

The Literary Digest

VOL. XXXI., No. 5

NEW YORK, JULY 29, 1905

WHOLE NUMBER, 797

Published Weekly by

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY.

44-60 E. 23d St., New York.

44 Fleet Street, London.

Entered at New York Post-Office as Second-Class Matter

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

PRICE.—Per year, in advance, \$3.00; four months, on trial, \$1.00; single copies 10 cents. Foreign postage, \$1.50 per year.

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TOPICS OF THE DAY.

IS IT THE BODY OF PAUL JONES?

THE possibility that the American and French governments are going through a series of elaborate ceremonies over the body of some unknown Frenchman which they are mistaking for the body of John Paul Jones creates a situation that may easily turn from the sublime to the reverse. The American press, therefore, are reviewing with considerable concern the evidences that the leaden casket found in the almost forgotten cemetery on the Rue Grange-aux-Belles in Paris holds all that was mortal of the famous sea-ranger of the Revolution. The two governments have officially accepted the body as that of the Admiral, but nevertheless there are many doubting Thomases who are not satisfied with the identification. General Porter, our ambassador to France, who found the body after a long and expensive search, is satisfied that this body is the true one, but he had few reliable facts to aid him in the proof. As the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* says, in summing up the case:

"The grave of John Paul Jones could not be located, and his coffin was not marked, but it was known that the coffin was of lead, and that the body was packed in a certain way and that it was buried at a certain cemetery. The age of John Paul Jones was known and the teeth and hair corresponded to the teeth and hair of a man of that age. It is known that the Admiral was dark complexioned and that he had brown hair. His height was also known and it was ascertained, as was to be expected, that the length of his body when laid out was a little longer than the height of the Admiral when standing.

"For the further guidance of the experts there were two busts of the Admiral, one by Houdon, whose name is familiar to Virginians, and the other from a Philadelphia gallery. The Houdon bust was mainly used and measurements were made, according to the latest scientific system, of the face and body under examination.

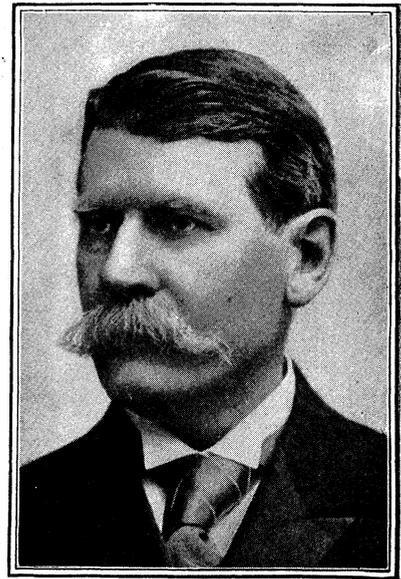
"But that was not all. The hair of the subject resurrected was enclosed in a linen bag, and this bag contained a curious letter, which, looked at in one position, was a 'P', and turned upside became a 'J.' The experts were satisfied that this was an anagram representing the initials of the Admiral's name."

Altho there was no plate or mark on the coffin, nor any recog-

nizable garment or trinket within it except as mentioned above, yet the facts that it was made of lead and agreed in other respects with records regarding it, and was found just where it was expected that it would be found, led General Porter to believe that his discovery was the identical coffin to which Colonel Blackden, the closest friend of John Paul Jones, referred when he said in speaking of the interment:

"His body was placed in a leaden coffin, so that in case the United States, which he had so essentially served, and with so much honor, should claim his remains they might the more readily be removed."

But of course the best evidence as to identity is the investigation and report of the two experts who made an autopsy of the corpse immediately after it was exhumed. These men were Dr. Capitan, professor of anthropology, and Dr. Papillaut, assistant director of the laboratory of anthropology at the *École des Hautes Études* in Paris. In the report Dr. Papillaut says: "I have not absolutely asserted that this is the body of Admiral Jones, but I believe that I have accumulated proofs which



From a recent photo taken in Paris.
GEN. HORACE PORTER,

Who made the search for the body of Paul Jones at his own expense, after Congress failed to provide the necessary funds.

render doubt very difficult." The body was wonderfully preserved. "The skin was tanned, mummified, but altogether intact," says the report, and so the examining doctors had no trouble in comparing the physical traits of the body with the details of Jones's physique as known from memoirs of the time and information concerning the disease of which he died. But the verification which was most satisfying was the remarkable similarity noticed between the dead man's head and the bust by Houdon which the Admiral considered to be his best likeness. Dr. Papillaut in the report on this comparison says:

"With the two busts of Houdon I was able to obtain results far more precise and interesting. One of these busts belongs to the Marquis de Biron; it is a rough cast, graceful and spirited, representing rather an elegant courtier than a mariner of vaunted bravery. The other bust, the original of which is in Philadelphia, but which has a plaster replica in the Trocadéro Museum, seems to have been modeled more exactly. On it Houdon appears to have aimed chiefly at the likeness. In this bust we took measures and verified the morphological characters capable of determining identity. The roots of the hair, shape of the eye-socket, form of the forehead, and root of the nose were identical in the bust and in the corpse. Professor Hervé, who helped in the operation, even pointed out a particular disposition of the ear cartilages, in which the corpse agreed with the bust.

"But it was the measurement of the height of the face, of the