

Tragedy of a Marcel Wave that Wouldn't Wave.



Mrs. Davis Presents Herself at the Hair Dresser's to Have the "Everlasting Wave" Put in Her Hair.

The First Step in the Process Was a Thorough Shampooing and Drying of Her Very Luxuriant Tresses.

What Happened to Mrs. Davis's Hair as She Described It to the Court. Then the Operator Divided Her Hair into Little Wispes and Wrapped Each Tightly Around a Little Metal Rod.

Then Each of the Tightly Twisted Wispes Was Wrapped in Saturated Cloth and Enclosed in Paper Cylinders

Each of These Cylinders Was Then Put in a Metal Cylinder, the Electricity Turned on and the Hair Baked.

And When She Came to Dress for the Ball That Night Her Hair Cracked and Broke Off an Inch from Her Head.

Distressing Experiences of Mrs. Alice Davis Who Sought an "Everlasting Ripple" in Her Hair and Who Has Been Given \$500 Damages Because She Promptly Lost Not Only the Ripple but Her Hair as Well

THREE years ago Mrs. Alice Davis, widow of a wealthy and prominent citizen of Cincinnati, became possessed of desire to own an "everlasting wave" in her hair. She acquired the "wave" and lost her hair.

Likewise she acquired much experience, including three burned spots on her scalp from which hair will never again grow. Four weeks' illness, doctors' bills, anguish and humiliation of spirit. By way of consolation a jury has awarded her \$500, which, she says, will not pay for the service of even one of her three lawyers.

The experiences of the wealthy widow raise several questions of import to all women, and, in natural consequence, to all men.

First what is a woman's hair worth to her?

Of what relative importance is her hair to the sum of her charms?

Will four weeks' illness, caused chiefly by her grief of losing her hair, so despoil a woman of her beauty that she will never again be so lovely?

What should be the amount of damages if a fashionable woman is forced to wear a hat in the evening, when hats are no longer fashionable?

If a woman is young and pretty and enjoys social prominence, what is the actual degree of her suffering if for three years she has to forego social functions and has always to sit in the back row of the theatre?

These are important questions to a smart woman, and it greatly puzzled a New York jury that finally found for the defendant to the amount of \$500.

The jury, which, by the way, was composed of married men, was out five hours. For most of these hours it was evidently divided upon the question of awarding any damages.

Temperament and tears were among the witnesses in the case of Mrs. Alice Davis versus the hair dresser, a prominent one in New York. Mrs. Davis who had come from California to press the suit, turned eloquent and indignant brown eyes upon the jury. It was noticeable that her small and shapely head was covered by a small black velvet hat. At the request of the Judge she removed her hat to show the jury the extent of the despoliation.

"Your Honor," began pretty and angry Mrs. Davis, being permitted to tell her story in her own way. "I have travelled all the way from California to press this charge, because, I think, other women should be warned by my sufferings. I had been foolish enough to believe that a confirmed ripple, called an everlasting wave, can be put into straight hair. Most women who have straight hair want it to look curly. I was of that number. Besides, if any guardian angel of common sense whispered to me, 'It can't be done,' I argued back 'It will be a great saving of time and vitality not to have your hair curled by irons every morning or to lose sleep by keeping your hair in torturing artificial curlers all night.' I made arrangements for the ordeal by telephone.

"I called up the best known firm in New York, for safety. My business judgment prompted me to say: 'Do you guarantee that this will be an everlasting wave?' 'Yes' was the answer. 'Do you

guarantee that it will do no harm to my hair?' I asked. 'Yes, absolutely' came over the wire. 'How much will it cost?' I inquired. 'Thirty-five dollars.' 'How long will it take?' 'Eight hours.'

"The next morning I was there at 10 o'clock to keep my appointment. At once my hair was thoroughly shampooed and dried. Then began the torment, proving the old adage that we must suffer to be beautiful. Sitting bolt upright in a straight-backed chair, I watched the operator begin his work. 'He first grasped a quantity of hair on top of my head as though he were going to scalp me. Then he divided that into eight little wispes, taking from what looked like a collection of surgical instruments that stood on a nearby table what resembled a darning needle, but was thicker, twenty times thicker I should say. He wrapped one of the wispes of hair around the metal rod. When each one of the eight wispes had been so treated the upper part of my head resembled that of a grinning pickaninny of my native Kentucky, save in color.

