

that ground. Of the quartette named above and the confederates, one was shot and killed by Deputy Sheriff O. P. Rockwell a few days later, on January 16th, 1862, at Faust's station, Tooele county, while attempting to escape from the officers. Soon afterwards two others, shared a similar fate in an encounter with the Salt Lake police on Second South street, near where the Walker Opera House block now stands. The desperadoes who were killed had long been a terror to the community and general relief was felt after their dead bodies were laid away in the city cemetery.

#### HENRY HEATH'S STORY.

Concerning these tragedies and the relationship they bear to Baptiste's ghoulish work Henry Heath, an old and well known Salt Laker tells a NEWS reporter: "I was a member of the Salt Lake police force in 1862. Baptiste was a Frenchman and came here from Australia some years before and was employed as a grave digger by Col. J. C. Little who was then city sexton and who now lives at Morgan city, Utah. 'Rone' Clawson, one of the men above referred to, was buried at the expense of the county. I purchased his clothes myself and though he was a very bad man I wanted to see him laid away as nicely as possible. This I did and I don't believe any pauper ever had better or cleaner burial clothing than he.

"Soon after I went south on official business and on my way home stopped over at Willow Creek, now known as Draper, Salt Lake county, where I learned from George Clawson, a brother of the deceased, who had had the latter's remains exhumed and removed to Willow Creek, that on opening the grave the body was entirely naked. George Clawson was indignant over the ghastly discovery and believed that his brother had been buried in that condition. Of course having purchased the interment clothes myself I knew better, but it was not an easy matter to prove that fact off-hand as the circumstances were rather against such a conclusion. Well, as a matter of course, the affair caused a good deal of talk, and I determined to sift the whole thing to the bottom, as did Judge Elias Smith, who was probate judge of this county at that time. The authorities generally were anxious to have the matter investigated and very little time was lost.

"Myself and three or four other men went first to Sexton Little's residence and inquired of him as to his opinion of how Clawson's body was divested of its clothing, but he was as completely in the dark as ourselves, and was quite as dumbfounded at our assertions. From there we proceeded to the gravedigger's house, which was situated on Third street, somewhere between P and R streets. Baptiste was not at home, though his wife was. We entered the house and engaged in conversation with Mrs. Baptiste, who was a very simple-minded woman, not thinking that light would be thrown on the object of our investigation so soon. Glancing about the room we observed numerous boxes of clothing, which we had the curiosity to examine. Judge, if you can, of our horror and surprise, when we discovered that this clothing was the funeral robes of people who

had been buried in the city cemetery for several years past. A horrible thought entered my mind, a terrible feeling took possession of me. When I tell you that I had a short time previously buried an idolized daughter, and when I feared that her grave, too, had been desecrated and that her funeral shroud was among the motley, sickening heap of flesh-soiled linen we found in the grave digger's hut, perhaps you can partly comprehend it.

#### DISCOVERY AND CONFESSION.

"There were with me three or four friends and together we proceeded to the cemetery where Baptiste was at work. In my breast rankled the unconquerable determination to kill him there and then should my suspicions be confirmed. I at once charged him with robbing the dead and he fell upon his knees calling God to witness that he was innocent. The evidence was too strong and I choked the wretch into a confession when he begged for his life as a human being never plead before. I dragged him to a grave near my daughter's and pointing to it inquired: 'Did you rob that grave?' His reply was 'Yes.' Then directing his attention to the mound of earth which covered my child's remains I repeated the question with bated breath and with the firm resolve to kill him should he answer in the affirmative. 'No, no, not that one; not that one.' That answer saved the miserable coward's life.

"The news of our discovery and Baptiste's confession spread like wildfire and it was with difficulty that we got him to the county jail in safety. The citizens were so enraged that it seemed probable they would have lynched him outright. When he was placed behind the bars out of harm's way he was very profuse in his thanks for the service we had rendered him in saving his life.

#### THE CARPENTER KILLING.

"About the time of Baptiste's capture he was detected wearing a broad-cloth Prince Albert suit in which a saloonkeeper named Carpenter had been buried some time before. Carpenter at that time was keeping a saloon and shoe shop a little south of the Clock corner on East Temple Street. One night his place of business was robbed and he accused an employe named Ferguson of knowing more about the affair than he would tell. The latter resented the accusation by instantly drawing his revolver and shooting Carpenter dead.

"I helped to take care of Baptiste during the three weeks' time he was confined in the county jail. Steel nor iron shackles were never put on his limbs and there is absolutely no truth in the statement that he was turned loose on the island with a ball and chain on. I shall never forget the agonizing scenes of grief-stricken parents, especially mothers—well, sisters too, for the matter of that, as they came into the big hall way in the county court house through which extended a broad table fifty feet in length, covered with several hundred funeral suits, from that which had encased the lifeless form of a tiny infant to that which had been wrapped about the body of some aged man or woman. Yes, it was a sorrowful spectacle to see a mother identify and weep over an article of clothing which belonged

to a darling child long since dead, or a husband or wife recognize the funeral apparel of the life partner who had preceded them into the unseen world."

#### ALBERT DEWEY'S STORY.

"I also remember that awful day and incident," said Albert Dewey, an equally well known veteran Salt Laker, who had quietly listened to and corroborated the remarks of Mr. Heath. "I will tell the story from this on to the end of the chapter. I had just returned from an Indian hunt and I remember that public feeling was at a feverish state of excitement. There was some doubt in the minds of the officers of the law as to what should be done with all the clothing, and finally it was decided to bury it in one big grave in the city cemetery, which was done. It was a painful task and was keenly remembered by those to whom the work was assigned.

"Another revolting feature of Baptiste's ghoulish work was the practice he had of using his victims' coffins for kindling wood. He was the most singular human being I ever knew in my life. He appeared to be entirely conscienceless. He boarded the clothes of the dead about his premises as a miser would his gold. It is not true that he sold his plunder to second-hand dealers as was published in a morning paper. He seldom disposed of any and kept careful watch over his ill-gotten gains. He had no fear of the dead, though he greatly feared death himself. He would prow about among the graves of the dead at night and divest them of their apparel with no more concern than if he were eating his dinner. Altogether he was a freak of human nature that I could not understand. Robbing the dead was a mania with him and he made it a business. He seemed to be in his element when worming about among lifeless bodies when the darkness of night was wrapped about him and when all was silent in the city and the cemetery.

#### BAPTISTE'S BANISHMENT.

"As to what was done with him, I will now tell you. It meant death to him to turn him loose in the community—death that he deserved, and in any country would have received. But he was such a hateful object that the sooner and farther he got away from sight without being put under the ground himself, the better everybody would feel. So, to give him a chance for his life, to save him in reality from an exasperated public, it was decided to banish him and a well-stocked island in the Great Salt Lake was chosen for his future home. He was conveyed there but there was no ball and chain or shackles or gyves of any kind on his limbs. He was absolutely untrammelled.

"Who first suggested the idea of banishment?" asked the reporter.

"I do not remember. But I assisted in taking him to the island. It was done in this wise: Four or five of us were permitted to place him in a wagon and take him from the county jail on the promise that we would not kill him and that we would allow him to shift for himself when once he should be put beyond reach of the community's vengeance. To this we agreed, and his solitary abiding place was reached. Unlike Robinson Crusoe, he found no good man Friday