

BELLE TO PHYLLIS.

DEAREST PHYLLIS,

A week yesterday the High Sheriff of Lancashire and Mrs. S. R. Platt gave a children's fancy dress ball, which proved to be a most brilliant and enjoyable function. The dance was held at the High Sheriff's residence, Werneth Park, and, from a CHILDREN'S party computation in the ballroom, I FANCY should imagine there were between 70 DRESS and 80 children present, whose ages BALL ranged from 15 to 16 down to the tiny little baby of 18 months. Mrs. Platt

received her juvenile guests in the drawing-room, whence the youthful marionettes passed on to the dining-room, there to partake of tea and cakes previous to dancing in the ballroom. The whole spectacle was gay in the extreme. The children's dresses were both fresh and picturesque, and had evidently been chosen with a due regard to their special characteristics, and if fairies and Titania's abounded, still in no case was any individual dress duplicated in each detail. Then the High Sheriff's residence lends itself charmingly to a ball of this description, and on the evening in question seemed one glow of brilliant light. Great clusters of daffodils festooned the hall staircase from top to bottom, and hung in garlands round the marble statues, while the huge conservatory resembled a lovely palm-house, and with its numerous soft rugs, cosy chairs and couches, made an ideal sitting-out place, and, provided with a buffet at one end, served also as a convenient refreshment place. The spacious hall-room, decorated with flag trophies and Japanese lanterns, presented a most attractive appearance with its draperies of soft pink and green muslin and trails of daffodils, and its crystal clusters of electric light pendant from the ceiling, and the 30 or 40 elder guests who were privileged to watch the spectacle were unanimous in their praises of the pretty scene.

It would take too long to enumerate all the various dances, fairies, jesters, Puritans, cavaliers, Geishas, cooks, fisher boys, withal a most picturesque medley of girls and boys. Mrs. Platt herself had honoured her juvenile guests by appearing in fancy costume, and represented a Chinese lady of the highest rank, attired in the most sumptuously embroidered robe. The overdress was of the loveliest shade of bright peacock blue satin, with exquisite hand embroidery of crimson roses, a real marvel of the art of needlework, while the underdress consisted of a series of panels of white and coloured satin, all wrought in silk with the same beauty and skill in intricate patterns and designs. Mrs. Platt's hair was dressed à la Chinese, and had huge clusters of pink Malmesbury carnations and foliage affixed at either side, above the ears, while beautiful diamond daggers and other ornaments glistened in her coiffure at the back, and, as a finish to the robes, the hostess wore a superb pearl and diamond drop necklace, beneath a gold dog collar, studded with pearls and diamonds. The High Sheriff was attired in his Court suit of black velvet, and wore his Jubilee presentation medal, and both host and hostess entered most heartily into the spirit of the evening's festivity, Mr. Platt participating in the country dances with his young guests, while Mrs. Platt was absolutely the most energetic and brightest hostess I have ever seen. Of the various children, I must begin by mentioning the beautiful costume of a French courtier worn by Master John Rookhouse Platt, the coat of pale heliotrope broadened satin, relieved with pale turquoise blue velvet pockets, and appearing in conjunction with white satin knee-breeches, vest, lace cravat, and tricorne hat. Then there was Miss Elsie Platt, piquant in a real Swedish peasant costume, of the type worn by the Crown Princess of Sweden, with a scarlet skirt embroidered in blue, a yellow bodice and chemise, and a green apron. Master Maurice Platt was the sprightliest of English jacks, and romped about reckless of damage to his beautiful turquoise blue velvet coat and white satin knee-breeches. Little Miss Nancy Platt, in the sweetest of French mode, in a dainty frock of white satin with trails of the blue flower, and a picturesque lace and chiffon hat.

In Mrs. Platt's house party were included Miss Harlowe Sykes, a handsome Fairy, in white and silver gauze, with diamond circlet round her dark hair; Master Roger Lamb, distinguished in the scarlet Volunteer uniform of his school (Wellington); Master Gerald Wellerley, the idol of a French clié, in white with bright red cheeks and fiercely twinkling eyes, and from Napoleon; and Master Edmund, who excellently got up as a Somersetshire yokel in smock and corduroys. With

the pretty fernery, and who was always surrounded by a group of clients. A recherche supper was served in the dining room, the long table being decorated with masses of sweet spring flowers. Although the dance was supposed to conclude at 9.30, it was after 10 before the last of the juvenile guests departed, and their enjoyment of the festivity was so sincere and genuine, and the whole evening was marked by such a spirit of unflagging animation, that the High Sheriff and Mrs. Platt must have been recompensed for any labour by the sight of the smiling faces that thronged round them at the close to thank them, and wish them good-bye.