

# The Black Cat

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## The Glen Echo Mystery.\*

BY WALTER WELLMAN.

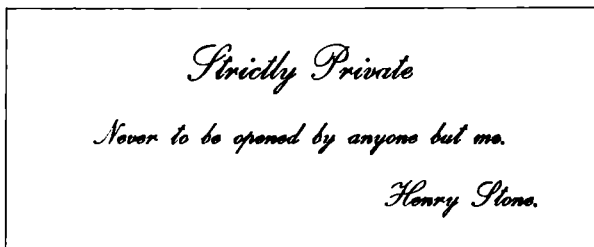


SIX months ago, through the death of a kinsman in Chicago, a lot of old pictures, furniture, bric-a-brac and papers came into my possession. Most of these things were stored away in the garret of my house. One day, having occasion to go to the storeroom, my attention was attracted to an old-fashioned, battered leather trunk. I had often thought of satisfying my curiosity as to its contents, but had never been able to find a key that would fit the lock. This day, however, it occurred to me that the ancient leather contrivance was of no value, and that a knife would do quite as well as a key; so I whipped out my pocket-knife and ripped a long slit in the leather top.

Within I found a large number of packets of old letters, account books and diaries, and all sorts of manuscripts and pamphlets. All these I tumbled out upon the floor, and looked through them in an idle way. At first I found nothing of unusual interest;

\* This is one of two stories that won the \$1,000 prize in THE BLACK CAT prize-story competition ending March 31, 1898.

but soon I came upon a packet of peculiar shape. It was apparently a sort of home-made envelope, composed of two pieces of old-fashioned blue linen paper folded and glued together. Upon the face of the packet was inscribed these words:—



This was the signature of my dead kinsman, and I suppose I should have respected his injunction; but I did not. My curiosity was stronger than my reverence for the dead, so I slit open the packet.

Now I wish I had not done so. By prying into the secrets of the past, accidentally placed within my keeping, I have come face to face with a mystery which appalls me. For days and days and nights and nights I have turned it over in my mind, have looked at it from every point of view, have analyzed, searched, thought, imagined. But it has been all in vain. I am completely baffled. So are my friends to whom I have submitted the matter. Our combined ingenuity fails to afford a solution.

What I found within the packet of old blue linen paper was simply the following three cuttings from newspapers of long ago:—

**MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE AT  
GLEN ECHO.**

ROUGHBROOK, Oct. 20. — The police officials here and detectives from New York are unable to throw any light upon the mysterious disappearance of Sylvester Baldwin from the house of our esteemed fellow townsman, Prof. Edwin Stone, who lives in the old Stone manor house at Glen

Echo, one of the picturesque suburbs of this city. Mr. Baldwin strangely disappeared last Sunday night, and though diligent search has been made for him during the forty-eight hours that have elapsed, not a single clue has been obtained.

Mr. Baldwin's home is in Boston. He came here about two weeks ago to visit Professor Stone, who was his classmate at Harvard. A house party

was given in his honor, and among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. George Jones, of Albany, Miss Irene Davidge, of New York, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, of Yonkers. Mr. Baldwin was about twenty five years of age, and a rising young lawyer of Boston. He was unmarried, but it is whispered that he had become engaged since his arrival here.

Mr. Baldwin was in fine health and spirits. Almost every day the guests had indulged in picnics, boating excursions, fishing, horseback riding and other amusements. Mr. Baldwin was the life of the party with his vivacity, wit and love of fun. On many of these excursions it was impossible for Professor Stone to go, as it is well known that in his laboratory, located on the roof of the manor house, he is carrying on some very important experiments. When he felt compelled to remain in his workshop, Professor Stone designated Mr. Baldwin to act as his representative in the entertainment of the party.

Sunday last the ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by Professor Stone's aged mother, with whom he lives, attended divine services in the morning, and spent the afternoon in walks and drives. Toward evening, the weather growing colder, they all assembled in the big dining hall, where they made a rousing log fire in the old-fashioned fireplace. They had refreshments and music, and Mr. Baldwin's fine baritone voice was never heard to better advantage. About ten o'clock, after planning their excursion for the next day, all retired to their rooms on the second floor.

Mr. Baldwin was heard by Mr. and Mrs. Jones and by Miss Davidge, who occupied adjoining rooms, to enter his chamber a few moments after they had reached their own apartments.

