## THE HOME-MADE WEDDING.

Me fur the home made weddin', the good, old-fashioned kind, Where love an' hope, an' not splendor, are uppermost in the mind; Where there's jes' the fam'ly preacher-the one we have known fur years; lome honestly spoken "God-bless you's," some smiles an' perhaps some tears. There every word of the service has a meaning that's deep and true, an' a promise is made that is strong enough to last fur a whole life through; there ain't no sneerin' envy that smilles an' mocks an' pretends; Where the flowers are the simple sort that bloom in the sunshine of home an' friends.

When 'Mandy and me was married-the time is years away Yet the memory of it stands as clear as if it was vesierdar There wasn't no crowd in waitin' to see us as we went past. It was jes' a home-made weddin' that was guaranteed to last. There wasn't no pomp and glitter. The presents was rather few But we spoke from our very innost hearts when we uttered the words "I do." An' the skies was blue an' happy; an' the light that shines in the skies Is no more constant from year to year than the love in 'Mandy's eyes. Washington Star.

## Red llead and Whistle Breeches

Thus the set of his grave. He motioned them to their Judgment, and, in the excite- chairs, ment of that disastrous night, joined He was a gray haired man, and his the front rank of the strikers in a face was the face of a nobleman. general mix-up and cracked the head Clear gray eyes were set deep under of a deputy sheriff, the result was his brows, and his mouth was a what he might have expected-two straight line of uncompromising honyears in the penitentiary. That was esty. He sat with one knee thrown all ogld. The peace of the Common- over the other. With one hand he wealth must be preserved, and that is fingered a pen on the deak at his side; why laws and penitentiaries exist, but the other he ran again and again it sometimes goes hard with the moth- through the hair that stood in masses ers and wives. That is also to be ex- on his head. His face was long, and pected, and the boy should have the check bones protraded. His nose thought of it before he crowded to the was power and his chin was resist front of the angry mob or struck the ance. deputy. It went very hard with the He listened silently until Father with his old man, too. It is a cruel 1940 carefully by the inkstand, unthing to have one's only boy in the folded his gaunt limbs and arose. penitentiary, even if one is only a "No." he said, slowly; "I cannot invillage hod currier.

not suffer for food or sheiter after the the priest. daughter of her; but the girl grew They all come to me with the same cried more than ever.

As for the boy's mother, it was to might." also. Mothers have a way of weep- the interview was at an end, and Mike ing over the son they love, even if erose from his chair in the shadow. he has gone wrong. It is not logical, He stood awkwardly turning his hat the grand facts of human life.

When Maggle's baby came the boy's. mother could stand it no longer. It had been urged-and there was some evidence to support it-that the boy had acted in self-defense. He said so himself, but he admitted he had been of the boy." in the front rank. The strikers had The Governor looked the old man carried things with a high hand all over carefully, and the old man's eyes along, and the jury had decided

boy's mother and wife. It went hard Maurice had ended. Then he hald the Terfere?

Maggie Murphy, the boy's wife, did "P if his wife-this mother?" asked

boy went to wear stripes, for old Mike "The should have considered them had a handy little roll in the bank and before," said the Governor, sadly, "If a shanty of his own, and he took you prepare a petition, I will consider Maggie into his home, and made a it, but I cannot offer you my hope. thin and had no spirits. She cried a pica-the wife and the mother-but good part of the time, quite as if Tim they do not take the wife and mother had been a law-abdding citizen, in- into account when the blow is struck, stead of a law-breaking rowdy. Then It is late to think of them when the the baby came, and after that she prison door is closed. You will pardon me, father, but I am very tired to-

be expected that she should weep. He extended his hand in token that perhaps, but it is a fact. It is one of while the Governor shook the priest's hand, and then shuffled forward to be dismissed.

"Good night, sir," said the Governor. "I did not hear your name----

"Murphy," said the priest, quickly; "Michael Murphy, He is the father

feh under his keen glances.

against him. Night and day the boy's " "Mike Murphy?" asked the Gov

ar happy when he could sneak home unmolested. The chiefest of his tormentors was Red Head, but there was re partiality. All the boys drubbed

and the state of t

One day Mrs. Gary made him a stout breeches of dove colored corduroy, and his mother was proud of them. So was Willie. As he walked to school he felt that every one saw and admired them. He felt as conspleuous as when, in a dream, he went to school in his night dress, but he felt more comfortable.

