

"Yes, cousin to Lord Bowditch. Oh, William, it is a shameful thing for you to have given us a sister-in-law from Barnum's side-shows!"

"Well," said William, "you can say nothing about it, if you like. I and my wife will go."

"No," said John, "my promise must be kept; but I must prepare our guests—the shock must not be too sudden."

"John Armytage returned to the drawing-room. His face was very grave, and everybody turned towards him as he entered.

"Before we go in to dinner," he said, "I have a strange communication to make to you. You are all aware of the agreement by which we meet to-day under my roof. This time a new guest is added to our little party. My brother, William, brings his wife."

There was a little buzz of excitement. All the guests with

remarks in a voice at once refined and musical. Whatever the affliction was, it was quite certain that she was not a "person," as they had feared, but an educated lady.

At the dinner-table, Mrs. William sat by her husband, and he was quite gallant in his attentions to her.

At first the proceedings were particularly solemn. The presence of the veiled woman was uneasy. It made the servants uncomfortable and nervous, and the guests could hardly take their eyes off the closely enveloped head. The veil fell loosely below the face, so that Mrs. William was able to put her spoon and her fork underneath and eat without exposing any portion of her features. That was an intense relief to John Armytage and his wife. At first they were terrified that an accidental movement might reveal the fact that their sister-in-law was tattooed.

Unfortunately, John had forgotten to tell his brother that he had only made a partial explanation to the company. Not



Typical Canadian Scenes—A Bathing Party in Manitoba.

the exception of Tom Mitcham, knew William, and they had misgivings about the lady.

"My brother," continued John, in a voice trembling with emotion, "has married a lady who has an affliction of the face. You will excuse her if she makes her appearance among you wearing a thick veil."

There was a movement of horror from the relatives. William had surpassed himself.

A few minutes later the door was flung open and the servant announced: "Mr. and Mrs. William Armytage," and then retired to burst out laughing in the hall.

"Good 'eavens, Parker," she said to the housemaid, "what is it?"

William was quite at his ease. He introduced the veiled lady to all his relatives. The veiled lady shook hands with her new kinsmen and kinswomen, and made the conventional

being forewarned of this reticence, William presently put his foot in it. He had been doing that sort of thing all his life.

Frank and open-hearted to a degree, what was more natural than that he should innocently mention the fact that his wife was engaged at the great show at Olympia, of which everyone was talking.

Thinking to amuse the company, he began to tell them of the Christmas festivities arranged for the freaks at Barnum's. "Of course, if we hadn't come here," he said, "my wife would have dined with them."

"I beg your pardon," said Tom Mitcham, amid a dead silence, "but why should your wife have dined with the freaks?"

"Why, of course, because she's one of them," said William. Then he caught his brother's stern eye and checked himself. "Oh, I'm sorry—I thought John had told you!"

The ladies glanced at the veiled woman with horror. A