

genuine terror would have convinced most people that there was something in the tale, even if the local peasantry had not been ready to believe in leprechauns. One night recently, two policemen actually captured the leprechaun—that is to say, they caught a dwarfish creature in the wood, who is so far human that he eats greedily, but who answers all questions put to him only with a sound between a growl and a squeal. The peasantry seem still to regard the captive as a being of the weird world, in spite of such prosaic details of his capture by constables and his lodgment in the workhouse. If the truth were known, probably this is a pitiful case of some unhappy human creature who has escaped from the concealment in which his friends long kept him, or perhaps has been turned adrift by them at last.

Started in one or two small places a few years ago, according to the "Pall Mall Gazette," "Smokers' Clubs" have proved most popular institutions in Germany, and are now to be found in nearly every village. The members meet in the local taverns once a week, and drink much beer and smoke many pipes of tobacco. The most interesting feature of these clubs, however, is the annual festival, to which members of neighbouring clubs are invited to take part in a smokers' competition, held under precise and elaborate rules and conditions. The contestants are divided into two parties of ten each, and are seated on a platform at the end of the room. The president then weighs out with great exactitude five grammes, about one-sixth of an ounce, of tobacco for each man, who rams it into a new pipe. At a given signal matches are struck, pipes lit, and all begin smoking furiously, so that they are soon hidden in clouds of smoke. Meanwhile the judge counts aloud the seconds and minutes as they fly, and before three minutes have passed most of the pipes have been smoked out. Each man's time is duly entered on a sheet as he hands over his pipe, and the to-

bacco ashes in it are carefully examined to see that the pipe has really been smoked out. The prices consist for the most part of beer "steins" and smokers' articles, such as pipes, and tobacco jars and cases. Music plays a prominent part in the entertainments, which are becoming increasingly numerous and popular.

Playing "tag" for charity is reaching the dimensions of a national craze, and protests are raised accordingly. This sport consists usually of a boy of young people stationing themselves in public places, whence they descend upon the unwary with the understanding that everyone "tagged" pays tribute. There are various diversions of the sport, as at Oyster Bay, when "taggers" were mounted on ponies, or, as in New York, recently, when riders in motor-cars played the leading part; but the object is the same in every case, namely, "tagging" for cash. In Philadelphia the other day, selected beauties of the city "tagged" cheerfully and successfully for the local hospital, and nobody objected, but in some places burly ruffians have joined the ranks of the "taggers" and that has brought discredit to the game. Since the big slump there have been tens of thousands of unemployed in big American cities, and the prospect of able-bodied labourers, suddenly accosting their hated capitalistic rivals on their way to business, and "tagging" them for charity is regarded as a possible danger. "Tagging" for charity originated in the columns of American newspapers, but it was impossible to foresee that the practice would extend from one end of the country to the other. In view of the protests raised, it is probable that the police will intervene, and thenceforth all "taggers" will stand the chance of being "tagged" themselves, and hauled off to the nearest police-station. The practice of "tagging" for charity worked satisfactorily in the small towns and villages, but in big cities abuses crept in from the commencement.

One of the attributes of the American which surprises me, says a cosmopolitan, is that he does make conscientious efforts to remove the beam from his own eye, even though his sense of humour is tickled by the mote in his British brother's eye. Americans, for instance, are keenly alive to the impertinent aggressiveness of their young. A protest was made the other day against students of tender years being set to write essays on such subjects as "The Decline of Manners and Morals in the Twentieth Century." The American child is all too naturally ready to lecture its elders without being taught to do so scholastically. The "bright" children of the United States are indeed one of the least pleasing features of a great country. I used to see them in hotels. Their statures seemed to indicate that they had not learnt long the principles of toddling, but they were as fastidious about their food as any middle-aged gourmet. The little girls with their hair tied up with absurd enormous bows, the little boys with shaven heads and fancy boots, alike seemed to have their fathers and mothers well under control. I could not always catch the drift of their infantile conversation, but to judge by appearances it was often more forcible than polite. They may have been milk drinkers, but they wore an expression when they addressed the waiters which seemed capable of only one construction. "Waiter, bring me a magnum of champagne, and be quick about it!"

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see!"

"This is an age of steel," said the after-

dinner speaker. "Permit me to suggest,"

interrupted the chairman, courteously,

"that for the benefit of the reporters present you spell the last word."

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