

Literature, &c.

LINES

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. WILLIAM SINCLAIR,
OF CHATHAM.

A robe of grey moonlight round Nature was
thrown,
Snowy vapours had curtain'd the face of the
sky,
And the wintry winds uttered a sorrowful
moan,
In the stillness of night, sweeping mourn-
fully by.

But though fainter its tone, a more sorrowful
moan.

Re-echoed the sound to the listening ear,
In the chamber so lone, when to us it was
known
That the Angel of Death was approaching us
near.

How swift was his coming, yet how unper-
ceived,
From the moment when first in the distance
afar,

Young Mary beheld him who only believed
That her spirit was early to enter his car.

So rapid his progress, so noiseless his tread,
That he entered unnoticed, unheard by us
all,

And the gloom of his presence was suddenly
shed

O'er the few who beheld his dark shadow
their fall.

Then we listened for words that might speak
to her friends

Of the regions that she was about to explore,
Of that spirit-ill'd land that so widely extends,
And from which she should never return
any more.

Of her hopes, of her prospects, on what she
relied

For obtaining a happy and durable rest,
If the blood and the water from Jesus' pierced
side

Had prepared her to dwell with the ransom'd
and blest.

Whether far to the right of the gulph that di-
vides,

The two opposite destinies fix'd for our race,
Where the glory of Israel for ever abides,
She knew that for her was provided a place.

If her faith's firm foundation was that living
rock,

Against which hell's devices could never
prevail;

If from thence came the courage to meet the
last shock,

When the flesh and the heart are both des-
tined to fail.

But we listened in vain for her vanishing
breath,

And her weakness denied her the power to
speak,

Then her lustrous eye languishing clothed in
death,

And the fever hue faded away from her
cheek.

But we learn'd from the friends who were pri-
vileged to hear

From her lips, ere those lips were with suf-
fering mute,

That beyond earth's dark bounds she had
nothing to fear,

And her ground of assurance what mind can
dispute,

For she talk'd not of innocence native and fair,
Nor of works to propitiate favours divine,
Nor of rites ceremonial performed with care,
On which for salvation she thought to re-
cline.

But she spoke of the life purchased spirit of
truth,

Having taught both her reason and feelings
that she,

Though arrayed in the softness and mildness of
youth,

Created anew metamorphos'd must be.

He had bled to conviction applied to the lamb,
That his pardoning love might to her be re-
vealed,

Repaired to the mountain and gathered the
balm,

By which the sick children of Zion are
heal'd.

In asserting those things she has witnessed at
least,

And set to her seal that the gospel is true,
And con'd from death's silence her tongue be
released.

This would be her counsel, young mourners
to you.

That you from the Father should ask and re-
ceive

The gift Christ hath purchased and wills to
bestow,

That you should in him through the spirit be-
lieve,

And learn in the path of the righteous to go.

Such religion is no blind delusion, O no,

No wild dream of fancy or flight of the brain,

It comes not like lightning as swiftly to go,
Undefined as the motion of legerdemain.

'Tis one faith in one Lord, in one baptism pure,
Gives light to the reason, and life to the
soul,

God has laid the foundation, and it is secure,
Though the heavens together be wound as a
scroll.

When the earth is dissolved, and its works are
destroyed,

And the mountains and hills shall have van-
ished away,

Holy peace on Mount Zion shall still be enjoyed,
For the Saviour of Zion the sceptre shall away.

From Chambers's Journal for February.

THE WINDFALL.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

AFTER an event, we sometimes make a pre-
sentiment fit the occasion; but I do really fancy
that on that well remembered day I had an un-
usual feeling of anxious curiosity when the post-
man's sharp rap announced the arrival of letters.
I was sitting at my breakfast-table in Wimpole
Street: one cup and saucer, one egg, one muf-
fin, and a tongue—not a woman's, thank Heav-
en!—shewed, at a glance, that I had no in-
cumbrance of wife or child.