He took his sent in the schoolroom proudly, and when he was called to fore, but if Red Head heard, he made the blackboard to do a sum he walked with a strut. He felt that even the big boys, the wonderful youths who buried in his book and did not look had money to jingle in their pockets. observed him, and he blushed as he imagined the eyes of the little women on the girls' side of the room follow-

ing him. As he crossed the floor the legs of dy scholar must lose that half hour his breeches rubbed against each of play. other, giving forth the crisp corduroy sound of "whist-whist-whist." It could be heard in the farthest corner. All the scholars looked up from their sintes or books. He caught Bessie Clayton's eye upon him and his cheek flamed. She had blue eyes and yellow curis and snubbed him dally.

Even the teacher glanced at, his new breeches. Willle paused in his sum and looked at them with satisfaction himself. Then he walked back to his bench, and the corduroy spoke again, "whist-whist-whist." It was as musical as the clumping of a new pair of red topped boots.

As he slid into his place on his bench, Red Head turned his face and made a month.

"Don't you think you're smart, Whistle Breeches?" he whispered.

"Whist-whist," said the breeches in reply, as Willie moved, and every we in the school seemed to gaze on him, not enviously as before, but meeringly. Who'd want whistle reeches?

When the recess bell rang, Willie valked to the playground with short a cry baby, should seek to defend steps, but still the corduroy whisper- him. d. Two boys behind him laughed, and Willie burned with shame. They must be laughing at his new breeches. lieusle Clayton passed him, and he tood motionless crowded against the wall, until she was out of hearing.

He baused in the doorway timidly. Red Head was standing just outside. me shoulder turned toward Freekles Redmond. It was the signal for a ight, and the small boys were crowdd about them.

"Aw, you're one yourself." Red Hend was saying, "an' you dassn't say it agin. I dare you to it," he cried, but he caught sight of Willie.

"Huh!" he shouted, "look here, felers. Here's Whistle Breeches. Let's spit on 'em?"

The boys crowded into the entry and spat on them. Red Head pulled Willie's hair twice, drawing his head forward as he would pull a bell rope. "Don't he think he's smart!" Wouldn't have 'em!" "Whistle Breeches!" "Whistle Breeches!" They honted in derision, and Willie whi

out of the gate and crept to school. hugging the fences and making himself as insignificant and small as possible, walking with short steps to avoid the endless "whist-whist" of

of the woe the day still held for him. Some men, going back to business, glanced at him to see the cause of his whimpering. He imagined they were thinking cruel things of his breeches. He heard the tardy bell ring, and then he ran in and hurried to his sent. As he hastened down the aisle the corduroy spoke louder than beno sign, and as Willie sidled on to the bench beside him he kept his nose

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up. Willie did not go to the playground at the afternoon recess. He would have died rather, and for once he saw the advantage of the rule that the tar-

When school ended for the day, Willie hoped the teacher would keep that had fallen from his hands. him in. He was willing to be whipped rather than meet Red Head again, but he was dismissed with the rest. He paused in the doorway gathering his breath to make a run for liberty, as he had often run to escape his persecutors. As he waited, he saw Red Head approaching, and he drew back; but Red Head stepped up to him and took him by the arm.

"You let me alone now," whimpered Willie.

"Aw, shut up," said Red Head roughly. "I ain't goin' to burt you. You shut up an' don't be a cry baby. Come along an' I won't let 'em hurt you.'

Fighting and scuffling were not allowed in the entry. Willie put his thumb in his mouth and gazed at Red Head doubtfully. Such friendliness was unnatural. It savored of a plot to entice him forth to be slaughtered. It was not easy to believe that the Red Head who had drubbed him a hundred times, and who scored him as

Red Head walted.

"Come ou," he said at length. "I'll let you help me drive the cow home tip-relerint.

Silli Willie hesitated, although he was almost willing to risk a licking to be allowed to slap the sleek legs of Mrs. Murphy's cow with a limber wil-

low switch, "Come on," said Red Head. "I'll let you smoke my pipe."

"Wou't you lick me?" asked Willie doubtfully.

