

SETH WALKER HARTWELL

DIED DEC. 25, 1902

MYSTERY SOLVED.—The subdued excitement we have all been laboring under during the past week reached a climax on Wednesday afternoon when the town bell was rung, the signal agreed upon if the body of S. W. Hartwell should be found. All the early incidents of the case have been so thoroughly discussed by the Boston papers, that hardly any mention is called for.

The pathetic side of the affair appeals to every kindly heart in Littleton. Aged, feeble and alone, he yielded to one of the impulses so characteristic of mental failure; that is, to wander forth alone, regardless of time or direction. The search by Constable Reed on Wednesday, just one week from the time he was missed, resulted in the discovery of his body, not half a mile from his own comfortable home. The route he took in his zigzag course proved that his wandering was wholly aimless. He was found in a corner of a field belonging to L. J. Stone, and everything gave evidence that he became exhausted and was unable to go farther. Such is the opinion given by Dr. Hartwell, medical examiner. His money and watch were in his pocket, the latter having stopped at 1.22.

From the first his strength had been over-estimated; or it never would have been considered probable that he walked far enough to take a train for Boston or New York. If it had been generally known that he was really the feeble old man that now seems so certain, then every industry in town would have stopped and all available force have been exerted to the one end attained on Wednesday. That he lived in his large house alone is no reflection on his immediate friends.

If his life was a solitary one, it was the life he preferred, and had been accustomed to during his long years of residence in Washington, Cincinnati and New York.

Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, his caretakers, who lived just across the street, have given him every thoughtful attention during the past three years, and if his method of living seemed unwise for one of his advanced years, such was his dominance of spirit that he would brook no interference.

Still the pitiful fact will be ever-present in our memory for many coming days. Alone, and in the chill and darkness of a winter night, over snow covered ground, he passed almost as a phantom might have done—unseeing and unseen. L.