As I sat there stirring my coffee, I thought
my landlady's steps were unusually heavy and
slow; and at length, when the door was gained,
and her hand upon the lock, she paused to ful-
minate some threat against Mary the housemaid,
that unfortunate victim of three sets of lodgers.
At last Mrs Davis entered my apartment, and
deposited a country newspaper and three letters,
two of which proved to be tradesmen's bills;
the third had a black edged envelope directed
in a strange hand. I had no near relatives, so
my glance at the post mark was more inquisi-
torial than anxious. Mrs Davis retreated slow-
ly, with more than one backward look: her
curiosity was excited, for I believe she knew
the hand writing of all my correspondents as
well, or better, than I did myself.

'Please, sir,' said Mrs Davis, 'do you dine at
home to day?'

'I do not know yet—I will send you down
word,' I replied, somewhat impatiently, for I
wished to be alone.

'Because, sir, I suppose if you do, you will
have the bit of cold fowl curried, and the re-
mains of the apple tart?'

Mrs Davis, I do not know yet where I shall
dine—whether at my club, or with some friend.
Surely it will be time to know in an hour?'

'O yes—certainly, sure, sir—I'll look up
again; and with this Mrs Davis made her ex-
it. I took one more sip of my coffee, and then
broke the black seal, and read the contents of
the letter. It gives one a curious sensation
that of putting an 0 to one's annual income,
whereby £500 a year is transported into £5000.
This was just my situation. The letter was
from an agent of a second-cousin of mine, whom
I had never seen, to announce to me the sud-
den death of his employer, coupled with the
very important fact, that the deceased had left
no will, and that I, Francis Gerrard, was found
to be next of kin. This intelligence was as
pleasing as it was unexpected. In the first
place, I had never for a moment dreamed of
being possible heir to this relative. Indeed,
not till the perusal of the letter had I heard of
the deaths of two intermediate connections,
whose claims, had they been alive, would have
banished all hopes of my succession. I had
never met Mr Henry Gerrard, the individual
who had so kindly died in my favour. I had in
early youth heard his name mentioned, or rather
that of his father; disputes, which took
place long before either of us were born, had
estranged the family branches, so that time
and distance had left little but the identity of
name.

Henry Gerrard's parents had been wealthy,
prosperous people, whose fortunes always in-
creased; while the income of my immediate
progenitors had ever been going the other way.
I have invariably noticed, that between the luck-
y and the unlucky in families there is no kind-
ly feeling; those who are unfortunate hate the
prosperous for their prosperity, and they, in
their turn, hate the others for their necessities.
Without, however, going into the philosophy
of family disunion, certain it is that I had never
seen Gerrard, nor his handsome residence and
fine estates, which had so fallen to my posses-
sion. Five times did I read the letter, to as-
sure myself that my senses were not playing me
some fantastic trick. I leaned back in my arm
chair, and mused and mused again. I think I
must have uttered my thoughts aloud, for the
cat partially woke up, and wickered at me several
times.

I had never coveted riches, but I defy the
greatest cynic to be insensible to such an ac-
quisition of fortune. I poured out another cup of
coffee, and stirred it thoughtfully and methodi-
cally; the proportions of my small but comfort-
able drawing room seemed to expand into a
baronial hall, and I fancied myself already sur-
rounded by all the appliances of luxury, and a
retinue of servants at my call. Well, the idea
was pleasant. How much longer I might have
indulged these pictorial imaginings I know not,
had not Mrs Davis again appeared with—

'Did you ring for breakfast to be moved,
sir?'

'No, but I have finished; you may take all

away,' I said, folding up the important letter,
and putting it in my pocket. 'Mrs Davis I shall
not dine at home to day; I have to go into the
city to see my lawyer, and perhaps, I shall be
obliged to leave town to-morrow.'

'No bad news, I hope, sir?'

'No, not exactly—merely the announcement
of the death of a distant relative whom I never
saw in my life.'

'Glad to hear it is no worse, sir. I was
afraid it was something more serious-like, when
I saw the black seal and letter, and you were
so long, Mr Gerrard, in ringing for breakfast
to be taken away.'

I smiled at Mrs Davis's pertinacious curiosity
and thanked my stars that no woman had a
right to question me more closely. Rejoicing
in my freedom, I took my hat and stick, leav-
ing Mrs Davis brushing up the fireplace—a
process I detested almost as much as the squall-
ing of children—and found my way towards
the city. I matters little to the interest of
narrative what took place between myself and
my lawyer during the morning's conversation;
suffice it to say, that all the preliminaries end-
ed satisfactorily.