"No, I won't lick you. What would I want to lick you for?" more comfortable in hot weather, and Willie followed Red Head hesitat-

ingly, with an eye to a safe retreat if necessary. One of the boys came forward from

the group by the gate. "Ili, here comes Whistle Breeches!"

he shouted gleefully. Red Head turned, and clinched his fists, his blue eyes blazing.

"Shut up, Bob Palmer!" he cried fiercely. "Don't you call him that. That ain't no name to call a feller You jist wisht you had breeches like 'em.'

## With his load of shame, he slunk and a amile softened the lines of his mouth.

"Mike," he said, "I believe you used to give me a drubbing about once a day."

in myst in summation cannot should receive the top the

The old Irishman moved uneas, v, pair of breeches. They were good, the corduroy. He sniffled as he thought and his hands played nervously with the rim of his hat. He drew his feet quickly under his chair, and slowly moved his lips without speaking. He thought of that last fierce battle, when the Governor had fallen with a bleeding nose, and he shifted his eyes from spot to spot on the soft carpet. He felt as does a mouse when the cat plays with it.

The Governor turned to Father Mau-

allow myself a personal indulgence, Lionism, in which he deals minutely but I have an unsettled score with thd at some length with the problem Mike, I shall settle it now. I am if the return of the Jews to Palestine. going to pardon that boy."

Two tears fell from the priest's eyes and rolled slowly into the white for- ad Copping in its Puritan edition of est of his beard. Mike Murphy stared 'Pilgrim's Progress" are being made straight before him, while his fingers nto lantern slides. felt vaguely for the rim of the hat

"Go home, Mike!" said the Governor gently. "Go home and tell the Cortez in importance among the conwife and the mother."

When his petitioners had departed, the Governor sat long in the reception room thinking of the old days. When -a study of girl life in New Englandhe opened his watch it was not to note the hour, but to look on a woman's with glowing humor, with human tindness and he crossed his arms on likeness; and he crossed his arms ou

breeches .- New York News.

ELECTRICITY IN WARFARE

Along the Loast.

electric motors have been adopted for

are replacing the older types. Electris

lights are used for rangefinder cross-

hairs, for lighting the rangefinder sta-

tion, and electric clock circuits fur-

fortification. To insure the continuity

of these manifold services accumula-

Curious Properties of Radium.

-Scientific American.

the desk and buried his face in them. Ginn & Co. are publishing "Bacteria. The old days had given him much Yeasts and Molds in the Home," by that the later years had stolen from Prof. H. W. Conn, of Wesleyan Unihim. He sighed and lifted his head. versity. The book is intended for prac-"Poor old Mike!" he said. "I'm lical use and is a popular, not a sciensquare with him at last. I wonder thic, discussion.

why he took my part that day?" and The Bobbs-Merrill Company of Inhe wearily climbed the stair to his dianapolis has completed an arrangement with Ralph Fletcher Seymour by lonely room.

He did not know that when Red which the beautiful books of his work-Head went home that noon, fifty years manship will henceforth be issued unbefore, he had found Mrs. Murphy der its imprint. cutting out a pair of corduroy What a charming story "The Little

Shepherd of Kingdom Come" is! To my taste it is the freshest and one of the most genuine pleces of fiction It Is Witely Used In the Fortification which this season has given us. Hamliton W. Mable.

An interesting instance of the rapid Funk & Wagnalls Company anextension of the use of electricity it nounce the publication of "Esarhadfurnished by the fortifications distrib- don, King of Assyria," a book conuted along our coast. A few yeart taining three new tales by Leo Tolago the electric light was introduced, stol, written for the benefit of the to add to the comfort of the garrisont Kishineff sufferers

and to provide better illumination of Houghton, Mifflin & Co, have issued the works. Once a generating plant a new library edition of Longfellow's had been installed there was at hand Complete Poems, contrining all the a supply of power in a convenient original verse that he wished to preand easily controllable form, and thit perve and all his translations except led to its use for purposes which wert those from Dante.

not contemplated at the time the plant | Agnes and Egerton Castle, the auwas installed. Electric fans have been there of "Incomparable Bellairs," have two new romances under way and will publish them both-first in training the guns, a class of work for which they are norticularly wells dent "Rose of the World," the other "If which they are particularly well adapt Youth But Knew."

munition hoists and to do other wort Houghton, Mifflin & Co, are issuing which before had either been done by a new edition of "The Children's hand or some less satisfactory power Book," edited by Horace E. Scudder. Searchlights have been installed, en Ilhe new cover design is by Adrian J. abling a fortification to sweep the ses lorio. The artists of the many fullat night. The various posts of the page pictures now added are Reynolds, fortress are connected together by tel. Crulkshank, Gustave Dore and Rosina



McClure, Phillips & Co. will publish book on "The Lyceum and Henry 'rving." by Austin Bereton.

