

THE TOMB OF KING RENE AND QUEEN ISABELLA OF LORRAINE.

Following the example of the majority of princes who were his contemporaries, René I, Duke of Anjou, Lorraine and Bar, Count of Provence and Piedmont, King of Sicily and Jerusalem, etc., the "Good King René," as popular tradition called him, made, in his lifetime, careful provision for his burial. It was in the city of Angers, in the choir of Saint Maurice Cathedral, that he desired to sleep his last sleep, alongside of his wife, Isabella of Lorraine. His "Comptes et Memoriaux," published by Mr. Lecoy de la Marche, prove to us that in 1447 he was already occupying himself with the execution of a monument that he desired should be a sumptuous one, and up to his death this was his constant thought. Three artists were successively employed upon it—Jean and Pons Poucet and Jacques Morel, the designer of the tomb of Charles I of Bourbon and of Agnes of Bourgoigne in the Church of Souvigny. All died before putting the finishing touches upon it, and when the king himself departed this life at Aix, July 10, 1480, all was not yet finished.

Of the monument there now remains nothing or next to nothing, but the details of the Comptes and a drawing by Gaignieres, preserved at Oxford, have kept a remembrance of it for us. It consisted, under a richly carved, painted, and gilded arcade, of a sarcophagus upon which reposed the white marble effigies of the king and queen accompanied with three large figures of knights and as many figures of women in the act of mourning.

At the back of the sepulchral vault, a painting upon wood, for a long time attributed, without proof, to

royal personages, nothing remained but the skeletons, to which still adhered a few particles of organic matter that the embalming had preserved. Time and humidity had destroyed all the vestments in which we know they were clad. The metal alone had survived. Alongside of the king's head there was a crown; in the right hand there was a scepter; and in the left hand a globe surmounted by a cross. These three pieces of gilded copper (trumpery executed for the occasion) were almost entirely covered with verdigris. At the foot of the



SKULL OF THE QUEEN.



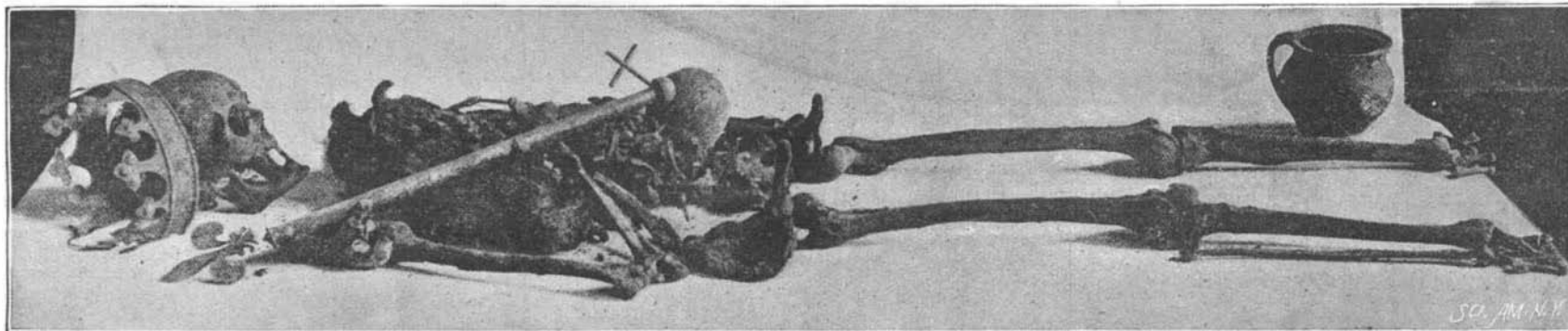
SKULL OF THE KING.

coffin there was a vessel of common earth containing charcoal. A few hairs still adhered to the skull. The teeth had almost entirely disappeared. The king, in fact, was seventy-one years of age on the day of his death. Isabella, on the contrary, who died at the age of forty-three, and who preceded her husband by twenty-eight years in the burial vault of Saint Maurice, still possessed nearly all her teeth. The skull had been sawed for the operation of embalming, and its cap rested upside down at the side. A few tufts of hair were still to be seen at the apex. At the feet lay the leather soles of pointed shoes, whose vamp, which was probably of fabric, no longer existed. There

The Color of the Negro Race.

