

Some were opposed to it, but a few of the most daring spirits contended that we were old fogies, cowards and mossbacks—that we were behind the age—that we lacked enterprise and moral courage. We disliked very much to be twitted after this manner, so one after another began to fall into line, and finally all hands agreed that when a suitable opening occurred we would try our skill on one—just one, and no more.

We had not long to wait. One day the news was flashed around that a certain old bachelor, who lived seven miles away was to be married in two weeks time to an old maid who lived in our midst, and who was intimately acquainted with everybody in the neighborhood. He was about fifty years of age and she no less than forty, although she had claimed for many years that she was just twenty two. She was a cheerful old body but an inveterate talker. As a news-gatherer and disseminator of current events she had no equal. That much was universally conceded. No boy could be seen speaking to a girl without her knowledge and that knowledge it was her business to spread, greatly to the annoyance of said boy and girl. She belonged to a good family, was extremely kind and was always on hand in cases of sickness, suggesting a hundred cures such as burning feathers on a shovel for colds, hot irons for aches and bleeding for the pleurisy. She was bitterly opposed to youthful marriages, and in this was entirely consistent, as illustrated in her own life. The boys, however, didn't like her, as she was altogether too officious in their affairs and gave many of them considerable trouble. They thought the time had long passed when she should have been confined to the company of Maltese cats. When, therefore, it was reported that she was to be married, it gladdened the hearts of the younger people, and nearly everyone had some remark to offer: "Now is our time boys;" "Let us pay her for what she said about us;" "If ever