

would be a poor place without them.

The writer of the present article—singular or plural, it matters little which—happened one summer day to be within earshot of a merry group of womankind in some such circumstances as have been described.

A most startling piece of intelligence had just been thrown into the midst of the company, and hammocks and rocking chairs were speedily deserted as every maiden of the group rushed with her own particular stream of queries to the person who had brought the news. The simple fact in question was that a well known actress of the American stage had been living quietly at the same hotel for full six weeks and not one had had the faintest suspicion of her presence. Unfortunately, she had packed up and gone home that very day. The animation of the group was marvellous to see, and some of them even seemed, at least to the cynical observer, to have taken leave of all their ordinary senses at one bound. "How did you find out?" "What name did she assume?" "What table did she sit at?" "Oh, if we had only known!" "Are you quite sure she's gone?" "I wonder if she is really pretty; what geese we were not to recognize her." "I saw her six times last winter in the Little Minister"; to all of which excited babble the young person in the straw hat who had brought the news, gave very arch replies, half hinting by her glances that she had herself been possessed of this precious information all along. When a gentleman, a little later, ventured to ask a member of the excited group what significance this person's presence would have had for them even if they had known all about her, "We would have worshipped her!" was the

enthusiastic reply; "we would have fallen at her feet; dear me, dear me, isn't it a shame she has really gone!"

No one should be cynical in such a place, and in the summer sunshine. The sound senses which seemed for a moment lost—though for our own part we could not say anything so severe—came back as quickly as they went; and the cynic was discomfited. The tennis was resumed and the idly busy life of a summer holiday went forward gathering store of health and good spirits against the winter days that were coming on.

Sometimes, we grant you, the tennis, the piazza, or the drawing room begin to lose their charms, and a wintry fireside seems a more welcome region, even for those who are least bewitched. Blazing coals in the fireplace and tremulous shadows on the walls, frosty footsteps and a winter wind outside; in such a place the gaiety of the piazza would be out of keeping, to say the least. In the drawing room a score of womankind, two score or three, with ripple of talk and laughter; by the fireside the number must be less, much less. By the fireside more confidence, more openness, more discovery, and by patient yet sure degrees the meshes which enwrap the deepest mystery in all the world will be removed. Charms and graces will be discovered which have been long ready for him who was able to search them out, and new ones will spring into life in the warm glow of the fireside, itself a companionship. What a piece of work is man; man forsooth, but indeed we are forced to admit that another race of beings have faculties no less infinite, in form and moving they are no less admirable, in action no less angelic.