He was whistling softly or humming an air, indicating the happy condition of his mind. He was also heard closing a window, and closing and latching the outside blinds. Between the apartment of Mr. Baldwin and that occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Jones there is a door, somewhat warped by time, and through the cracks and the big old-fashioned keyhole Mr. Jones heard Mr. Baldwin bounce into bed; but as the light in his room was not extinguished, as Mr. Jones noticed when he put out his own light and retired, the supposition is that Mr. Baldwin was reading in bed before going to sleep, as was his habit.

From that moment not the slightest trace of the young lawyer has been secured. The last known of him, he was apparently lying in bed, reading, a happy man. Next morning he was not in his room. All his clothing and effects, save only the pajamas which he wore as a night robe, were in the apartment. He had disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up.

It is inconceivable that Mr. Baldwin suffered an attack of mental aberration and wandered away, for there had been a light fall of snow that evening and no tracks were found in it around the house. The barn and outbuildings, as well as every nook and cranny of the manor house, were carefully searched. The police looked into the haymows, and even lowered a man into the wells. They scoured the country around, but no one had seen or heard of a man wandering about in his pajamas. If Mr. Baldwin left the house, he went away without shoes, hat or clothing; and as cold weather has prevailed since his disappearance, it is almost inconceivable that he has not been forced to apply for shelter or food during the last forty-eight hours.

The detectives do not believe that Mr. Baldwin left the house. The morning after his disappearance the window blinds in his room were all found fastened on the inside. So, too, were the front door and the rear or kitchen door and side door of the house. All were locked, with the keys in place inside. The detectives have satisfied themselves that the fall of snow Sunday evening ceased about nine o'clock, and it would have been impossible for Mr. Baldwin to wander away, or be carried away, without leaving traces of footsteps.

But neither Mr. Baldwin living nor Mr. Baldwin dead is to be found in the house now. The search has been thorough from cellar to garret. Professor Stone's laboratory upon the roof has been thoroughly ransacked. As is known to our citizens, Professor Stone is engaged in investigations looking toward a new illuminating process and also in the water-proofing of fabrics. For these purposes he keeps upon the roof quite a collection

of apparatus, retorts, gas generators, a large lot of fabric, some of which has been chemically treated, tools, fine instruments, etc. Professor Stone says he was in his laboratory hard at work the night his friend disappeared. No other member of the family or any of the guests heard Mr. Baldwin's steps that fateful night. Professor Stone insisted that the detectives should thoroughly search his laboratory. The officers opened the gas machines, sifted the cinders in all the retorts and overhauled all the piles of fabric. They found not the slightest trace of the missing man, dead or alive.

Professor Stone and all the members of his house party, so merry a few days ago, are bowed down with grief. They not only fear that Mr. Baldwin is dead, but they are overwhelmed by the mystery which surrounds them. They feel that they are living within the shadow of a tragedy which has not been explained and which thus far is wholly inexplicable.

#### MYSTERY PILED ON MYSTERY.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Oct. 22. — The mystery of the disappearance of Sylvester Baldwin is not yet cleared up. In fact, it grows deeper and darker. This morning a telegram was received from Saratoga. It read as follows: —

CHIEF OF POLICE, POUGHKEEPSIE: Body of man in night-clothes found last Monday morning at daylight by mail carrier on bridle-path in the Adirondacks about one hundred miles from here. What was date of your man's disappearance?

CITY MARSHAL.

To this Chief of Police Kipley replied, giving the date of Mr. Baldwin's disappearance, and adding: "Impossible same man."

Of course it is impossible, and yet it is a most strange and striking coincidence. Have two men disappeared in their pajamas during

the past week? This most extraordinary development did not impress Chief Kipley as having any bearing upon the Baldwin case. When asked if there could possibly be any connection between the two incidents he replied: —

“It is absurd to think there was. Mr. Baldwin disappeared after ten o'clock Sunday night. Early next morning the body of a man was found in the Adirondacks, two hundred miles from here. There is no railway nearer than Saratoga. It is a journey of about two days from the place where the body was found to the nearest railway station, and that is by mounted courier. A wagon would need four days over those rough roads. It was a physical impossibility for the body of Mr. Baldwin to be carried to that remote point in the Adirondacks by next morning, and, therefore, we do not need to discuss this phase of the case any farther. The body found in the mountains is that of some other man.”

