

CHRISTMAS SURPRISE--CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

freak? What might not that heavy veil conceal? Two noses, a horned head, perhaps, they shuddered as the idea came to them, perhaps a pig faced lady.

William's sisters almost fainted at the thought. Sisters-in-law to a pig faced lady? Oh, it was too terrible!

But the silvery voice of the veiled woman was heard amid the silence. It partially reassured them. Surely no woman with a pig's face could speak like that. Pig-faced ladies only grunted, and they ate out of a silver trough. Is there not a picture in the Hospital in Dublin to certify to the fact?

John saw the horror that had come upon his guests, and made the Christmas dinner like a funeral feast, and he thought the plain truth was preferable to the hideous idea which was evidently in the minds of the company.

"Oh, yes," said William, "Of course we know her. She performs in the ring—La Haute Ecole."

"Why do you say 'calls herself'?" asked the veiled lady, "is not Delroy her real name?"

"No," said Mr. Mitcham. "Fact is, she's a relative of mine. One of the bad eggesses," he added, turning to his wife.

"Indeed," exclaimed the veiled lady. "A relative of yours?"

"Yes, she is my cousin, Lord Bowditch's youngest daughter, you know. It was a terrible blow to the old man, Fanny—that is her name—was mad for horses, and, when her father married again and the girls were unhappy at home, hating their stepmother—and they had good reason to—Fanny had the bad taste to run away. The next we heard of her was that she was riding at horse shows, you know, and then I'm blest if she didn't go to America. There she joined



Typical Canadian Scenes—A Farm in Sussex, New Brunswick.

"Mrs. William Armytage is not, I believe, a freak, in the common acceptance of the word," he said. "My brother tells me that she was shipwrecked among cannibals, and had her face tattooed."

The veiled lady nodded. "That is quite right," she said. "I am not really a freak. I am a misfortune. You will forgive me for not showing you my face, but my contract is never to do so outside the show. The words are 'under no circumstances,' and of course I must keep my contract."

"Oh, pray do!" exclaimed everybody in chorus. There was not the slightest desire among the company to have a hideously tattooed face opposite to them while they ate their Christmas dinner.

Tom Mitcham was the first to break the silence. "You are professionally engaged at Barnum's, Mrs. Armytage," he said. "I wonder if you know an equestrienne who, I believe, is performing there now—Miss Jennie Delroy she calls herself?"

Barnum's Circus. They say she's really splendid in the high-class business."

"She is," exclaimed William, "isn't she, my dear?"

"Oh, I think she is all right," said the veiled lady. "But, of course, I don't see much of her, so I can't judge."

"No, of course not," replied Tom, "you'd be in one of the side-shows."

John Armytage, who had been astonished at Tom Mitcham's confession of a circus rider in the family, felt rather relieved. After all, if Lord Bowditch's daughter was at Barnum's, it wasn't so very awful for his sister-in-law to be there.

Only, unfortunately, the latter was among the freaks.

Jenny turned to her husband inquiringly. "Why did you never tell me about your cousin, dear?" she said.

"Well, fact is we didn't care to have it talked about. But as Barnum's is in the family," he added with a smile, "it doesn't so much matter now. I don't know much of Fanny,