But to return to the starting-point—the in-
dividual me that metaphysicians prate about.—
I had just reached my fifty-second year; my
income, as I before hinted, was a trifle under
£500 per annum. This, I believe, is allowed
on all hands to be a 'competence,' and, as I
had been from my earliest childhood favoured
also with 'health and peace,' I might be deemed
according to the poet, a happy man; and I
was so. The failure in my professional career
troubled me little: shortly before my father's
death, he persuaded me to become a member
of the bar; I did so, and the eating of the din-
ners at term time was the only Law Digest I
ever troubled myself about.

I had, it is true, a gown and wig, and a bag
of briefs, but the latter the moths had utterly
destroyed some fifteen years since, and I did
not find it necessary to procure another. I had
regularly attended the Western Circuit twenty-
eight years, and never had a client presumed
to disturb my *otium cum dignitate*. Some
impertinent person may question the *dignitate*;
the *otium*, however, was certainly mine. I had
at first gone the circuit from a sort of vague
idea of duty—latterly, it became a habit. I
liked change of air twice a year, and the west of
England is pleasant enough for a few weeks
for an idle man who has no calls in particular
to any of the cardinal points. For many years
—nearly twenty, I think—I had lodged in
Wimpole street. Mrs Davis was a good kind
of woman, and seldom annoyed me, except
when her curiosity was excited. My habits, I
suppose, would be called decidedly bachelor.—
I liked London, better than any place in the
world; I was born there, and mostly educated
there. All my associations, my friends and my
habits, were connected with the metropolis. I
was a member of one of the clubs; I went oc-
casionally to the theatres or public lectures;
dabbled a little in science; read the reviews
and periodicals, and found people to talk with
about them. I had always an inward domesti-
city about me, but it never went beyond a sin-
gle arm chair, the love of poking my own fire
unretricted, a witch's bonnet to make my
own negus in, and an occasional friend who
would drop in to help to drink it.

My sitting-room in Wimpole Street was cozy
and comfortable—the furniture, the position of
the house, the locality, seemed all identified
with myself. If I could not dignify my *larses*
with the true title of household gods, they were
not less dear to me because they might igno-
miniously have been termed lodging house
gods; nor need I quarrel with my high-priest-
ess, Mrs Davis, because he was vernacular in-
stead of oracular. As to money matters, I had
so squared my expenditure that, at the end of
the year, I generally found I had never less than
£5, nor more than £10 in hand. This over-
plus I dropped periodically into the box for do-
nations at Middlesex Hospital.

My other charities were not numerous, if I
may except the fact that I gave the sweeper at
the crossing nearest my door the sum of two-
pence every Monday morning; and if that day
chanced to be wet, the young rascal held out
his hand on the following morning, with 'please
your honor, I did not see your honour yester-
day.'

Such was the 'even tenor of my way' during
that period of my life when fortune had gently
smiled upon me: the amiable goddess and my-
self now fairly laughed together—her gifts were
of that boundless sort that makes a man for the
time feel that he would save his worst enemy
from hanging, and as if he would shake hands
with the whole world. One's nature expands
like a full blown rose in the sunshine, and a
visit of a passing acquaintance. Such were
my feelings during the necessary interval be-
tween the announcement and the taking posses-
sion of my unexpected windfall.

I had sent my lawyer to settle all prelimina-
ries at Langton Hall; and after the lapse of a
few days, Mr Stevens informed me that my pre-
sence was desirable. I sent an answer by re-
turn of post, announcing my arrival (D. V.) on
the following Thursday. It was not till I had
despatched this letter that I informed Mrs Da-
vis of the change in my circumstances, and my

consequent evacuation of my long occupied ap-
partments in her house.

'Ah, sir,' said she, 'my mind misgave me
when I saw you receive that black-edged letter.
I knew it was from nobody that wrote to you
in a general way; and your going so often to
Mr Stevens, and not having dinners at home
every day, and sending down a piece of a bottle
of sherry, as if it was no more than New River
water!—thinks I to myself, there's a change
somehow come over Mr Gerrard. But la! sir,
I'm sure, though I lose the best lodger I ever
had, I do most sincerely wish you joy. Well,
only think, and you going, sir, to live in a great
country house all by yourself! It's most a pity
as things have turned up that you are not mar-
ried, sir. I ask your pardon for my freedom,
Mr Gerrard.'