Chief Kipley is undoubtedly right. Your reporter has ascertained that the only train for the north after Mr. Baldwin retired to his room was the midnight express, which does not make connections at Albany for Saratoga. The earliest possible arrival at Saratoga would have been at ten o'clock Monday morning, and that is still one hundred miles by a rough mountain road from the place where the body was found, according to the telegram, at daylight Monday morning.

Notwithstanding the utter impossibility of there being any connection between the two incidents, Miss Davidge, who has taken much to heart the strange fate of Mr. Baldwin, has insisted that careful investigation be made of the Adirondack case. In this she is supported by Professor Stone, and by others at the Glen Echo house. Their anxiety is so great that they grasp at straws. Chief Kipley, to humor their strange whim, has agreed to send a man to the mountains to inquire carefully into the finding of the body there, though protesting that it is useless expense and trouble.

Chief Kipley is still convinced, as are all the detectives who have worked on the case, that Mr. Baldwin, living or dead, is still in the manor house. He has expressed his belief to Professor Stone, and the latter has insisted upon a more thorough search. In consequence, the old house has been nearly pulled to pieces. Partitions have been cut down, floors ripped out, walls opened, the floor of the cellar dug up, and the ashes and cinders in every furnace and stove, including the retorts in Professor Stone's laboratory, have been subjected to chemical analysis by Professors Tausig and Bruinier, of the Polytechnic School. The barns and outbuildings, strawstacks and wells, have all been researched. Every scrap of paper in Mr. Baldwin's rooms has been scrutinized. All the inmates of the house have been subjected to another examination, but without disclosing any new facts. Not a single trace of Mr. Baldwin or of the manner in which he left or was taken from his room, not even a shadow of a clue, has been discovered.

### MR. BALDWIN'S BODY FOUND.

#### AN ASTOUNDING CASE.

SARATOGA, Oct. 26.—The body found in the Adirondacks a week ago this morning was that of Sylvester Baldwin, after all. It has been positively identified by Professor Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Miss Irene Davidge, who came here to view it, accompanied by your reporter. But instead of clearing up the mystery, this discovery has darkened it into one of the most inexplicable crimes of the century.

All we know now is that Mr. Baldwin is dead; that he disappeared from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo after ten o'clock Sunday night, the 8th inst.; that his body was found at daylight next morning two hundred miles away, a hundred miles from the nearest railway; and that he must have been foully murdered.

Detective Brown, who was sent by Chief Kipley to investigate the Adirondack case, reached Saratoga last Friday morning, and by hard riding over the mountain roads arrived at Cascadeville Saturday evening. There he found the body, which had been brought in from a point eight miles north. Mr. Brown closely questioned the mail carrier who had found the body about six o'clock Monday morning, on his way from Lake Placid. There was no doubt as to the day and hour, as these were attested by the mail carrier, Daniel Givins, and by the authorities at Cascadeville, who had sent after the remains, and also despatched a courier to Westport with a telegram to the City Marshal of Saratoga.

When Givins came upon the body it was lying in the road. His horse was frightened by it. The remains lay in a sort of heap, and were not yet quite cold.

The skull was smashed, the neck broken, and the head driven in toward the shoulders. Many bones in the body and limbs were broken, indicating that the remains may have been tightly packed in a box or crammed into a cask. The only clothing upon the corpse was a suit of silken pajamas, tied around the waist with a cord of the same material.

The deceased had never been seen in that region, nor was any one known to be missing. The population is sparse, and every tourist and sportsman is known along the trails to the guides, boatmen and innkeepers. No man could carry a human body to that remote spot save upon the back of a horse, and no mysterious horseman or other person was reported from any part of the district. The manner in which the body had made its appearance in the midst of the mountains was as much of a mystery to the people there as the means by which it had been removed from Poughkeepsie was to Detective Brown.

Detective Brown had known Mr. Baldwin, and as soon as he saw the body he was convinced of its identity. Accordingly he sent a courier with a telegram to Chief Kipley, and hired two men and two horses to help him carry the remains to Saratoga. They arrived here at three o'clock this afternoon, and there was a sad scene when our party from Poughkeepsie were admitted to the undertaker's rooms to view the body. Every one at once recognized in the broken and mangled mass of flesh handsome, manly Sylvester Baldwin. Professor Stone was greatly agitated when he beheld the features of his college chum and best friend, and Miss Davidge uttered a cry of pain and would have swooned had not Mrs. Jones led her away.

