

WOULD RATHER BE MABEL

Than "Dave," and Again She Has Put on Skirts.

Wheeling, W. Va., July 29.—After masquerading for four months as "Dave" Kyle, pretty 18-year-old Mabel McElhaney has again adopted the habiliments of her sex. She is at the home of Samuel O. Boyce, a prominent attorney, and declares that she would rather be Mabel than "Dave." Yesterday she was a rather foppish, delicate-featured, fair-skinned young man. Today she has made a pompadour in place of the part in her brown hair, donned shirt waist and skirt, and is a prepossessing young woman.

Mabel was a cabin boy on the steamer Ruth when her sex was suspected, and she left the boat at Moundsville. That was eight days ago. She has been in Wheeling and vicinity ever since, and was spending Saturday at a fishing camp below Benwood, when an officer from that city placed her under arrest. The first tears she shed since putting on male attire were flowing from her blue eyes and the sympathy of Mrs. Boyce was aroused. When she heard the story her woman's heart rebelled at the idea of the young girl being confined in a cell. She was permitted to take her to her home, and there she will remain until other arrangements can be made.

Mabel was born in Bradford, Pa., the daughter of John A. McElhaney, now living at Pennsboro, W. Va. She has brothers living at Franklin, Pa., Somerset, Ky., and Cameron, W. Va. Her mother died when she was 9, and for three years she was in a hospital. Since then she has been compelled to earn her own livelihood. She worked in Buffalo during the Pan-American exposition then went to Tennessee. Returning to Sistersville, W. Va., in April, she went to Elk Fork, where a brother was then living. At a country store she bought her first suit, telling the merchant it was for her brother, who was about the same size. She had attended the Ellis Glenn trial for two days in Parkersburg, but declares this had nothing to do with her determination to masquerade as a boy. She says she had tried to go through life as a girl and found her sex a hindrance. She had strong arms, was willing to work and felt she could make more money as a boy.

An uncle was the first person she succeeded in deceiving. She met him

on the train en route to New Martinsville from Elk Fork. He took her for her brother, and asked how Mabel was getting along. This reassured her, and she said she felt no fear afterward. She spent a half day with him, and used the dollar he gave her to buy her railroad fare to Wheeling. "Dave" Kyle was employed at various jobs in Wheeling. For a time he was in the stamping works. Then he worked in a saloon and as a house painter, and when funds got low, he handled heavy metal slabs in the Aetna Standard mill. His sex was never suspected. At this boarding house he slept alone, paying extra for that privilege when the mistress suggested placing another boarder in a room with him.

He learned to smoke cigars, but cigars were too strong, and when he yielded to the importunities of his friends and tried to chew tobacco, he became deathly sick. He had boy companions of the same age, and loafed about the pool rooms with them, where he became an adept in the use of up-to-date slang. He swore, too, but his companions say that his profanity appeared to be strained. He fought his own way literally. When a boy shot a cartridge on the Fourth of July that injured his foot, "Dave" engaged in a fistcuff with him, blacking his eye and cutting his neck, while his opponent made his nose bleed. He also had a battle with the lad who succeeded him as cabin boy on the Ruth.

"I got licked in one fight," said Mabel to-day, "but I think I was entitled to the decision in the other."

When "Dave" went in swimming with the boys at the fishing camp, and refused to remove his clothing, the suspicions which were first aroused by his effeminacy in other respects were confirmed, and this led to the arrest.

"I am happy and contented now," she said today, "and I don't want boy's clothing any more. "Anything they may do with me is better than roughing it as I have been. There were times when my embarrassment discouraged me, and if I had had the money then, I would have bought dresses, and discarded boy's clothing forever, I could not do the things girls do, and I was prevented from doing many of the things that boys do. I am heartily glad it's all over."