

the work to them, as well as all round the edge, but if they do not exist it will be secure if you nail all round the outside and sew strips of webbing on the back where the pockets are stitched, and see that you sew the pockets through here and there on to this webbing; you will then have little to fear as to want of strength if you nail this webbing on to the piano at top and bottom.

In a work of this kind you want to work

out a decorative scheme of colour, so that when you take in the effect as a whole there are no jarring notes. It is difficult to give exact advice, but avoid introducing too many colours. A wide piano would take two rows of pockets wide enough to receive the music placed upright, whereas in the sketch I have arranged for the music to lie oblong.

The *motifs* used in the embroidery are fairly familiar. The festoons on the upper

pockets are quite simple in design and should present no difficulty to the worker.

The musical instruments are modelled after familiar forms, but they are to be taken symbolically, and as I have suggested worked in outline.

The campanula-like flowers can be treated in two tones of colour, and very simply, as you do not want to be naturalistic.

FRED MILLER.

## SOCIAL EVENTS IN A GIRL'S LIFE.

By LA PETITE.



### PART VII.

A CRIPPLES' TEA-PARTY AT THE MANSION HOUSE.

ANY and varied have been the functions I have attended at the Mansion House, but I am bound to admit that the one which stands out clearest is a Cripples' Tea-Party.

There was the usual crowd round the side-door as we approached, and vans were standing before

it, but the guests showed none of that eagerness to descend and enter that one might have expected, and I soon saw the reason for this want of alacrity.

Chairs were brought out, and those who could, scrambled painfully down by their means, while others had to wait till strong arms were extended to bear them into the hall.

At last they were all inside; a pathetic assembly with sad eyes, which failed to see the humour of the Major Domo being shut out on his own doorstep (which very nearly occurred), and glanced shyly at the gigantic beings in rich liveries and powdered hair, who were standing at ease around them.

When heads had been counted, and those in authority were quite certain that not one of the fifty-six were missing, a move was made upstairs.

Some toiled up on their crutches, while every able-bodied person present tenderly lifted a tiny burden, finding it, alas, all too light and easy to carry.

What, however, struck me as the prettiest sight of all was to see each of those gigantic footmen before-mentioned stoop over a helpless little guest, and, lifting the tiny body, carry it up as deftly and delicately as a woman.

The contrast between stalwart, lusty young manhood and suffering, pain-racked childhood was inexpressibly touching, and my respect

for those who are sometimes half-contemptuously called "flunkeys" went up by leaps and bounds. The pinched, white faces nestled confidently against the gold cords and lace, and their contented looks showed that the strong arms and capable hands had adapted themselves to the fragile nature of the burden.

It is said that a really gentle man is always more tender than even a woman, and our brothers need not think it "mawkish" to cultivate this virtue, since thus they may earn for themselves in the best way a title they would all like to lay claim to—that of a true "gentleman."

We have wandered away from the little procession of cripples toiling up the grand staircase, but we can soon overtake them, for progress was slow to those who preferred to drag themselves up independently of help, since they could not bear even the lightest touch.

Every step they took must have been a revelation, and one event alone of that wonderful afternoon would have been enough to feast their poor starved imaginations upon for a week, whereas not one but a succession of events took place, each more fascinating than the last.

First there was the walk through the saloon with its wonderful furniture and tapestry, its glittering mirrors and lofty roof.

Next came the entrance into the Egyptian hall, where they were distracted by the many pleasures and surprises in store for them, and hardly knew which way to look or where to begin, so to speak.

Lively music greeted them, and a most beautiful lady was waiting to take each little hot hand in hers and lead them to the semicircle of chairs arranged in front of a small platform, which seemed to promise further delights.

As to the lady, opinions were divided, some thinking she was the Queen, and others that, if not, she ought to have been, but when told she was at any rate "Queen of the City," they felt quite satisfied and gave themselves up to the charms of having downy, delicate-hued cushions tucked behind their aching backs by her white, jewelled hands, and extemporised couches arranged for their small, suffering limbs.

Once settled they had time to look round and admire the noble proportions of the hall, its rainbow-coloured windows and rich banners; but it had high screens arranged all round three sides of it, and many were the speculations as to what those screens so jealously hid.

Now a smiling, pleasant-faced gentleman mounted the platform and began to do the most wonderful and indescribable things.