The face of the deceased is natural. In one of the front teeth is a gold filling just such as Mr. Baldwin had in one of his front teeth. The silken pajamas are

precisely like Mr. Baldwin's, and, moreover, his initials "S. R." are embroidered upon a little linen tag under the neck. The name of the maker, a Boston firm, is there, too. Still stronger proof of the identity of the remains, if any were needed, is found in the fact that in a pocket of the pajamas was discovered a locket containing a miniature of Miss Irene Davidge.

There is, therefore, not the slightest doubt whatever that this is the body of Sylvester Baldwin. There can be no doubt, either, that he was murdered. But how and by whom? And above all, how was his body carried, in six or seven hours, some two hundred miles from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo to that lonely spot in the mountains, to reach which a journey of two days and nights is required, even under the most favorable circumstances?

It cannot be possible that the body which we have here is that of another man. It is beyond reason to suppose that there was a simultaneous disappearance of two men, both wearing silken pajamas exactly alike, the two men resembling one another in figure, face, color of eyes and hair, teeth and everything as closely as if they were twins, both bearing the initials "S. R." and both carrying in their pockets a miniature of Miss Irene Davidge, of New York.

Every one is greatly depressed, not only on account of Mr. Baldwin's sad fate, but by the inexplicable mystery surrounding the dreadful tragedy. The police and the detectives are without even a theory. The doctors and professors who have carefully examined the body and subjected parts of its raiment to microscopic tests are without any explanation, however shadowy and unsatisfactory. Have the Black Arts been revived, or must we ascribe this most extraordinary tragedy to the working of some modern miracle?

This is the strange story my curiosity had unearthed from the recesses of my dead kinsman's trunk. You will now see why I am sorry I disobeyed the injunction which I found written upon the blue packet. The tale which these old newspaper clippings tell has rung in my ears and whirled about in my brain, robbing me of sleep and making me nervous and restless. I have searched the old trunk again and again for further light upon it, but without success. I have had a feeling that somehow or other I must discover the dread secret, for this tragedy was in my family. Not only did it occur, or at least have its beginning, in the house of one of my kinsmen, but, now that the circumstances have been brought so strikingly to my attention, I recall that my relation, Professor Stone, married the Miss Davidge who figures in the story, lived with her in happiness for many years, and reared a fine family of boys and girls. Though I had never known either Professor Stone or his wife, Mr. Henry Stone, their brother, who left to my charge the fateful trunk, has told me of the professor's successful and useful career and happy home life.

But all my efforts have been unavailing. I am unable to find a clue or even to evolve a satisfactory theory. I can only give my readers the facts and leave them to struggle with the problem, as I have struggled.

. . . . .

POSTSCRIPT. — The foregoing was written some months ago. Meanwhile I have made strenuous efforts to throw off the strange fascination which this mystery has exerted upon me — to stop thinking and worrying about it; but to no purpose. It has continued to harass me. To-day, feeling more desperate than usual, I went up to the garret with a hatchet and a big knife, determined to cut the old trunk to pieces in order to discover if its shell contained any clue to the mystery. Underneath the lining in the bottom I found a letter apparently no more than five or six years old, which read as follows: —

SAN FRANCISCO, June 20, 1892.

*My dear Brother Henry:* — I am writing this letter to you with my own hand, despite my physical weakness. It is the last letter I shall ever write to you, for I know my end is fast approach-



ing. The doctor tells me I shall recover, but he cannot deceive me.

I have, as you know, led a busy, a useful, a successful life. My inventions have brought me distinction and reward. There is only one thing in my career which I regret, and even that does not fill me with much remorse. Once there came to me a moment in which all that life seemed to promise me — all happiness, success, and ambition — were involved in a struggle for mastery between two men — myself and another.

It is the law of nature that when two forces come in collision the weaker must give way. Nature has thus established the principle of the survival of the fittest, the dominance of the superior over the inferior. It matters not whether the struggle comes between planets or molecules, men or animals, nations or tribes, the law is the same. No man can be above the law of his being and his surroundings; it is his right and duty to work out his salvation within the sphere and under the principles which nature has ordained.

And yet in my case that which I had to do was extremely disagreeable. I had to remove a man from my pathway. One or the other had to suffer a most grievous loss, a fatal disappointment; and when this clash of interests came I had the right, under nature's laws, to defend myself. The man whose life crossed mine, and whom it was necessary for me to remove, was my best friend, and, for the moment, my guest. These circumstances added to the unpleasantness of my task, but did not deprive me of my right of self-preservation — a right which exists in every living thing, from the humblest to the highest, and whose exercise nature restricts only with limitations of power.