'Mrs Davis, I never intend to marry.
Please to dust that table,' I added, by way
of stopping her loquacity on a subject I peculiar-
ly disliked.

My landlady was not so easily abashed; she
took up her apron and performed the desired
service, at the same time observing; 'Well,
sir, certain sure it will be most terribly lonesome
without a lady. It isn't as it is in the town,
where you can pop out, and a friend pop in, of
a long winter evening. I know what lonesome-
ness is in the country, where you have no neigh-
bours but the trees, and scarce a Christian to
speak to but the brute beasts. We kept two
cows, and lived in the country, you know, sir,
where my poor dear John died; and I'll tell
you how it was, sir, that he did die—all thro'
the mistake of a country 'potheecary, who—'

'Yes, I remember perfectly your mention-
ing the circumstances, Mrs Davis. Is that my
weekly account you have in your hand? There
was nothing I dreaded so much as the exclaim-
ing of 'Poor dear John! Peace be to his ash-
es, so long as they do not give rise to the gar-
gularity of his relic.'

Having stopped the narrative, and settled the
account, I gave Mrs Davis a quarter of a year's
rent, in consideration of her long services, and
presented her with my tea-caddy, a pair of
handsome decanters and plated spirit stand, to-
gether with a Pembroke side-table I had once
bought cheap at a sale. She was all gratitude.
I shook hands with her at parting: and as she
wiped her left eye with the corner of her apron,
she observed she hadn't felt so much since poor
John died from the effects of taking the wrong
mixture.

As I gave a last survey of my little drawing-
room and my accustomed place by the window
in summer and the fire in winter, I felt how
pleasant it had been; but quickly succeeded a
feeling of self devotion to my new position, with
all the dignified duties of a man of substance.
The railway took me within seven miles of my
future home; I had never been in that part of
the country before. A carriage and pair from
the principal hotel was waiting for me at the
station, and I soon found myself rolling towards
Langton Hall. The shades of evening were
rapidly closing in; the country seemed rather
picturesque; I looked from side to side as long
as the darkening twilight permitted. At length
the ascent of a tedious hill, with hedgerows as
high as prison walls, made me sink back
and I fell into a pleasing reverie of anticipation.
I was interrupted by the postboy, who was
walking by the side of his horses, coming to
the window and saying: 'If it was a bit lighter,
your honour, your honour could see Langton
Hall, just right down there, over on the left,
at the bottom of the hill.'

As it was not light, however, I could see no-
thing, but I looked vaguely into the obscurity
of the evening landscape. The postboy soon
mounted to his place, and the horses went off
briskly. At that moment the burst of a merry
peal of bells saluted my ears not unpleasantly.
Louder and louder they sounded as we ap-
proached Langton. Suddenly the horses stop-
ped; I looked out to see what was the matter;
we were at the lodge. The gate was opened
by three people, all anxiously pressing forward
to perform the service; and four five others
stood at the door of the lodge, vainly straining
their eyes to see beyond the glare of the can-
dle which a woman held right before her own
eyes—women always do, I observe. We soon
passed the group of gazers, and I found myself
driven under an avenue of trees, whose dark
trunks stood in bold relief against the clear
cold sky. The church was evidently near the
house, for the clang of the bells grew louder.
In another moment I saw lights passing from
window to window, and immediately the car-
riage drew up at the portico. The entrance
door flew open, and a whole retinue of servants
filled the spacious hall. My lawyer and friend,
Mr Stevens, came out to welcome me. My
small amount of personal property was speedily
sized on by three or four officious men-servants
who conveyed a small portmanteau, and still
smaller carpet-bag, ceremoniously into the
house. A kind of shyness overcame me; I did
not like so many people about me. Which-
ever way I looked, it seemed as if half a score
of female domestics stood courtesying before
me; my head moved like a Chinese mandarin
in acknowledgement of these oppressive civi-
lities. To say the truth I was uncommonly glad
when I found myself alone with Stevens in the
dining room. There was no fire, for it was yet
early in the autumn, and the polished cast-iron
and wainscots seemed to defy the light of four