

# The Man with the Iron Hair

Sascha, Modern Samson, an Object Lesson in Hair Health,  
Tells How You Can Keep Yours

By John Hayden

**M**OST of us hate to have our hair pulled. We don't pull it ourselves, and we would become belligerent toward anybody who tried it. The prejudice is one of long standing. When we were kiddies and mother was in too great a hurry with the comb, we yelled our resentment; and when we grew up we stuck to it that the only thing to be said about hair pulling was that it was a mode of torture.

I recall the first time I ever rode horse-back, and how shocked I was when the farmer, who helped me onto the old bare-backed nag he had led from the barn, told me to catch hold of her mane and hang on. I caught hold and pulled myself up gingerly; and then, fearing for my balance, put my whole weight on it with the startled conviction that I must be nearly killing the patient animal, and that she would presently buck me right into kingdom come.

But apparently nothing disturbed her. She stood there with her wise old head down, waited for me to get settled, and then set off at a slow canter—whereupon I promptly began to roll off, and she stopped till I could again get my short legs into position. She had carried children before.

What it meant to me as a child was a startling revelation of the strength of hair. It was a discovery that there was more to the matter than my nursery experiences had taught me.

Then, years later, I went to a circus where a gentleman who called himself "Iron Hair" attached himself by his thatch to a sliding pulley and traveled the length of a sloping rope. If he had eaten his dinner sitting on a hot stove he could hardly have startled me more, and the rest of the onlookers, though they were mostly much older and wiser than I was, were equally amazed.

For sheer dramatic interest Iron Hair put it all over the fellow who climbed barefoot up the ladder of swords, or the one who ate fire and blew smoke and flames from his mouth and nostrils.

These hair stunts, however, appeared to be comparatively rare. Though I saw many circus and vaudeville acts after those first wondrous days, I do not recall another strong hair artist till, about six months ago, I met Professor Anthony Barker. By way of an introduction, Professor Barker

invited me to grab his hair with both hands, whereupon he swung me up off the floor with no apparent effort, indicating at the same time that he could as easily have taken two of me.

But the first time I ever got a tingling feeling in my scalp from seeing such feats was when I went to the Physical Culture Show in Madison Square Garden last October and beheld Sascha, "the Hair Gladiator," attach a couple of fifty pound weights to his hair by means of some contrivance I couldn't see the nature of, and begin to whirl them, as a boy does a sling, with a rotary motion of his head and body. If they had ever broken loose they would certainly have flown out and banged somebody in the mass of spectators banked about the platform where he did his act. As it was, it was hard to convince oneself that either the hair or the scalp had ever been made that would stand that strain—for obviously, while the weights themselves would tip the scales at a hundred pounds, as I later ascertained, the pull must have been enormously increased by swinging them till they stood out fully half way to horizontal. If you don't believe it, try taking even a

twelve pound weight attached to a wire and swing it around your head till it stands out at an angle of forty-five degrees.



Photos by Fab

You may have seen him with a circus at any time during the past twenty-five years, juggling heavy weights hanging to his hair. His professional name is "Sascha."