You may wonder, brother, why I write these words. I write them because it is not in my nature to die with my secret untold. All these years I have carried it alone, absolutely alone. An impulse which I can neither describe nor control leads me to share my secret with just one human soul; and of course he can be none but you, my dearest friend and brother, who has shared all his secrets with me.

You will recall all the circumstances of the tragedy which happened at our house in Glen Echo shortly after I left college and while you were in Europe. We have often talked them over in the past, and you, like every one else, tried to solve the mystery. If you had only known what I knew!

I loved Irene Davidge before Sylvester Baldwin did. Before he and she met at our house I was passionately devoted to her. I made up the house party for the purpose of providing a good opportunity to press my suit, which I knew was not unpleasing. Before she returned home I had confidently expected she would be my promised wife. But from the first day she met Baldwin I knew my star was setting and his was in the ascendant. He was rapid and prosperous in his love-making, and I was forgotten. In a week they were lovers. One day I saw him kiss her as they stood behind some rose bushes in the garden. Had I not been a philosopher, a man of cool, calm reasoning, I should have killed him there and then.

But you know my self-possession, my absolute control of self, my favorite theory that he who can master himself can master the world. All that night I reasoned it out with myself. My conclusions, which to me then, as now, appeared logical, were as follows:—

1. Without her my life is ruined, as I know myself well enough to know I shall never love again.

2. If he lives she will be his, and I, the superior man in all save those superficial qualities which attract the other sex, shall be the loser in life's battle.

3. Nature has ordained that the superior shall triumph, and therefore I have the right to remove him from my way.

4. If I do remove him, in proper fashion, she will be mine, as she would have been mine had he not come between us. Therefore his removal will give me that which I must have.

Conclusion: I will remove him.

Action being determined upon, it only remained to decide the means. It was necessary that everything should be done in a prudent and orderly way. There must be no danger of discovery or even of suspicion being fastened upon me, for of course that would defeat the purpose in view. To obviate the possibility of pain or humiliation to our dear mother, or to you, my brother, was as much my duty as to protect the mind of Miss Davidge from being poisoned against me. Therefore it was necessary to proceed only after thorough consideration of all the possibilities. A minor point, but still one worthy of attention, was that I should not be compelled to do any actual butchering with my own hands, nor have any gruesome scenes about me. Even in this supreme moment, when I was successfully to work out my destiny or

utterly ruin myself, I could not overlook the fact that I was a gentleman. Nor could I take the risk of employing a confederate.

In a few hours my plans were laid. I hope you will agree with me that they were laid with judgment, skill, and thoroughness, as became a man of science and self-possession. Fortunately I had in my laboratory all the materials needed for my operations. But there was much work to do. Day and night I toiled up there on the roof of the old house, where you and I afterward passed so many happy hours while perfecting my inventions. I absented myself as much as possible from the house party, in part because I could not endure seeing him and her together, and in part because I needed all the time for my preparations. During a period of one hundred hours I took only as much sleep as one ordinarily gets in twenty-four.

At last I was ready. I remember that it was Sunday noon, just after services, that I tested my work, reviewed all my calculations, and found that nothing had been neglected. After dinner in the evening I spent some time with the party in the dining-room, and the loving glances exchanged between Sylvester and Irene were more endurable to me than they had hitherto been. Excusing myself about nine o'clock, I went upstairs. Entering Baldwin's room, I struck a match and found the book which he was engaged in reading. It was "Horace's Odes," from my library. I knew Sylvester's habit of reading for an hour before going to sleep — he formed it in college. Opening the volume to the bookmark, I turned over six pages and inserted there this note which I had prepared: —

*Dear Sylvester:* — If you are not too sleepy when you find this, come up to the laboratory. I have something important to show you.  
E. S.

I calculated that it would take him a quarter of an hour to read from his bookmark to my note, and I felt sure he would come, as he had displayed much interest in my experiments, and had complained because of late I had admitted him so rarely to the laboratory. My only fear was that, in the time which I had given him, not all of the other people in the house would be asleep, as I naturally did not want any one to know he had visited me. At the same time I dared not place the note farther on in the book, lest he should not reach it before falling asleep himself. Of course I could have deferred the removal till another night, but now wind and weather favored, and I courted no delays.

He came a few moments before eleven o'clock. I was ready for him.

