

Wonders of the World.

LXXX.—A MASQUERADE OF CATS.



HERE were others besides pussy in this gay masquerade, but pussy dominated everything. It was first place to her and second to all the rest. The rabbit and the frog, the noisy chanticleer, and the hairy bear, to say nothing of pierrot and harlequin, bowed beneath her sway on this night of nights; and tabby made a splendid queen, cajoling her courtiers with a silvery purr or ruling them with velvet paw.

The masquerade of cats was the idea of the bright president of an association known to popularity as the "C.C.C." These mystical letters stand for the Connecticut Cat Club, whose efforts are centred in the city of Stamford, in that well-known State. The ball was intended to aid a local day-nursery, and the public were only too glad, at a reasonable price per ticket, to enter the charmed gates of the Casino, where the ball was held, there to mew and purr with the tabby queen until the midnight bell had rung. Several months were occupied in preparation for the great festival, with gratifying results to the charity in question.

The invitations were sent out by card to members and their friends, merely stating that masks were required to be worn until twelve o'clock, and, as the ball was given by the Cat Club, the predominance of pussy in the masquerade is naturally explained. Accordingly, there was a run upon the local *costumiers*, and the more widely celebrated mask-makers of New York City, for cat faces and other animal masks. How well the work

was done is shown in our numerous illustrations, particularly the one given below, which represents Mistress Tabby and Master Wee Puss, two of the best-dressed figures at the ball.

As it was not expressly stipulated that the feline face only should be represented, there were Maltese cats, Persian cats, Angora cats, and plain everyday cats treading the mazes of the dreamy waltz, or doing the two-step in stately style, amongst a crowd of others in dominoes, extravagant in design and lending diverse colour to the glittering scene.

The main feature of the decoration was a lovers' lane, a shady grove of pine and evergreen, where the masqueraders pirouetted and, as a local reporter put it, "basked in the sunshine of one another's presence 'neath the glow of twinkling electric lights, and before the gaze of curious eyes seeking to penetrate their several disguises."

Besides the cats and kittens, the pullets and roosters, there were rabbits

and other well-known members of the animal kingdom. There were, to mention one or two only, Miss Bunny Cottontail and Mistress Mopsy Cottontail, whose masks hid the personalities of two charming young sisters of Stamford. That they were pretty beneath their rabbit faces we dare not, in ignorance, assert, but that they were effective exponents of the genus *Lepus* was proved to the satisfaction of all.

The "frog who would a-wooing go," personated by one of the well-known young gentlemen of the town, achieved some



MISTRESS TABBY AND MASTER WEE PUSS IN THE CATS' MASQUERADE.

notoriety by his elaborate attentions to the tabbies of the carnival. His costume was so extremely natural that when he was photographed later behind a rock in the garden he looked as much like a frog as could be expected in such an environment. It is said that considerable amusement was created by a set-to between this sentimental batrachian and a big rooster, who was deputed by the feline victims of the frog's perfidy to see that he was fully punished. The combat was short, indeed, for the rooster had the advantage of his spurs, and Mr. Frog took refuge in an imaginary pool of water behind a lounge, where he remained until all ill-feeling had passed away.

Many brought with them their little pets, escorting them round the floor in leash. An ex-vice-president brought a beautiful silver



MISTRESS MOPSY COTTONTAIL.

Persian cat, which drew some attention on account of its intelligence; and a litter of kittens, owned by the president, had a fine time amongst themselves in a corner of the room. According to one account, many of these little aristocrats came, like their elders, in fancy dress, with embroidered caps and pretty gowns. Some of them, not content with their surroundings, caused merriment when they got loose from their little silver chains and mixed up promiscuously with the dancing crowd, and not a few of the pseudo cats shed tears behind their masks over the temporary loss of their darlings. On the whole, however, those thus

admitted on a free ticket to the festival behaved themselves quite admirably, and we venture to say that not one of them would refuse a second invitation if asked.



MISS BUNNY COTTONTAIL IN FANCY DRESS.



A PIERROT IN THE CATS' MASQUERADE.

There was as much ingenuity shown by the members in dressing these feline pets as there was in their own costumes. Here, for instance, was to be found a smiling pussy with a tricky cap of colour on her head, and there a wily old tabby with a ferocious air, warranted to scare any mice to be found within the neighbourhood. That, by the way, reminds us that there were mice within the neighbourhood, for several of the ladies present wore them as ornaments upon their clothes. There were fifty on the bodice of a beautiful gown worn by Mrs. Cummings, the president of the club. But let us hasten to add that they were not live specimens of the genus *Mus*. They were imitation rodents, with brass feet, rubber ears, and elastic tails.

One of the most striking costumes was that of Mr. Cock-a-doodle-doo. His dress was a brilliant red, with black trimming, and he wore long brass spurs at his heels, which, so the local gossip says, clanked heavily or, when they didn't clank, entangled themselves in passing gowns.

The masquerade was distinctly a *succès de curiosité*, for those who bought tickets little knew what was before them in the way of merry-making except that they were asked to appear in fancy dress. The club itself had on a previous occasion amusingly drawn the attention of the public, even to



MR. COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO IN FANCY DRESS.

the extent of gaining a temporary notoriety and the antagonism of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It came about in this way. It was announced, and the report spread with unexpected rapidity, that the club was arranging for a mouse-killing function at which two thousand specially-selected mice were to be put to death, and special cards were issued to polite society asking them to come and witness this terrible scene. Immediately the president became the recipient of numberless protests from well-wishers of the cat, and the society with the long name served notice on the mayor for allowing such a

startling banquet to take place within his jurisdiction. The mayor thereupon wrote to the president making official protest, and received in reply an invitation for a force of police to be upon the ground, and a hint by post that "a mouse-protecting mayor as a feature of the cat show would tend to promote levity in the community."

This awful behaviour on the part of respectable Stamford ladies, with its flaunt against the law, added to the consternation of the community. The public suspense was finally relieved just before the function took place by an announcement of the executive committee, affirming the truth of the report that two thousand selected mice were to be put to death, but adding that all were made of candy.



A GROUP OF MASQUERADERS.