

which I could not make out. Being rather curious to find out what it said, I lifted the decanter from the table and tipped it up so that the light fell on the lettering. It said: 'If you touch me I'll tell.'

"Curious, wasn't it? But, sure enough, it did tell, for I had scarcely time to read the lettering when my ears were greeted with the tones of 'Johnny Get Your gun.' There was a music-box hidden in the bottom of the decanter, and when it is tipped the machinery starts and the music begins. You can judge for yourself how surprised and chagrined I was, for I had never seen the master of the house before, and he would have a fine opinion of me for my meddling qualities.

"Right in the middle of the tune he walked into the parlor, and gave me a cynical smile when he heard that music-box. It seemed as if it would never stop. I tried to make some sort of apology, but made a mess of it, I know, though now I cannot think for the life of me what I said. He saw how confused I was and laughed it off, saying that it was an oddity he had found in New York."

LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

CUSTOMS OF THE UNITED STATE "HOUSE"



ANYONE who knows human nature knows that it is practically impossible for any two persons to fully agree on all questions and when one considers that the U. S. house of representatives is made up of 435 members, each having his own peculiar political beliefs and doctrines, it is apparent that legislation would be practically out of the question unless some definite means for obtaining unity of action were employed.

Important factors in obtaining such unity of action in the house are the rules which govern it and which the speaker is authorized to enforce. Some of these rules are written but many of them exist only as precedents established by custom and usage. Although they are always formulated by the majority side of the house they are equally binding on both majority and minority. At the same time they give the minority certain rights which the majority is bound to respect and which the former can enforce even against and in spite of the latter.

The most important factor in legislating under the rules of the house is the speaker. Next in importance are the leaders of the respective parties represented there, called, in England, the leaders of the government and the opposition, respectively, and in the American house of representatives, the leaders of the majority and the minority, respec-