A "Dictionary of Slang and Collejulal English," begun many years ago by J. S. Farmer and the late W. E. denley, is just being completed.

"Father," he said, "I do not often Mr. Zangwill is writing a book on

Fleming H. Revell Company ansounces that the illustrations by Har-

Cunninghame Graham is about to publish a book on Hernnado De Soto. whom he regards as coming next to juistadores of America.

Mrs. Wiggin's delightful "Rebecca" is simply crammed from cover to cover

a pardon, but Mike knew it was not who used to go to old No. 3 school in State or to himself. He had never called Red Head?" been known to forget a wrong nor to It was this that had made him Governor; his uncompromising righteousness and stanch fearlessness were greater than eliques and bosses

Old Mrs. Murphy however, was only a woman, and the boy was her boy, and she pardoned him. She knew he was innocent, for he was her boy. Mike refused a thousand times to ask the Governor for a pardon, but as to drub me?" Mrs. Murphy was the boy's mother and had a valiant tongue, the old man changed his mind. One day he put on his old slik hat, and, with Father Mnurice, the good gray priest, went up to the capital.

A strange pair they were to sit in the Governor's richly furnished reception room-Mile, with his smoothly shaven face, red as the sunset, his snowy cyclicows, his white-flecked red hair, and the shiny black of his baggy Sunday suit; Father Mamice, with his long gray board that had been his before the days of the smoothly shaven priests, his kindly eyes and the jolly returnity of his well-fed stomach. The or, st's gentle heart was hopeful, but like sat sadly with his eyes on the tes of his host, for he knew the ertand was folly, not alone because the Sovernor had never pardoned a condiamed man, but because it was he, 3. the Murphy, who came

He remembered an incident of his 'tay hood, and he frowned as he reentied it. Think of it! He, Mike Murphy, had bullled the Governor; had crubbed him and chased him and worried the life out of him. That was why he had told the old woman it was ... use to try it. Who was he to come ssking pardons, when years ago he Lad done his best to make life miserable for the quaking schoolboy who was now the stern-faced Governor; he Governor who never forget nor forgave, nor left a debt unpaid?

When the Governor entered the reeption room he came in unexpectedly, as Father Maurice was leaning forward with one of Mike's red hands clasped in his two white ones. Mike was wiping his eyes with his coat steerse.

The Governor paused in the door way and coughed. His visitors started in surprise, and then arose,

It was Father Maurice who stated their errand, his seamed face turned his face in his arm and bawled, leanapward to the serious eyes of the Governor, and as he proceeded, choostas his quaint Frenchified English

mother begged the old man to try for or, slowly, "Are you the Mike Murphy worth a trial. The Governor was an Harmontown forty-no, fifty-years old man and a strong man, and not ago? There was a Mike Murphy sat one to forgive an injury done to the on my bench. Are you the boy they

The old man tried to answer. His leave a debt unpaid. He was a just lips formed the words, but his voice man, as the ancient Jews were just. did not come. He nodded his head. "Be seated, gentlemen," said the Governor, and Father Maurice sat down hopefully. Mike Murphy dropped into a chair with deeper dejec-

> Well, well?" The Governor nodded his head slowly, his gray eyes searching the ruddy face before him. "So you are the Mike Murphy who used

He smiled grimly. His eyes strayed from the old man's face, and their glance was lost in the air above his head He smiled again, as he sat with the fingers of his left hand pressing the thin skin into a roll above his check bone, for he recalled an incldent of his boyhood.

The Governor had once been an arrant liftle coward. His mother lived in the big white house two blocks above the schoolhouse, on the opposite side of the street. Red Head Mike lived across the alley in a shanty. The Governor's mother bought milk of Mrs. Murphy, and Red Head brought it every evening. He was the first to go barefoot in the spring, pleking his way with painful carefullness over the clods in the street, and he was the real thing. He even chewed a real tobacco. The others chewed licorice or purple thistle tops, but Red Head had the real thing. He even smoked a real pipe without dire consequences," and laughed at the other boys' mild substitutes of corn silk and 'indy cigars," while the way he swore was a liberal education. All the boys swore more or less, especially when they were behind the barn smoking corn sfik, but they knew it was not natural. It was a puny imitation, but

the Red Head article sounded right. But it was when it came to fighting that Red Head proved his right to the worship of the words. He could lick any two boys in the school.

