

## "THE TINDER BOX"

(Continued from first page)

It would be much more spectacular for all the good looking women in town to go when we are invited to Mrs. Henderson's tea for the big bugs and dazzle 'em so that it would at least put Glendale on the map," said Nell, with spirit. "He made me so mad that I"—

"Mr. Haley thinks that we should be very careful not to feel malice or envy toward Bolivar, but to rejoice at its good fortune in getting both roads and the shops even if it does mean a loss to us. What is material wealth in this world anyway when we can depend so on"— Sallie's expression was so beautifully silly and like the dominie's that it was all that I could do not to give vent to an unworthy shout. Nell saw it as I did, and I felt her smother a giggle.

But before Aunt Augusta could get her breath to put the crux of the matter straight before her feminine tribunal Aunt Martha beat her to it as she placidly rocked back and forth knitting lace for a petticoat for Henrietta.

"Of course Glendale doesn't really care about the railroad. In fact, we would much rather not have our seclusion broken in upon, especially as they might choose the route they have prospected," with a glance at Sallie, "but it is more to show our friendliness to Bolivar than to the actual commission and our desire to rejoice with them in their good fortune. It would be very mean spirited of us to ignore them and not assist them in entertaining their guests, especially as some of them must be invited. We've never been in such an attitude as that to Bolivar!"

"Exactly, Martha," answered Aunt Augusta, with relief. "The thought of proud old Glendale putting herself in an attitude of municipal sulks toward common Bolivar seemed an unbearable

disgrace to me. Didn't we invite them up for a great fish fry on the river when they opened that odious soap factory and ask them to let us help take care of some of their delegates when they had the Methodist conference? They sent one of the two bishops to you, you remember, Martha, and I am sure your entertainment of him was so lavish that he went home ill. No man said us nay in the exercising our right of religious hospitality. Why should they in our civic? We must not allow the town to put us in such an attitude—must not! It was for this that I called this meeting at Evelina's, as she was the one to propose this public spirited and creditable plan."

"But what shall we do if they don't want to have it?" asked Mame.

"I have asked when did the men of Glendale begin to dictate to the women as to whom they should offer their hospitality?" answered Aunt Augusta as she arose to her feet. "Are we free women, and have we or have we not command of our own storerooms and our own servants and our own time and strength?"

And as I looked up at the tall, fierce, white haired old dame of high degree, daughter of the women of the colonies and the women of the wilderness days, I got exactly the same sensation I had when I saw the Goddess of Liberty loom up out of the mist as I sailed into the harbor of my own land from a foreign one. And what I was feeling I knew every woman present was feeling in a greater or less degree, except perhaps Sallie, for her face was a puzzle of sore amazement and a pleading desire for further sleep.

"Have we or have we not?" Aunt Augusta again demanded, and just then a most wonderful thing happened!

Jane stood I

Oh, Jane, you were a miracle to me, but I must go on writing about it all calmly for the sake of the five!

I made a mad rush from my rocker to throw myself into her arms, but she stopped me with one glance of her cold, official eye that quelled me and stood attention before Aunt Augusta.

"Madam President," she said in her grandest parliamentary voice, "It was by accident that I interrupted the proceedings of what I take to be an official meeting. Have I your permission to withdraw? I am Miss Shelby's guest, Miss Mathers, and I can easily await her greetings until the adjournment of this body."

Oh, Jane, and my arms just hungry for you!

"Madam," answered Aunt Augusta in her grandest manner and a voice so filled with cordiality that I hardly knew it, "It is the pleasure of the chair to interrupt proceedings and to welcome you. Evelina, introduce us all!"

It was all just glorious! I never saw anybody get a more lovely ovation than Jane did from my friends, for they had all heard about her, read with awe clippings I showed them about her speeches and—were about ready for her.

Sallie kissed her on both cheeks. Mame laid the baby in her arms with a devout expression, and Nell clung to her with the rapture of the newly proselyted in her face. Aunt Martha made her welcome in her dearest manner



Jane Stood in Our Midst!

and Caroline beamed on her with the return of a lot of the fire and spirit of the youth that, hanging on the doled out affections of Lee Greenfield, had starved in her.

And it was characteristic of Jane and her methods that it took much less time than it takes me to write it, for her to get all the greetings over with, explain that she had sent me a letter telling me that she was coming that had gone astray, get everybody named and ticketed in her mind and get us all back to business.

Aunt Augusta explained the situation to her with so much feeling and eloquence that she swept us all off our feet, and when she was ready to put the question again to us as to our willingness to embark on our defiance of

our fellow townsmen, the answer of enthusiastic acquiescence was ready for her.

"Of course, as none of you have any official municipal status, the invitation will have to be given informally, in a social way, to the commission through Miss Shelby's friend, Mr. Richard Hall," said Jane, when Aunt Augusta had called on her to give us her opinion of the situation in general and the mode of procedure. "We find it best in all women questions of the present to do things in a perfectly legal and parliamentary way."

