

FINDING OF THE BODY OF ADMIRAL PAUL JONES IN PARIS.

BY THE PARIS CORRESPONDENT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

The news that the body of Admiral Paul Jones had been discovered in Paris naturally awakened a considerable sensation. The body was found in fact in one of the ancient cemeteries of the city, and was then removed to the Medical College, where an autopsy was made. Gen. Horace Porter, the United States ambassador, and Col. Bailly-Blanchard, second secretary of the embassy, had been making researches to this end for some time past. It was known that the body had been buried in Paris in one of the old cemeteries, and for more than six years Gen. Porter was occupied in making different excavations, in the hope of recovering the body of the renowned admiral, the "Father of the American Navy," who died, it will be remembered, in 1792. At last his perseverance was rewarded, and the body came to light in a better state of preservation than could be hoped for. The discovery is naturally one which will awaken great interest in America, and it is proposed to transport the remains to Washington as soon as the plans are fully decided upon. It was in the old St. Louis Cemetery, where Protestants of foreign birth were buried, that success finally awaited the excavators after so long a time. The cemetery lies near the St. Louis Hospital in the Rue Grange aux Belles, in the northeast quarter of the city. The excavations in the cemetery were commenced by Gen. Porter about the first of February last. Some difficulty was experienced, as it was not known just where the body might be found, and so considerable excavating had to be done in the premises. Several lead coffins were brought to light, but each time the explorers were disappointed, as they all had plates with inscriptions. One of the latter mentioned simply "Anglois" (Englishman) with the date, on a copper plate. However, the fourth time proved to be successful, and the coffin by its exterior signs seemed to contain the remains of some eminent person, as it was of better quality than the others and of more solid build. It appears likely that a body had been buried above it, and some vestiges of this grave were found at the same time. It is supposed that when the upper grave was dug, they came upon the plate which no doubt had covered the lower coffin, and removed it, as no plate was found, and it was also noticed that the lower coffin had been pierced as if it had received a blow with a pick. The lead coffin was no doubt inclosed in a wood casket, and a few traces of the latter were found. The lead case is in the form of the mummy coffins which were used at that time.

Upon removal to the Ecole de Médecine, it was opened in the presence of the representatives of the American embassy and some of the city officials. The body was found to be in a good state of preservation, and had been well packed so as to avoid movement, by means of hay and straw placed in the spaces. The limbs were covered with tinfoil. It is supposed that the good preservation is due to an immersion in alcohol. The body was dressed in a shirt and wrapped in a sheet. The shirt was found to be marked with a small embroidered initial, which might be taken either for a P or a J, according to the way in which it is read. There was no other clothing, nor were any other objects found, but this is not surprising, as we already know that the uniform, sword, and decorations of the admiral had been preserved by his family. Dr. Papillault, the distinguished anthropologist, and Dr. Capitan, another high medical authority, were chosen to examine the body. They made a certain number of measurements, and to give greater surety, the latter were taken before any other information as to the admiral's characteristics had been furnished. Such documents were not wanting, however, and Gen. Porter brought all the busts and portraits he could secure, so as to make the comparison. The examination was quite convincing, leaving no possible doubt as to the identity of the body.

The preservation is remarkable, and it was even found that the flesh is soft and yielding, so that the head and members could be moved without any difficulty. The face as it appeared is clean shaven and is of a dark color. The hair is abundant and quite long, according to the fashion of the time. The principal documents of comparison were two busts of the admiral, both by the eminent French sculptor Houdon. One of these was loaned by Marquis de Biron, of Paris, and the other came from the Trocadero Museum and is a copy of the bust now possessed by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. The former bust represents the admiral in a court costume, with his hair arranged in the mode of the period, with masses at the sides of the head. The Trocadero bust is more lifelike, and shows him in his military

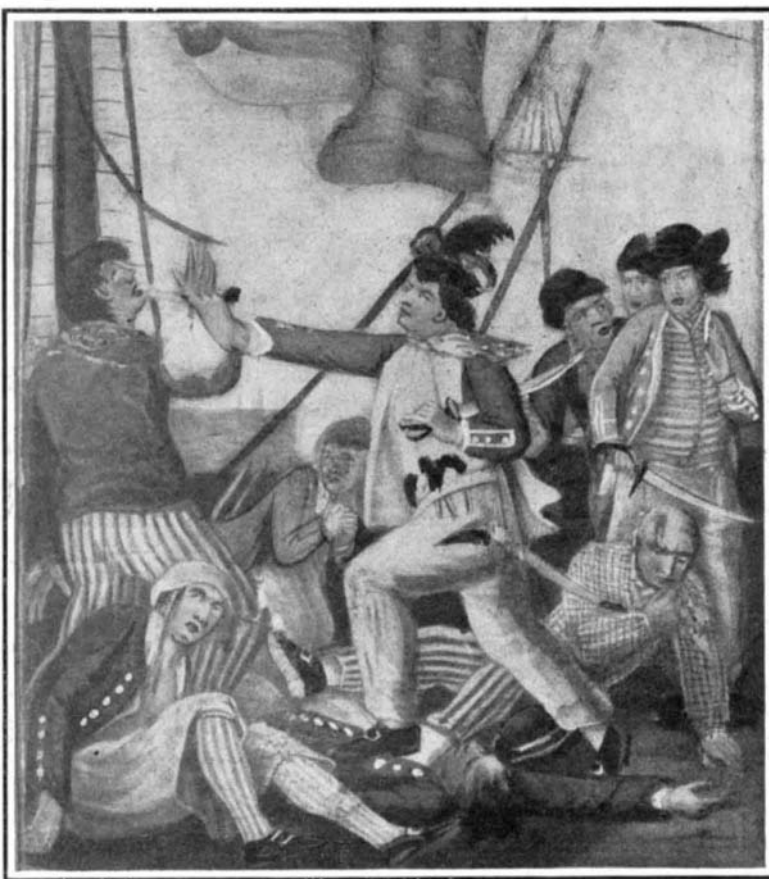
costume, with the hair drawn back from the forehead. Besides, we possess different documents relating to the color of the hair, different dimensions of the body, etc. In this way, after a careful examination, it became evident that the person could be no other than the admiral. The height, upon measuring, was found to be exactly the same, or 5 feet 7 inches. The hair, which is of a dark brown, is of the same color as that which he was known to possess, and is slightly gray in some places. Examination of the head shows that it resembles the original documents as closely as possible