"Sylvester," said I, "here is a machine I have built for experimental purposes, and I want you to help me test it."

"All right, Edwin," he replied; "what is it now?"

"A new gas-holder, made of silk," said I; "and here is some of the new gas. Take a good whiff of it—it is like wine in the nostrils."

He took the metal flask which I handed him, turned the cock, and in a moment or two fell insensible at my feet. I had filled the flask with a combination of chloroform and hydrogen, under pressure, and when the cock was turned a cloud of most powerful anæsthetic fumes burst into his face.

Now I was master of the situation. First I locked the door leading to the floor below. I noted with satisfaction that he had brought my note with him, thus saving me a perilous trip down to his room after it. I burned it in my furnace. A look at the anemometer showed a wind movement of thirty miles an hour, and I was glad to see that the barometer was still falling. If it had been possible for a man of my temperament to have faltered in a set purpose, the sight of the locket containing Irene's portrait, which had fallen from the breast pocket of his pajamas as he fell, would have served to nerve me for my task.

With your knowledge of my thoroughgoing methods, dear brother, you will easily imagine how carefully I had planned everything. Sylvester's exact weight I had ascertained by a casual inquiry a few days before to be one hundred and fifty-three pounds. I assumed that he would come to me without stopping to dress, for he was hardy and athletic, and proud of his ability to endure exposure—an important point on account of the nicety of my calculations. The weight of the gas-bag was eighteen pounds, and of its lines and netting, five pounds; total, one hundred and seventy-six pounds. By careful test I had found the weight of my gas—it was nearly pure, dry hydrogen—was eighty thousandths of an ounce per cubic foot; and as air weighs one and two tenths ounces per foot, I had a net power of fully one and one tenth ounces per foot. The gas-bag was spherical, and a little more than eighteen feet in diameter, giving it a capacity of three thousand one hundred and fifty cubic feet, equal to two hundred and seventeen pounds lifting force.

It was necessary to have a little margin, to compensate for loss of gas by leakage. Careful calculations of the rarity of the

atmosphere at various altitudes showed me the bag with the burden would at first ascend to a height of about five thousand six hundred feet, where there would be an exact counterbalance of the weight of air displaced and the weight of the apparatus and its burden. Then it would slowly descend as the gas escaped from the bag. It was, of course, desirable that it should at first ascend to a great altitude, as that would prevent its being seen by any one who might be astir. It was quite as desirable that the whole machine should remain in the air at least six hours, that it might be carried a proper distance away. At the same time, it must drop its burden before daylight — before any one could see it and perchance understand its dread significance.

It was highly important, too, from my view-point, that the body should be found sooner or later, and be unmistakably identified; otherwise Irene might take it into her pretty head to do the romantic by waiting year after year for the possible reappearance in life of her absent lover, which would be decidedly unpleasant for me. Hence I did not dare to arrange to send the apparatus out to sea, as I might easily have done. For the same reason I replaced in the pocket of Sylvester's pajamas the locket with Irene's miniature in it which had fallen from it.

It was absolutely necessary that the apparatus and its burden should not be found together, for in that case it would be easy to trace the two to a common source, — to wit, my laboratory, — thus defeating the purpose in view. To obviate this danger I had made careful experiments in the effect of various acids upon fibers, and was able accurately to determine the time in which a given quantity of diluted vitriolic acid would eat away a cord of given strength so that it would part under the strain of a weight of one hundred and fifty-six pounds. By this means I made sure that the apparatus and its burden should be separated before daylight, the latter to fall to earth, and the former, relieved of its incubus, to ascend to the skies and fly perhaps a thousand miles before coming down.

Such a cord, twisted with acid and timed to sustain the load just six hours, I tied about the waist of Sylvester and made fast to the netting underneath the gas-bag.

The moment had come. Carefully I looked all about from the roof to see that no one was watching my operations, and noted with satisfaction that the night was extremely dark and in all respects favorable to my purpose.

At quarter past eleven o'clock, Sunday evening, October 18, I took Sylvester's living right hand in mine and pressed it with a farewell greeting. Then with three rapid slashes of my knife I cut the guy-ropes and my little balloon, with the body of my rival dangling beneath it, darted upward and northward into the gale.

Your affectionate brother,

EDWIN STONE.

Such was the secret of Sylvester Baldwin's death. Was it to be expected that anything less than the diabolical craft and ingenuity that brought it to pass should penetrate its mystery?

