up at our door? Do you think we're goin' to vote for a man that's afraid to show his face in the day-time?" said one of the leaders of the mob. "I should say not. Hang the miser, hang the miser!" roared the mob. "Then they quieted down again, and the committee conferred with Josh. He told them how his cards had been disappearing all the while, and that he had not put out a single one in Brookville, nor did he dare to ask for more. When the crowd heard the story they called Josh a liar, and said that if he didn't make good with them they'd string him up to a pear tree in the yard. 'Give 'em twenty-five and they'll let you alone,' whispered one of the members of the mob, and the suggestion was a great relief. So the committee gave him ten minutes to go and get the cards, and an hour to get them. After the trouble of that night Josh was determined to solve the mystery of the cards, and he went over to Cap Hemperly's building, who had a card of Hapgood's in his pocket. Cap said he was sitting on the porch scratching his heads over the matter when up came Josh, who had a card of Hapgood's down on the porch and went on his hand of electric engineering without having noticed his loss, and Cap sitting there,

So right before their noses the problem was solved, and Josh was so mad at the dog that he wanted to go home and kill him. He went to the dog and was so stung, advised him differently. "You let that dog alone," said Cap. "You can't tell but what he may do you some good. Josh lay down by the door, and the following night and saw him take the cards from the box and start across the fields. He never saw the dog again, but he thought that bulldog had more get-up about him than he had himself.

whole matter up when his attention, as well as that of others hanging around the polls, was directed to a commotion on the Brookville road. Pretty soon out of the cloud of dust that was being raised raced Big Pete Bowers, leading his gang with whoops and snort like a mad turtle. "By and by one of the fellows got tired playing and started for the door. The bulldog got up also, and began growling at the fellow in the saloon. He was bound to respect, for they all knew of the fighting qualities of the dog. Big Pete made a pass at the brute with a chair when the bull chased him into a corner of the saloon and was back again in his own den. The bulldog was a new kind what he was up to. They roared to see Weeks climb on a table to get out of his way of the dog's brute. "Others of the gang, thinking that the dog might possibly just have a spite at Big Pete, started to follow him. They were treated in the same manner. There was a back entrance to the building, but every one was too swagger to go around through a back lot simply for a dog, so they kept on drinking and playing cards. The fellow who was called in by the dog, interfered with no one who entered. By noon the entire gang was corralled in the saloon, and they were beginning to feel pretty lousy.

## Veritable City of Death, Is Vera Cruz, Mexico

The Mexican plateau is in such a climate as we may hope for in the hereafter if we are good, and from that paradise the train carried me down a hillside to the sea. That drop of 8,000 feet into the heavy air of the tropics felt like a slow drowning, and as the train rolled on into the shadows of the night I lay in a torpor half-dozed, until the engine roused for an exultant hoot, saluting a broad, bright garland of electric lights, the city of Vera Cruz. Then into the thick damp air stole a subtle presence, a nameless taint, the smell of death.

Their day's work over, the vultures with wide wings outspread would circle above the city, their beak upon their cornices and towers. The Plaza, always beautiful because of its noble architecture, changed under the moonlight to a dream place of blue and silver, ethereal, exquisite, the situation British and American adventurers from the Mexican fleet, and the ends of the earth, sat taking their coffee under the arched portails, electric lamps shone out among strings and orange trees, where the band played wonderfully, and the citizens moved in procession along the pathways in all the gorgeous colors of their national dress. But above were the watching vultures, and beneath was the gathered filth of centuries, in the air the sickly smell of pestilence, and over the whole city hung the presence of winged Death.

## SOME OF THE ROYAL PET NAMES AND AUTOGRAPHS

"Why, he's just like one of us," a Yorkshire farmer once exclaimed in a tone of mingled surprise and disappointment when he saw a royal prince for the first time in the flesh. And perhaps it would be impossible to pay a more welcome compliment to our royal family than to say with the farmer that, apart from the trappings and ceremonial of their exalted position, they are after all very much like ourselves.

is either "Wilhelm" or "Wille," according to the degree of affection and familiarity, and his signature, "Wilhelm," is as simple and free from flourishes as that of any village carpenter. In his younger days the king of the Belgians was known to his intimates as "Leo," the Grand Duke of Hesse is still "Ernie" to his countless cousins and uncles and aunts; the Duke of Saxe-Coburg answers equally to the name of "Charlie" and "Teddie"; and the king of Spain, to his mother and sisters, is still "Ponso," as when he first learned to play with his toy soldiers.

Princess Victoria, is "Vicky" at home, and her signature is bold and flowing, with a quaint flourish, resembling a sprawling figure 2, over, instead of under, the name. It is a little odd that Princess Maud, who has been playfully known for many years as "Charlie," should marry a husband of precisely the same name, the Prince of Denmark, Prince Charles, Charles of Denmark, who has been properly elected to be called by her proper name, "Maud," which she signs in a strong, angular hand, eloquent of her decision of character; although she occasionally, in affectionate and playful moods, appends "Audie" to her letters.

## There'll Be No More Crisp Paper Money

If experiments now in progress in Washington, under the auspices of officers of the treasury department, fulfill the promise of their present stage, the offering of the "crisp \$10-bill bill," or any other "crisp" bill so dear to the heart of the police reporter, has almost reached its end. Money turned out by the bureau of engraving and printing will be of a soft and velvety texture. As these experiments are nearly completed, the predictions concerning the outcome of the application of the new method of treating paper are all optimistic in the extreme, and they point to a revolution in the manufacture of paper money.

to scale, and consequently of no scientific value. All such means, therefore, had to be copied by hand on hand-made linen paper manufactured especially for that purpose. Mr. Fowler had taken a great interest in chemistry, and he had been the subject of experiments which two years ago resulted in the chemical solution which was used in the manufacture of paper. The process is not expensive. It has been patented both in the United States and foreign countries, and although no publicity has heretofore been given to the discovery of Messrs. Fowler and Hoover, the large paper manufacturers of this country have heard of the results accomplished and are making bittering offers to the inventors for royalty rights. The Japanese government has also bid for the process, and as Japan has for centuries been considered the magician of the world in the art of papermaking, the offer from the Orient is regarded as a marked acknowledgment of merit.