CASKET CONTAINING THE BODY OF PAUL JONES.

and in all the details. Especially noteworthy is the high forehead. The hair is quite long and flowing, with slight curls at the sides of the head.

The coffin is narrow at the feet, and gradually widens at the upper part to contain the shoulders, then finishes in a rounded part at the top for the head. The lead is quite thick, thus enabling the body to be well kept, and it was no doubt tightly sealed from the air until the hole had been made in it with the pick, as is supposed. It seems as if the wrapping of the limbs in tinfoil was done in order to prepare the body



PAUL JONES SHOOTING A SAILOR WHO HAD ATTEMPTED TO STRIKE HIS COLORS IN AN ENGAGEMENT.

After an old print (1780) from the original picture by John Collet.

for a long transportation by sea. In fact, we have a letter of Col. Blackden, an intimate friend of Paul Jones and one of his pall-bearers, which reads as follows: "His body was put in a leaden coffin on the 20th that, in case the United States, which he had so essentially served and with so much honor, should claim his remains, they might be more easily removed." One of the interesting points about the discovery is that an autopsy could be made, owing to the fact that the organs of the body were so well preserved. The autopsy was carried out at the Ecole de

Médecine by Drs. Papillault and Capitan, and they were struck with the good state of the remains. It was not difficult to find that the admiral had died of tuberculosis, and this is known to be the case. After the autopsy the remains were put back in their original position. A second lead coffin was constructed, so as to surround the first, leaving a large oval opening at the top covered by plate glass, so that the head and upper part of the body are visible. The whole is inclosed in a plain but handsome oak casket with silver handles, which the ambassador had made. Our engraving shows the appearance of the latter, containing the body, as it was exposed for a day or two at the Medical College. Only a few persons specially authorized by the embassy were admitted to view the remains, as it was not intended to make a public celebration of the event before obtaining advice from America in regard to the matter. The writer is indebted to the courtesy of Col. Bailly-Blanchard for the permission to take the present photograph for the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. The embassy had some photographs of the body taken, but these are to be kept as documents, and it is not intended to have them published, at least at present. The casket is draped with two large American flags, with small flags and palm-branches on the top. The remains are to be placed in a vault in the American church in Paris until it is decided what steps are to be taken for bringing them to America. It is probable that the American and French governments will come to accord for a great celebration in honor of the admiral, which will take place in French waters, and it is likely that the American cruiser squadron will come over to take the body back to the United States some time in June.

Aluminium Paper for Wrapping.

M. Riché, member of the Council of Hygiene of the Seine Department (France) has recently made a number of observations regarding aluminium foil and paper coated with aluminium powder as regards the preserving of the alimentary substances which may be wrapped in them. The percentage of foreign matter was found to be small, upon analysis of different samples. Iron is sometimes found to the extent of two per cent. The samples contained no arsenic or toxic metals. The aluminium powders used for the paper are comparatively pure, but sometimes contain alumina. The coated paper is manufactured in Germany. The base is an artificial parchment obtained by treating paper with sulphuric acid as usual. The sheets are spread out and upon one side is applied a thin layer of solution of resin in alcohol or ether. Evaporation is hastened by a current of air, then the paper is heated until the resin softens again. Powder of aluminium is then sprinkled on, and the whole is placed under strong pressure to give the adherence. The coating is not attacked by the air or by fatty bodies. The paper thus prepared is much cheaper than tin-foil. As regards the aluminium foil, up to the present the foil has been rather stiff and hard, but the manufacturers are now making a very thin foil. By a combination of rolling and mechanical beating they now prepare as many as 3,000 sheets together, and the thickness is as low as 1-2,500 inch. The sheets are as soft as tin-foil, which up to the present is the only one used for chocolate and confectionery. The price of the aluminium sheets of the above thickness is 7 francs the kilogramme (\$0.64 per pound) in France, and at least 80 square yards per pound. This question presents a great interest from a commercial and a hygienic standpoint. According to M. Riché, the coated paper does not give a complete protection, as cracks or holes are apt to form and the air and moisture penetrate into the interior. However, the air does not enter rapidly, seeing that a piece of chloride of calcium wrapped in the paper was only liquefied after six days. While the tin-foil is usually harmless, we must not forget that tin is now obtained from old cans or boxes, and may thus contain lead, and again lead is sometimes added to make it cheaper. The police regulations in Paris do not allow more than one-half per cent of lead in the tin-foil. If aluminium paper and foil can be prepared so that it will not crack and will follow the surface of the objects exactly, it will no doubt be a serious competitor of tin-foil, not only as regards cheapness, but also hygienic value.

The Postmaster-General of Great Britain has made provisional arrangements with the Marconi International Marine Communication Company for the acceptance and prepayment at telegraph offices in the United Kingdom of telegrams for transmission from wireless stations on the coast to ships at sea. The arrangement came into operation on January 1.