

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

DEWITT C. WARNER, OF WILKES-BARRÉ, PENNSYLVANIA.

## IMPROVEMENT IN WIGS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 14,683, dated April 15, 1856.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, DEWITT C. WARNER, of Wilkes-Barré, in the county of Luzerne and State of Pennsylvania, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Wigs, Toupees, and other Artificial Coverings Made to Imitate the Natural Hair; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same.

This invention consists in attaching the hair, as hereinafter described, to a groundwork of gutta-percha, either in the form of a perfect scalp or frame-work for a wig, or in plates or strips of any desired form for toupees, plaits, curls, &c. The advantage of this groundwork over the net-work commonly employed in wigs, &c., consists, first, in the facility with which the hair can be attached and the consequent reduction of the expense of labor; secondly, in its allowing the hair to be combed and dressed with as much ease and perfection as if it were in its natural condition *in situ*; thirdly, in allowing the wigs or other articles to be washed and cleansed thoroughly without injuring the beauty of their appearance or affecting their durability.

To construct a wig I first mold the gutta-percha base or groundwork on a block or mold of suitable form, while it is kept sufficiently plastic by heat. This groundwork may be either in the form of a perfect scalp perforated all over for ventilation, and having one or more slits to allow it to be easily put on and taken off, said slits being provided with strings to tie or with other suitable fastenings, or it may simply consist of a frame, and in that case no further provision for ventilation will be necessary. Having made the gutta-percha groundwork, I proceed to attach the hair, which may be done in a variety of ways, in all of which the main agent by which the attachment is effected is a sufficient degree of heat to make the gutta-percha plastic and adhesive. The mode of attaching the hair which I have essayed with most success is to take a smooth but not too sharp chisel-edged steel instrument, and heat it over a spirit-lamp or otherwise to a degree that will enable it to penetrate the gutta-percha easily, and I make with this instrument in the exterior surface of the gutta-percha a groove or furrow of about half a line

in depth and from half an inch to an inch in length. This being done, I take a lock of hair sufficient in quantity for the length of the groove, without any other preparation than being well cleansed from oils, &c., and clip the ends to be attached, so as to bring them all in the same line or plane, and lay them across the groove or furrow so that their cut extremities will project about half a line beyond its lateral center. I then place the heated instrument on the hair over the center of the groove or furrow and press it down into the gutta-percha. This produces an angular bend in the hair, as it sinks into the gutta-percha, which, being rendered adhesive by the heat of the instrument, causes the hair to remain in its bent form at the bottom of the groove or furrow after the removal of the instrument. I then with the heated instrument press the sides of the groove toward the center thereof, and the gutta-percha from the side next the cut extremities of the hair covers and adheres to the hair at the bottom of the groove and secures it. All that now remains to be done is to smooth the surface of gutta-percha on either side the hair. At suitable distances apart I secure in this manner a sufficient number of locks of hair to cover the whole scalp. The parting is formed by laying the hair in opposite directions on either side of it.

Another method of securing the hair is to bend the extremity of each with a heated metal instrument, so as to form a little hook, and to immerse the end so bent in an aqueous solution of gum-arabic, drying it, then softening the gutta-percha sufficiently for the extremity of the hair stiffened by the gum-water to penetrate to the depth of the bent extremity. This method will require considerable practice, and will be more tedious than that first described, but will produce a very perfect imitation of nature. There are several other methods, which it is not necessary to describe, as all partake of the same character.

Instead of employing a scalp or frame of gutta-percha, strips or plates of gutta-percha may have hair attached, as above described, and the said strips may then be applied to a net-work scalp of similar character to the groundwork of wigs as usually constructed.

To construct toupees, plaits, curls, &c., strips

or plates of gutta-percha of proper form will be employed, and the hair attached by any of the methods above referred to as applicable to the construction of wigs.

I do not confine myself to any particular method of inserting the hair in the gutta-percha; but

What I claim as my improvement in wigs, &c., and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

Attaching the hair to a groundwork of gutta-percha by means of the adhesive property of the gutta-percha as developed by the application of heat, substantially as herein described.

DEWITT C. WARNER.

Witnesses:

JAMES SUTTON,  
CHAS. N. DRAKE.