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## The TINDER BOX

by  
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"THE MELTING  
OF MOLLY"



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### CHAPTER 7—Continued.

"Do you suppose we will ever get all of the clothes done for the twins?" Nell sighed gently as we sat on my porch whipping yards of lace upon white ruffles and whipping up our own spirits at the same time. Everybody in Glendale sews for Sallie's children, and it takes her all her time to think up the clothes.

"Never," I answered.

"She's coming, and I do believe she has got more of this ruffling. I see it floating down her skirt." Nell fairly groaned.

Nell ought to like to sew. She isn't emancipated enough to hate a needle as I do. But the leaven is working, and she's rising slowly. It might be well for some man to work the dough down a little before she runs over the pan. That's a primitively feminine

wish and not at all in accordance with my own advanced ideas.

I was becoming slightly snarled with my thread, and I was glad when Sallie and her sweetness seated itself in the best rocker in the softest breeze, which Nell had vacated for her.

"Children are the greatest happiness in life and also the greatest responsibility, girls," she said in her lovely rich voice that always melts me to a solution of sympathy whenever she uses it pensively on me. "Of course I should be desolate without mine, but what could I do with them if I didn't have all of you dear people to help me with them?"

Her wistful dependence had charm.

I looked at the twin with the yellow fuzz on the top of its head that has hall marked it as the kitten in my mind, seated on Sallie's lap with her

head on Sallie's shoulder, looking like a baby bud folded against the full rose, and I couldn't help laughing. Kit had been undressed three times after her bath this morning, while Cousin Martha, Cousin Jasmine and Mrs. Hargrove argued with each other whether she should or shouldn't have a scrap of flannel put on over her fat little stomach. Henrietta finally decided the matter by being impudent and sensible to them all about the temperature.

"Don't you all 'spose God made the sun some to heat up kit's stomach?" she demanded scornfully as she grabbed the little roly-poly bone of contention and marched off with her to finish dressing her on the front porch in the direct rays of her instituted heater.

The household at large at Widegables can never agree on the clothing of the twins, and Henrietta often has to finish their toilets thus, by force. Aunt Dilsie being reduced by her phthisic to a position that is almost entirely ornamental, Henrietta's strength of character is the only thing that has made the existence of the twins bearable to themselves or other people.

As I have said before, I do wish that some day in the future you will come under the direct rays of Henrietta's influence, Jane, dear.

"Yes, Sallie, I should call them a responsibility," I answered her, with a laugh, as I reached up my arms for the kitten. Then, as the little yellow head snuggled in the hollow that was instituted in the beginning between a woman's breast and arms for the purpose of just such nestlings, I whispered as I laid my lips against her little ear, "and a happiness, too, darling."

And as Sallie rocked and recuperated her breath Nell eyed the ruffle apprehensively.

"Are you going to let us make another dress for the kiddies, Sallie, dear?" she finally was forced by her uneasiness to ask, though with the deepest sweetness and consideration in her voice.

If I am ever a widow with young children I hope they will burn us all up with the deceased rather than keep me wrapped in a cotton wool of sympathy, as all of us do, Sallie.

(Continued on last page)

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