"Must we tell them about it or not?" asked Mame, in a wavering voice, looking up devoutly at Jane, who had held young Ned against the stiff white linen shirt of her traveling dress just as comfortably as if he were her own seventh.

"Did they consult you before deciding to refuse your suggestion?" asked Jane, calmly and thoughtfully.

"They did not," trumpeted Aunt Augusta.

"Then wouldn't it be the most regular way to proceed to get an acceptance of the invitation from the commission and then extend them one to be present?" pronounced Jane coolly, seemingly totally unconscious that she was exploding a bombshell.

"It would, and we will consider it so settled," answered Aunt Augusta dominantly.

This quick and revolutionary decision gave me a shock. I could see that a woman doesn't like to feel that there is a stick of dynamite between her and a man when she puts her head down under his chin or her cheek to his, but advanced women must suffer that. Still I'm glad that the Crag is on our side of the fence. I felt sorry for Mame and Caroline, and Sallie looked a tragedy.

In fact, a shade of depression was about to steal over the spirits of the meeting when Aunt Augusta luckily called for the discussion of plans for the rally.

Feeding other human beings is the natural, instituted, physiological, pathological, metaphysical and spiritual outlet for a woman's nature, and that is why she is so happy when she gets out her family recipe book for a called rehearsal for the functioning of her hospitality. The revolution went home happy and excited over the martaling of their fleshpots.

I'm glad Jane is asleep across the hall tonight. If I had had to shoulder all this outbreak myself I would have compromised by instituting a campaign of wheeling the like of which this town never suffered, and then when this glorious rally was finally pulled off the cajoled masculine population would have fairly swelled with pride over having done it.

Of course by every known test of conduct and economics their attitude in the matter is entirely right. Men work to all given points in straight, clear cut, logical lines only to find women at the point of results waiting for them with unforeseen culminations which would have been impossible to them.

And I am also glad the Crag is partly responsible for starting or at least unconsciously aiding this scheme in high finance of mine, and he is also in reality the silent sponsor for this unhatched revolution. I am deeply contented to go to sleep with that comforting thought tucked under my pillow.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### An Attained Tomorrow.

I'VE changed my mind about a woman's being like a whirlwind. The women of now are the attained tomorrow that the world since the beginning has been trying to catch up with. Jane is that, and then the day after, too, and what she has

done to Glendale in these two weeks has stunned the old town into a trance of delight and amazement. She has recreated us, breathed the breath of modernity into us and started the machine up the grade of civilization at a pace that makes me hold my breath for fear of something jolting us.

She and Aunt Augusta have organized an Equality league, and that wheel came very near flying loose and being the finish of Uncle Peter.

He came to see me the morning of the first meeting, and, when I saw him coming up the front walk, I got an astral vision of the chips on his shoulder enlarged to twice their natural size and called to Jasper to mix the juleps very long and extra deep. But deep as they were, to the very top of the longest glasses, he couldn't drown his wrath in his.

"Women, women," he exploded from over the very mint sprig itself, "all fools, all fools from the beginning of time; made that way on purpose—on purpose—hey? World needs some sort of creature with no better sense than to want to spend their lives fooling with babies and the bread of life. Human young and religion are the only things in the world men can't attend to for themselves and that's what they need women for. Women with no brains, but all heart—all heart—hey?"

"Why should just a little brain hurt their heart action, Uncle Peter?" I asked mildly. There is nothing in the world that I ever met that I enjoy any more than one of Uncle Peter's rages, and I always try to be meekly inflammatory.

"They're never satisfied with using them to run church societies and children's internal organs, but they want to use 'em on men and civilization in general. Where'd you get that Yankee schoolmarm, hey? Why don't she get a husband and a baby and settle down? Ten babies, twenty babies if necessary, hey?"

"You are entirely mistaken as to the plans that Jane and Aunt Augusta have for the league they are forming this morning, Uncle Peter," I began to say with delight as to what was likely to ensue. "If you would only listen to Jane while she"—

"Don't want to hear a word she has to say! All 'as the crackling of thorns under a pot'—all the talk of fools."

"But surely you are not afraid to listen to her, Uncle Peter," I dared to say and then stood away.

"Afraid? Afraid? Never was afraid of anybody in my life, Augusta not excepted!" he exclaimed as he rose in his wrath. "The men of this town will show the uprising hussies what we think of 'em and put 'em back to the heels of men, where they belong—belong, hey?"

And before I could remonstrate with him he was marching down the street like a whole regiment out on a charge that was to be one of extermination or complete surrender.

The Crag told me that evening that the mayor's office of Glendale had reeked of brimstone for hours, and the next Sunday Aunt Augusta sat in their pew at church, militantly alone, while he occupied a seat in the farthest limits of the amen corner with equal militancy.

Jane didn't throw any rocks at anybody's opinions or break the windows of anybody's prejudices. She had the most lovely heart to heart talks with the women separately, collectively and in both small and large bunches. I had them in to tea in the combinations that she wanted them, and I must say that she was the loveliest thing with them that could be imagined.

(To be continued)

Great are those 25c dinners at the Ramsey Hotel dining room, Tillamook, Ore.