I think a good many of his audience would have liked to know how he produced coins of the realm from their curls and collars with a view to thereby increasing the family income; but though he did it with surprising ease—

making jokes all the time—he never explained how it was done, which was a great omission.

How they laughed when he requested the loan of a gentleman's high hat, fixing his eyes rather sternly on the front row of small boys. But an ominous pause followed, and they began to be anxious, until some tall person (a nobleman of course) handed up the glossy article required.

Everyone agreed afterwards it would have been an immense pity if it had not been forthcoming, for the most marvellous things came out of it, such as are not generally kept in a hat.

A perfect shout of delight went up when a beautiful, curly brown wig came to light, though why the owner of the hat carried that about with him was not clear seeing that he had a very good head of hair of his own.

So this wonderful conjuror went on, finding nothing too difficult, saying the funniest things, so that a tiny ripple of elfin laughter accompanied all he did, and making things appear and disappear until, if he had not looked so kind, one would really have felt quite nervous.

That was a proud boy who was allowed to hop on to the platform and assist him, though the pride was tempered with fear.

Being asked to value a lady's gold wedding-ring, he promptly responded, "Five shillings," and was apparently puzzled at the smiles with which his answer was received.

His mentor, however, did not let him feel discouraged, but proceeded to do magical things with that ring (with his assistance), and handed him politely down at the end as hopelessly in the dark about it as anyone.

Presently an interval was announced.

Their wonderful entertainer disappeared behind one of the mysterious screens, and they were free to lean back and talk over all they had seen and heard.

But they were not expected to do so unfortified.

Various ladies and gentlemen threaded their way between the rows of chairs, and laddled out generous handfuls of most delicious sweets which the grown-up visitors themselves did not disdain, and, as for the small ones, they got into the most charmingly sticky condition, and gave great sighs of contentment as they nibbled luxuriously at chocolate-creams. The pleasure caused by this interlude had barely subsided when the Lord Mayor appeared, in private dress, it is true, but wearing his chain of office, having donned it simply to give pleasure to his small guests, and not in any way because he came in his official capacity.

He wouldn't even make a speech, but the few words he did say went straight to one's heart, and more than one found they had a bad cold coming on when he said how gladly and promptly he would make them all well and strong if only he had the power.

I think every one of us felt the same, but, since we could not do that, we did our best to



make them forget their pain and weariness for one afternoon at least.

No sadness, therefore, was allowed to mar the enjoyment of this lovely evening, for everyone had conspired together to make the little guests happy.

Even the Lady Mayoress' little black Pomeranian dog contributed his share towards the afternoon's entertainment by barking lustily whenever anything specially good was said or done.

This set us all off laughing, as it came in so appropriately, it sounded as if the wee doggie really meant it for applause. Presently their kind, funny, clever entertainer reappeared with two dolls, one an old man and the other an old woman, with whom he proceeded to converse, for they talked as well as he did in the oddest of cracked voices, and "Sally" even sang a little, but was so hurt by the old man's unkind remarks, that the song came to an abrupt close.

By-and-by they announced that a friend was waiting outside, but could not come in as

he had a lot of parcels to take care of, whereupon a messenger was despatched to fetch him. As it happened the unknown friend never appeared at all, but this mattered less, as his parcels did, and the excitement of finding that they were all toys drove everything else out of their heads.

It was not till after the distribution of these presents that we found out what was behind the screens; but then, at a given signal they were removed, and there stood revealed two long tables covered with the most appetising good things elegantly arranged, as if for a grown-up party.

Soon they were all seated and busily employed in sampling the various dainties set before them.

One little man was too fragile to sit up to the table and had to remain on his improvised couch, to which tea and cakes were brought, but it was pitiful to see what a mere morsel he ate, and how even the hot-house grapes failed to tempt his appetite.

Here too was a tiny lassie, who should by

rights have been in the hospital, but whose father could not deprive her of this one day's pleasure.

Poor mite! she looked as if any more pain would finish her altogether, for her small hands were like claws and her little face pinched and wizened like an old woman's, but let us hope that the pink and blue dolly she so affectionately clasped in her thin arms brightened the hours of suffering that I fear were before her.

The golden minutes sped to the hour of departure, and soon the time came when they had to shake hands with their queenly hostess and turn their backs on the Palace of Pleasure.

Friendly hands were again ready to help their crippled limbs and stumbling feet downstairs on the way back to their own drab-coloured lives.