The Governor, who was plain Willie Gary then, could not fight at all. His early youth was one great fear of being whipped. The smallest boys in the school were accustomed to practice on him until they gained sufficient desterity or courage to attack one another. He had a hundred opprobrious nicknames, which he accepted meekly. "Cry Baby" was the favorite. When he was attacked 10 hid ing his arm against any convenient tence or tree, while his tormentor drubbed his back at pleasure. He pered and edged into a corner. "Don't you do that," he said in a

choking voice. "I'll tell teacher, I will."

Red Head stuck his freckled face lose, and shoved him with a warlike shoulder. His fists were doubled, and he jabbed Willie with his elbow.

"Aw, you tell him then, why don't you, Whistle Breeches?" he inquired. "Jist you tell him, an' I'll punch your face off."

He drew his arm back and feinted. Willie crooked his elbow to hide his face, and sobbed.

"Aw, come on, fellers," said Red Head with deep disgust. "What's the use of foolin' with him? He ain't nothin' but a cry baby in whistle breeches. He sin't no fun."

That noon Willie remained in the choolroom until the boys had gone. Some went home for dinner, and the rest ate their lunches under the oak tree at the side of the school. When the room was clear, Willie stole out by the back way and ran rapidly up the alley. He knew he was branded for life. The shame of the name of Whistle Breeches bore him down. He meditated wild plans for getting rid of the offending garment. He would burn it, lose it in the river. He even considered running away from home. After dinner he slipped quietly away from the table, crept up to his room under the slauting roof, and put on his old, patched breeches. He came down quietly, but his mother caught him tiptoeing through the hall.

"Why, Willie," she said, "where are your new breeches, dear?"

"Up stairs," he said, simply, don't want to wear them. Theythey're too tight."

His mother saw the prevariention in the droop of his head.

"Nonsense!" she answered lightly They fit you perfectly, dear. If they are a little stiff now, they will soon wear soft. Go up and put them on.' "I don't want to," he replied stub bornly. He meant, "I will not," but he had learned the disadvantage of contradicting his mother flatly.

"William," said his mother sternly 'go up stairs and put on those breech es this instant."

He climbed the stairs slowly. H hoped he would be late to school. He would be so leisurely in donning them that his mother would make him stay at home to avoid the greater disgrace of being tardy. He thought of playing sick, but decided such an Illness would be too sudden to excite b's mother's sympathy. If only the school house would burn down, or word come that the teacher was dead! But neither came to pass, and his mother's voice sounded from the hall, bidding

Bob stopped suddenly. He looked at Red Head in astonishment. Then he turned and ran to the boys by the gate. They listened to what he said, and then began a loud sing song chant: "Whistle Bree-ches-Whistle Bree-ches-Whistle Bree-ches."

Red Head bounded forward, his eyes glowing with anger. He toppled two boys over, and rained his blows right and left.

"Don't youse call him that!" he with the scouting vessels, and would cried

It was a surprise. The boys drew back and stood ready to scatter at the next onslaught. Red Head waitthe coast. The telautograph may be brought into service for transmitting ed, pulling, with clinched fists.

orders, and electric signaling lights "The next feller that calls him that, I'll break his face!" he threatened. "An' I min't foolin', neither."

They saw that he was not, and they waited respectfully as Red Head and Willie walked away.

Willie went with Red Head to drive the cow home, and Red Head taught him how to double up his fist for battle according to the traditions of at all times be a constant and reliable the school, with the knuckles of the supply of power. Thus, from being Walter Besant was engaged on what second finger protruded.

