

## *Account of Purley on Thames*

### Little Miss Menpes' Ball

R200331 30/3/2017

*An article in 'The Lady' of 24th Jan 1889.*

MR. MORTIMER MENPES' lovely and chastely decorated rooms in Osborne House, Munster Terrace, can never have been seen to greater advantage than on the occasion of little Miss Menpes' children's fancy dress ball last Thursday evening, all the dresses being remarkable either for accuracy or tasteful and fanciful design. First and foremost came the "Menpes Minors," the little hostess, her brother, and delightful and diminutive sister Dorothy, dressed as Japs, wearing their artistic costumes with an ease and grace "as to the manner born," quite suggesting that the habiliments of our Western world were totally unknown to them; their little faces being accurately made up, even to the elevated arched eyebrows and shaven crowns. A small figure which charmed all eyes was that of pretty little Miss Edith Unwin as "Yellow daffodil," a perfect vision of the spirit of spring, and looking as though she had just arrived from the fairyland of our youthful dreams. Mrs. Stannard's (John Strange Winter) quaint little daughter Audrey, shy as the robin redbreast on her wee left shoulder, made one quite in love with such a snowy "Winter." Minnie Terry was surely the sweetest and demurest of Puritan maidens, in her little linen cap and pointed collar; her cousin, Olive Morris making an admirable contrast as "Little Miss Muffett," in her mob-cap and delicate lace and ribbon gown, with a terribly realistic spider dangling about her. Olive Berkeley, in an exquisite pink satin "Directoire" gown, looked delicious, and gave during the evening a couple of recitations, one on the thoughts of a day-old baby being rendered with a sense of dry humour perfectly marvellous in one little more than a baby in years herself.

The youthful Noel Stoker as a "Japanese Swell," in a perfectly correct and superb costume brought from Japan, strode about with all the self-possession and staid, philosophic calm of that almond-eyed race; in fact, all the Japanese costumes worn were perfect both in design and colour. Merry, bright-eyed little Leyland Hamilton as "Charles Surface" created intense amusement by the announcement that he was unable to sit down owing to the too accurate fit of his pretty pale blue satin smalls. Randolph and Lewis Ingram as Arabs were perfect pictures ill their lovely little contrasting dresses of blue and red brought from Tangiers, their small heelless slippers being constantly found found (like Cinderella's) in the centre of the ball-room.

Mignon Harvey as a "Vivandiere" looked piquante and bright. Many tiny figures toddled about in the dances or joined in the merry games of "Hunt the Slipper" and "Round about the Mulberry Bush" amongst them being tiny, wide-eyed Claude Hardy as "Fred Archer," the most miniature of jockeys, quite a pocket edition; also little Marie Scott as "Starry Night," some of the older children towering like Gulliver in Lilliput, noticeable among them being Guy Unwin as one of the murdered Princes in the Tower; also Mrs. Jopling's son as a "Chinese Mandarin," and Miss Nellie Standage as a wonderfully well got up "Gipsy Queen."

Paul Napier looked particularly well as a "Neapolitan Fisherman," wearing his easy and picturesque costume with boyish grace. Harvey Bradbury's "Matador" dress was absolutely correct in every detail. Daisy Fuller looked a very pretty "Odalisque" in white and pale blue satin. Alfred Baguley made a darling "Blue Boy" accompanied by his sister, Mary, as a sweet little "Italian Peasant" But space fails me, where all were worthy of notice and admiration; so in conclusion I must

mention the "Princess Poppet" of Dora Labouchere, the "Snow" of Hilda Caldicott, the "Lady Teazle" of Mabel Lewis, the "Folly" of Dorothy Hudson, the "Henry V" of Bobby Mason, Diana Creyke's " Empire," the "Cinderella" of Kitty Mason, Grace Fennet's " Winter," Kenneth Wilson's Mephistopheles," Stella Johnson's "Yum Yum," with others too numerous to mention, as all distinguished by the grace and ease with which they wore their pretty costumes.

The ball concluded with a distribution of Japanese presents and toys.