Again the stalwart footmen and gigantic policemen lent tender and willing aid, and the pathetic procession melted away into the London crowd, leaving us in a very April condition of mingled smiles and tears.

## MODERN SLANG.

By DARLEY DALE.



**T**IME was when the use of slang was almost entirely confined to schoolboys, and a very stupid kind of language it was when everything that was not "awfully jolly" was—but we all remember that unspeakable alternative. We have changed all that now, and one of the many things which have improved in these latter days of the nineteenth century is our slang.

We owe this in a great measure to our American cousins, from whom some of our pithiest sayings emanate. To them is due that picturesque element which is so characteristic of much of our modern slang; to them we owe its humour—the wittiness of slang lies more in its application than in the words themselves—to them we owe that Machiavellian power of concentrated force, but when, as rarely happens, our modern slang is touched with poetry, then we must look nearer home for its origin.

When Mr. Rhodes said Dr. Jameson had upset the apple-cart by his excursion into the Transvaal, he raised a vulgar but picturesque phrase from slang to historic English, though we doubt if it will ever become classical. Again, when he said he was coming home to face the music, when he came to give evidence before the South African Committee, he used another picturesque piece of slang, which recalls a mediæval phrase of still greater force, "facing the lions," the motto of the Medici.

When Blanche tells Maud that the result of her expressed determination to marry a penniless man was then the band played, she has advanced considerably in grace of expression from the "jolly row," which, twenty years ago, would have accurately described the situation. And, if Maud has the sense and courage to reply that her friend's folly was enough to make her parents sit up, she uses a very telling and forcible manner of describing the mental attitude of Blanche's parents towards their daughter's foolishness.

When Jones tells Fitzroy-Brown he will have to climb down, he hints in a mild but effective way that the latter has set too high a value upon himself, and when Mrs. Fitzroy-Brown plaintively implores Jones not to give her away, he quite understands he is being asked not to tell Fitzroy-Brown he knows F-B.'s wife shares his opinion of her husband.

When young Sprigg tells his pretty wife that to expect him to take her to two "at-homes" in one week is rather a large order, he is probably unconsciously quoting an Aristotelian phrase, which has degenerated into modern slang from Attic Greek.

The minor poet, or shall we make it plural and say the minor poets, for alas, their name is legion, who complain that their poems do not catch on, in spite of the "boom" in the journals they control, these use a pithy, if not a very elegant phrase, to describe the feelings of the reading public towards their productions. And he among these bards who generously vows that he considers another's poems take the cake, is undoubtedly guilty of the first degree of lying, but his hearers will understand he thereby offers the laurel crown to his contemporary poet.

The schoolboy who, failing to distinguish his hostess at an evening party, asks his

companion who bosses this show, uses a vulgar Americanism to express his dilemma; but the boy who, on being summoned to family prayers, asks his sister the same question, makes a witty though irreverent application of the same.

When Mabel tells Ethel she is a little previous in congratulating her on her engagement to Captain Lancer, before he has proposed to her, she states succinctly a truth she doubtless deeply deplores; and when this same gallant captain complains to Ethel that Mabel's manner at the ball last night was rather casual, Ethel quite understands why Mabel lent herself to this reproach, and is not at all inclined to exclaim *Rats!* We have never quite fathomed why "rats" should mean "I don't believe it" any more than "cats" or "dogs," but the laws of slang which, unlike the laws of the Medes and Persians, change continually, have decreed otherwise. "Rats" expresses incredulity, cats or dogs at present do not.

There is another very pregnant saying, to put on side, for to give oneself airs, which is of modern origin, and not to feel very fit is quite as impressive and certainly more refined than the "very seedy" of a former generation.

There is one modern slang phrase which rises very nearly to poetry, when wishing to give an idea of general depression or low spirits, the speaker says the lights were turned low, while the frequent allusions to "the little rift within the lute which lets the music out," in reference to some of the lesser difficulties of life, is scarcely common enough to come under the head of slang, yet it is certainly a highly poetical way of referring to some of life's minor discords.

Up to date is one of those eminently descriptive phrases which custom has raised from the byways of slang to the higher paths of current speech, and is of such wide application, that it will serve equally well to describe either a sermon or a bonnet.

Less obvious is *I can't do it for nuts*, when a man wishes to say he expects to be well-paid for his work.

Modern slang possesses to almost a sublime degree the power of concentration; it can suggest, if it cannot actually say, volumes in a couple of words, as, for instance, when Lady