

## SEXTON AND GHOULS FIGHT

Leonard Only Attacks Four Grave Robbers in Mount Zion Cemetery.

### THEY EXCHANGE PISTOL SHOTS

He Heard Them, and, Creeping Cautiously in the Direction of the Sounds, Discovered Four Men Working Around an Open Grave—Three Bodies Recently Stolen.

The ringing clash of a falling spade broke the stillness of the early morning yesterday in the neighborhood of Mount Zion Cemetery, Georgetown. There are not many houses in the vicinity, with the exception of a row to the south of the graveyard.

Some of the sleeping residents stirred uneasily in their beds, but the only one aroused by the unusual noise was Leonard Only, assistant sexton of Mount Zion Church, who lives in one of the dwellings described. He jumped out of bed and looked out the window of his room. Off in the cemetery he could see dim, flickering lights and dark figures moving in front of them once in a while. Faint sounds could be heard in the quiet, and the sexton at once surmised that grave-robbers were at work.

He realized that it would be impossible to effect the capture of the ghouls, and concluded to get a look at their faces. Securing a pistol Only descended the stairs and cautiously approached the thieves. He thought at first that they had just commenced and hoped to scare them off before their nefarious work had been done. As he softly stepped nearer he discovered that the robbers had already lifted a coffin up from the grave.

ONLY FIRED POINT BLANK.

One man had just started cautiously to pry open the lid when Only decided that the time had arrived to act. Raising the pistol he fired point blank at the quartet. The report of the revolver, sounding a thousand times louder in the still night, caused the thieves to jump in their fright. Then with an oath one of the party whipped out a pistol and returned the shot. The excitement at this point was intense, as another of the ghouls kicked the lantern into the desecrated grave, thus leaving the spot totally dark. Only again pulled the trigger of his weapon, and as the flash of the powder revealed his whereabouts, quickly jumped to one side.

Another bullet was sent winging its way in answer to the sexton's shot. By this time the neighbors were leaping out of bed and cries were heard in the distance. Realizing that discovery and capture were imminent the four ghouls took to their heels and ran swiftly in the direction of the hill which borders the cemetery on one part, stumbling over grave mounds and falling against tombstones. Here a horse and wagon had been hidden in readiness to bear away a ghastly burden, and into the vehicle the hunted men quickly jumped. Whipping up the horse they fled along Massachusetts avenue extended into Washington before they could be stopped.

When it was found that the thieves could not be caught an investigation was made. It was found that the grave upon which they were working when discovered was that of Mrs. Diggs, who was buried on Monday. She had died in Benning's, but was a member of Mount Zion Church at No. 1336 Twenty-ninth street northwest. Rev. Henry A. Carroll is the pastor.

THE BODY WAS NOT DISTURBED.

The coffin had been hauled out of its bed by ropes, but fortunately the corpse was not disturbed by the grave-robbers, owing to the lucky accident which caused their discovery. Another important fact was brought out yesterday when an examination of the burrying place was made. Three graves have been derpoiled during the last few days, and it is likely that the rest of the dead would have been violated still further yesterday morning had it not been for the assistant sexton.

It is plain that the thieves must have been watching the cemetery, because only freshly interred bodies have been exhumed.

The police have been notified, and an effort will be made to locate the stolen remains, which probably were sold to a medical college or to students privately. No trace of the ghouls could be found after they disappeared from view in their mad gallop along Massachusetts avenue.