"You jist do that," he explained. "an' you can hurt 'em worse. An' If they fight back, kick 'em in the legs. That's how I do. Why, you're as blg as I am, an' I bet you're jist as strong. You jist stand up to 'em. There ain't nothin' in fightin' when you tremely curious. This body emits with, know how. If you just stand up to great intensity all of the different rays 'em, they 'most always back down. that are produced in a vacuum-tube You begin on Tom Ament. He's a The radiation, measured by means of bigger baby 'n you are. Anybody kin lick hlm. I kin lick him with my littimes more powerful than that from as tle finger. An' then you tackle Shorty. He's a baby, too. You're jist afraid." It was Red Head who egged Willie on to strike Tom Ament the next day. and Red Head coached him until Tom took to his heels, defeated. Then Red Head made him lick Shorty and with the lust of victory in his veins Willie worked his way upward, and soon the other mothers began telling Willie's mother that he was a bad boy, always fighting, and Mrs. Gary wept over him. But no one called him Whistle Breeches, and he learned that he was as much of a man as any of them, and more of a man than radiographs.-Century. toost.

Ther, came a battle royal, when Red Head and Willie stood face to face and pounded each other for a good half hour for supremacy, and Willie went down with a bleeding nose and an eye that was dark for days. But Red Head had taught him self

onfidence, and self confidence made him the Governor of a great State. When the Governor's eyes came back to Mike Murphy's face, they rest ed a moment on the grizzled red hair. ephone, so that the commandant is is Emmet.

touch at all times with the entire gap The Macmillan Company has just rison, and can instantly transmit or added to its Mediaeval Towns series ders to any point. The various fortifi. "The Story of Seville," by Walter M. cations along the coast are tied to. Gallichan. This is a sketch of the gether by telephone and telegraph, se salient events in the annals of Seville, that on the appearance of the enemy but it is chiefly concerned with the ap at any point all the fortifications sociations of the city's buildings and would be informed of it. Submaring thoroughfares. mines are controlled electrically, and

Elizabeth Robins Pennell has for even the guns may be fired by this many years been collecting a valuable means by an officer at some distant library of cookery books in Latin, point. By means of wireless telegra-French, German, Italian, Spanish and phy a fortification can be kept in touch English. Her account of them in "My Cookery Books" will entertain the genbe informed of the approach of the eral reader, delight the epicure and enemy long before he is visible from gain a hearty welcome from the book collector.

The Carlyle controversy has had one legitimate effect, it has increased the number of visitors at the celebrated house in Chelsen. More sightseers hy 500 have passed through its doorway nish accurate time to all parts of the than in any year since the opening of the house to the public, in December, 1895. Americans have taken the lead tors are now installed, so there will among the visitors.

At the time of his death the late Sir at first a small auxiliary, the electrical he called his magnum opus, the survey equipment has extended until it is of London. The first installment, new probably the most important part "London in the Eighteenth Century," of the entire equipment of the fortress, appeared last year. The second part,

"London in the Time of the Stuarts," is announced by the Macmillan Company to be almost ready for publica-The properties of radium are ex tion.

One on the Editor.

George Ade, in the early days of his career, before the "Fables in Shang" an electroscope, is at least a millior had brought him fame, called one morning in Chicago upon a Sunday edequal quantity of uranium. A charged itor, on a mission from a theatrical electroscope placed at a distance of sev. manager.

"I have brought you this manueral metres can be discharged by a few centigrams of a radium sait. One car script"----- he began, but the editor, looking up at the tall, timid youth, inalso discharge an electroscope through a screen of glass or lead five or six terrupted:

"Just throw that manuscript in the centimetres thick. Photographic plates placed in the vicinity of radium are al. waste basket, please," he said. "I'm most instantly affected if no screen in. very busy just now, and haven't time tercepts the rays; with screens, the ac to do it myself."

tion is slower, but it still takes place Mr. Ade obeyed calmiy. He rethrough very thick ones if the ex. sumed:

- Thea. therefore be used in the production of ter, and the manuscript I have just thrown in the waste basket is your comic farce of The Erring, Son, which the manager asks me to return to you Tom-I thought he would marry the with thanks. He suggests that you soll it to an undertaker, to be read at for

> aerals." Then Mr. Ade smiled gently and withdrew.

> > Sure Test.

"Why do you say he is as true steel?"

"Because be never loses his per."-Philadelphia Bulletia.....

Woman's Bad Aim. widow. Dick-Oh, no! I believe she didn't strike him at all. Tom-Why, I understand she simply threw herself at his head. Dick-No doubt that's why she didn't strike him. - Philadelphia Ledger.

A woman's age is one of nature's greatest secrets.