The Hospifal speaks as follows regarding the color of the negro race: "It has occurred to a writer in an American medical newspaper to discuss the question of the blackness of the negro's skin. It will be a revelation to many to learn that the baby negro is not born black. Even so long ago as 1765, Le Cat noticed that the newly born negro is of a reddish color. That observation has since been frequently confirmed; and it is now pretty widely known that, though the baby negro begins to follow in the footsteps of his parents as regards color within a few days after birth, yet at the moment of birth he shows a disposition to aspire toward the civilized races, being white, or, at worst, red in hue. It is generally assumed that the primeist of all the causes of a negro's blackness is the hot sun beneath whose more or less vertical rays he is doomed to live. There is, however, a physiological condition of the skin which differentiates that organ from the integument of a European. 'The negro,' says our American

scientist, 'possesses a more developed vascular sudoriparous system than we do.' In other words, he has more and larger sweat glands, and they are more liberally supplied with blood. By means of these he perspires much more abundantly. This condition is possibly a contributory factor in his blackness. It is an important element in the investigation to remember, however, that the blackest of all black people are almost invariably found under certain very definite climatic conditions. That is to say they are found where great heat, strong light, and much atmospheric moisture are in combination. For example, 'the blackest negroes in Africa are those who live in Guinea, where



SKELETON OF KING RENÉ.

René himself, showed the dead king—a crowned skeleton allowing the royal emblems to fall from its hands. Up to the middle of the last century, the monument stood in the first triforium of the choir, on the north side. In 1769, the canons, desirous of wainscoting the choir, moved the monument to the nave. This first mutilation was followed in 1793 by a complete and final destruction.

It was owing to the transfer of the monument from the choir to the nave that the royal remains were not violated at the revolutionary epoch. They had been forgotten.

As will be remembered, during the course of some work on the pavement of the choir, September 16, 1895, a fortunate accident led to the discovery of the royal burial vault, and permitted of ascertaining the presence therein of two leaden coffins, one of which was provided near the head with an aperture through which a crown was perceived. There was no doubt of it; it was indeed here that rested King René, and the aperture was really the one that, according to history, was made in 1482 by the incredulous canons in order to verify the identity of the body brought to them from Aix by Queen Jeanne de Laval, second wife of the king. The authentication having been made, the vault was sealed up again.

On the 16th of last June it was again opened in the presence of Mgr. Mathieu, bishop of Angers. The top having been removed, the two coffins were hoisted to the surface—that of the king first. During the course of this operation, the decomposed lower part gave way and the royal remains fell to the bottom of the vault. In order to prevent a repetition of such an accident, the coffin of the queen was opened in situ. Of the two

were no jewels nor emblems that recalled the rank of the departed.

Carried to a chapel of the cathedral, the remains of René and Isabella passed the night of the 16th and 17th therein. They were placed in new oaken coffins lined with lead, and to which were fixed two copper plates bearing the simple inscription: "René d'Anjou, Isabella de Lorraine." The two new coffins were then lowered to the bottom of the vault, which had been previously repaired, and in which was deposited a leaden box containing an account of the operations of June 16 and 17, in order to enlighten such future rummagers and archæologists as might be tempted to

the greatest amount of rain annually falls.' On the other hand, 'the people who live in the dry section of the Nubian Desert have red skins.' Heat, light and humidity are all causes of pigmentation, and if to these we add the fact of the highly 'developed vascular sudoriparous system' of the negro, we have traveled as far as our American investigator is able to help us. The question is one of genuine scientific interest; and, perhaps, when the Matabele, and the Dervishes, and the Soudanese have all settled down quietly in the ways of civilization and order, science may turn her attention in this direction and tell us much that is both new and interesting about those races who differ so markedly from ourselves in color, character and many other particulars."



COFFIN OF ISABELLA OF LORRAINE.

trouble once again the sleep of the dead king.—L'Illustration.

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND has appointed a scientific commission to investigate the condition of the fur seals in the North Pacific and Bering Sea. The members of the commission are Mr. Jordan, of Stamford University (president), Lieutenant-Commander Moser, commanding the fish commission steamer Albatross, Dr. Stejneger and Mr. Lucas, both of the United States National Museum, and Mr. Townsend, Fish Commissioner.

sounds, possibly due to the falls, were heard on three occasions, but it was uncertain whether they might not have come from Buffalo, which is hardly ten miles distant. The tremor observations were made within a few miles of the falls, and show that the vibrations are extremely irregular, varying both in amplitude and period. Some times they stop for an instant, then steadily increase in intensity, reaching one or several maxima, afterward steadily declining. The momentary pauses do not, however, recur at regular intervals.