"When this had been done each of the tightly twisted wispes was wrapped round with a strip of woollen cloth about an inch wide that had been taken from a white solution in a glass bowl. After this each wisp was thrust into a little cylinder of white paper that reminded me of the white wrapping of a lamb or mutton chop. One by one the wispes thus prepared were thrust into a larger cylinder, about six inches long and two in diameter, that looked like a giant spool. The cylinder had what looked like cord wrapped around it, and there was a little green handle on it. I remarked that it looked like a flatiron with a round, instead of flat, bottom. This cylinder was attached to a battery, the cord hanging from the ceiling.

"He gathered together at the back of my head the same quantity with which he had begun at the top. That he separated into eight wispes and began the treatment all over in the same way.

"How long will it take to bake the hair?" I asked, growing restless.

"From thirty to forty-five minutes," was the reply.

"For each set?"

"For each batch of loaves," rejoined the hairdresser.

"His jest was not as ill-timed and inappropriate as it seemed. I began to feel like a loaf of bread in an oven. Remember that I had to sit continuously on the stiff-backed chair. Had I moved I would have disconnected with the electricity and the baking would have been interrupted. Fancy what would happen if you put a painful of bread into an oven and took it out when it was but half done. Such catastrophe must not befall my hair. So I sat on and on, though perspiration burst from my face and my breath came in gasps from utter weariness.

"When the first set of 'waves' was baked the cylinders were removed and the second lot of hair thrust into them. When the second lot was done the baking was continued with the third. And so on until half past six.

"I began to suffer from a frightful headache. Complaining of it, I was told that the firm would send for a luncheon for me, which it did. But sitting as stiffly as I would in a straitjacket, I had little appetite. Twice there was a distinct impression that my scalp was burning in spots. I screamed in my



PHOTO BY MARCEAUVNY

A Photograph of Mrs. Alice Davis Taken Before the Tragic Episode of the "Everlasting Wave." Her Hair, It Is Plain, Was Then Extremely Abundant.

fright. The operator turned a blast of cold air from a drying funnel on my head. But any one who knows the rudiments of first aid to the injured knows that this is exactly what not to do for a burn.

"In great distress I said, 'Send at once for some one in authority.' A man entered. I did not know at the time who he was, but when I saw him on the witness stand I knew he was the head of the firm.

"Is it true that you guarantee that this baking will not destroy the life of the hair?" I demanded.

"We absolutely guarantee that it will not harm the vitality of the hair," he answered.

"Slightly soothed, but with tears of fright and nervousness flowing over my face, I continued the scene of torture.

"My scalp felt as though it were on fire. My nerves tingled in a tumult of pain. The chair became a seat of torture. Quite frankly I confess that I went into hysterics the last hour of the long operation. I was at the point of screaming. By half past six I did scream from the pain of my tortured head. When the last of the wispes were taken out of the

torture oven I would not wait to have my hair dressed. Thrusting my hair into my hat and wrapping a veil around my head I hurried home.

"When I had rested an hour I determined to go to a ball. It was one to which I had looked forward for a long time. All the people I knew were to be there. I got up from my bed and started to do my hair.

"As I tried to comb it it literally broke off in my fingers. Masses of it fell to the floor. My hair, which had been my best point, fine and light and wonderfully thick, was thirty inches long. It broke off one inch from my head. Strand after strand as I touched it it fell to the floor. Every stroke of the brush brought out masses of it. Frantically I kept on. When I had finished three tiny wispes that had somehow escaped the destroyer remained. They but accentuated my deplorable appearance. I burst into tears. I raged.

