

adjusting his steps to Miss Minerva's mincing walk.

"William," she corrected, faintly.

"The trouble with *Billy*," repeated her suitor firmly, "is this: you have tried to make a girl out of a healthy, high-spirited boy; you have not given him the toys and playthings a boy should have; you have not even given the child common love and affection." He was letting himself go, for he knew that she needed the lecture, and, wonderful to tell, she was listening meekly. "You have steeled your heart," he went on, "against Billy and against me. You have about as much idea how to manage a boy as a — as a ——" he hesitated for a suitable comparison: he wanted to say "goat," but gallantry forbade; "as any other old maid," he blurted out, realizing as he did so that a woman had rather be called a goat than an old maid any time.

The color mounted to Miss Minerva's face.

"I don't have to be an old maid," she snapped spunkily.

"No; and you are not going to be one any longer," he answered with decision. "I tell you what, Miss Minerva, we are going to