

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

J. ANTHONY GAUSSARDIA, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

METHOD OF PRESERVING DEAD BODIES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **15,972**, dated October 28, 1856.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN ANTHONY GAUSSARDIA, of the city and county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, have invented a new and Improved Method of Preserving Dead Bodies, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description.

The body or subject to be preserved is first placed upon a table or other suitable place in a horizontal position and then injected with a strong mixture of acidum pyroligneum arsenicalis, a gallon of the mixture being sufficient for a grown person of ordinary size, this mixture being prepared by the addition of four ounces of white arsenic to one gallon of pyroligneous acid. The body thus prepared is then gradually charged with electricity from an electric machine until the liquid matters and humors have become congealed or coagulated, this being ascertained by the body becoming firmer or more solid to the touch or pressure of the hand, this part of the process, as a general thing, being effected in the course of from two and one-half to five hours, according to the condition of the body, one of the conductors of the machine being applied to the mouth and the other to the anus. The body is next washed in a strong mixture of arsenic, nitrate of potash, chloride of lime, and alcohol, this mixture being composed of about four ounces each of the arsenic and nitrate of potash, with two ounces of the chloride of lime to one gallon of alcohol, three successive times, a few hours being allowed to intervene between each to permit the mixture upon the body to become thoroughly dry, after which it may be anointed with aromatic oils and placed in a metallic coffin so constructed as to be capable of being hermetically sealed. In this condition the coffin is then filled with an alcoholic mixture of arsenic. The specific gravity of the alcohol in no case should be greater than .285, the quantity of arsenic required for this purpose being about the one-fiftieth part of the whole weight of the

body thus treated, or at the rate of about two ounces of white arsenic to the gallon of alcohol, about eight ounces of the oils of cicuta and caryophyllus aromaticus being then added, after which the coffin is hermetically sealed and the process complete.

It may be here observed that the quantity of the mixture of the acid pyroligneum arsenicalis is increased or diminished according to the condition of the body being preserved. If partially decomposed, then a greater quantity is required than if it were in a good condition. Such being also the case where it is large and gross, these conditions being also dependent upon the age of the person whose body is being prepared and the season of the year in which the operation is being performed; but bodies once prepared in this manner will keep in all climates and for almost any length of time.

Bodies can, if desired, be so prepared as to preserve them but for a short time to enable them to be transported from the place where death intervened to the spot where their friends may wish to have them interred, this being effected by merely lessening the quantity of acidum pyroligneum arsenicalis to be administered and the quantity of electricity.

Having thus described my improved mode of preserving dead bodies, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

Injecting the body with a mixture of arsenical pyroligneous acid and then charging it with a current of electricity for the purposes described, and then filling the coffin in which the body is placed, and which is afterward hermetically sealed, with an alcoholic mixture of arsenic, together with the oils of cicuta and caryophyllus aromaticus, substantially as described.

J. A. GAUSSARDIA.

Witnesses:

P. HANNAY,
ARTHUR C. WATKINS.