"My sister, trying to comfort me, begged me to go to the ball. 'Without hair?' I wailed. 'Put on your silver cap,' she said. The little caps were fashionable at the time. She thrust my poor hair,

now only one inch long, and the three pitiful strand relics, into the cap. She pinned a rose into the cap. Picking up some of the hair that had fallen to the floor I desperately pasted it around my face.

"I went to the ball. I tried to forget my trouble by dancing a few times. But in the midst of the ball I fainted and was carried home.

"For four weeks I was ill, confined to my bed. My physician has since said that he never saw anything at once so comic and pathetic in his life. 'I had thought you a pretty woman,' he said. 'As you lay there you seemed to shrink a few inches every day. After a while you looked all eyes and ears.' 'I recovered slowly from the shock, so slowly that for a year I lived a life of widowhood. But for a far different reason. This time I was ashamed to be seen.

"When I began going out again my humiliation was great. For instance, I always liked to sit in a box or at least in the front row of a theatre. I had to sit in a back row because I had to wear a

hat to cover the wreck of what had been my beautiful hair. Had I sat nearer the stage an usher or a neighbor would have demanded the removal of my hat. And I would have been laughed at because my wig was crooked or my transformation had slipped.

"After a while I stopped wearing the wig because it heated my head and caused worse headaches.

"Then my mental suffering was greater than ever. A light thatch of hair like the down on a duckling was beginning to grow, but only sparsely, as it were, in patches. I suffered grievously from remarks I overheard regarding my appearance.

"'Pretty woman,' said some one at a restaurant, 'but look at her hair. I'll lay you a box of gloves she is just out of an insane asylum. Shave their hair there, you know.'

After having recited what she told the court, as in the foregoing, Mrs. Davis continued to a representative of this newspaper:

"I sued the hair dresser for \$25,000. I based my claim upon the more than \$6,000 that I had expended on daily massage to soothe, and electrical treatments to stimulate, my poor scalp; for the wigs and transformations I had to buy, and the caps to conceal my dreadful cranial condition. Also for the fees of my lawyers. The \$20,000 I claimed was some compensation for the mental anguish I had endured. I was not, however, disappointed at the verdict, because I have all the money I want. I won what I wanted, a moral victory. I was able through my case to warn other women against repeating my mistake.

"My story has a double moral. The first is, 'Use the measuring rule of your common sense when reading an advertisement. Ask yourself whether the claims made are probable.' Second, 'Never use a curling iron on your hair. If God hasn't given you a wave in your hair make the most of your straight tresses.'

"I am going back to San Jose, Cal., to watch over my little daughter's education. I go in penitence and in triumph. Women, suffering, I salute and warn you!"

There is, of course, another side to every picture, and this is the explanation the hair dresser made:—

"I have had 8,000 everlasting waves in five years. No one is infallible! There have been a few failures. At most one per cent. But they have been in cases in which the hair has been often dyed or bleached, or both. Mrs. Davis did not tell us her hair had been dyed. We knew it had been bleached because we could tell at a glance. There is no natural yellow hair. Light hair has a drab tint. Following my instructions, our operator warned her that since her hair had been devitalized by bleaching we could not guarantee that it would not fall out in the treatment. She said, 'Go ahead.' I know she denied this on the stand, but it was a question of veracity between us. We charged her fifty dollars because of the poor condition of her hair.

"The day after she won her suit four customers came in for an everlasting wave. We asked them whether they were not frightened. They all laughingly replied that they were not. One of these was a customer who has had an everlasting wave put into her hair seven times in two years."

"But why so often if it is everlasting?" "Because we cannot prevent the hair growing out and the everlasting wave moving down toward the ends of the hair. It is on top of the head that the wave shows most and the effect most desired is secured. Therefore my customers wish to have it done over and over. We guarantee that in normal conditions it will last six months.

"The electricity is not applied directly to the scalp. It is only used in heating the irons. Besides, the hair is not waved nearer than an inch from the scalp. And we slip over the wisp of hair as protection a fibroid disk that will not burn.

"Since this woman has caused the trouble we have had printed a slip we require every customer to sign, assuming the responsibility themselves in case of accidents. By improvements we have lessened the time of the operation from eight and a half to three and a half hours."