

**LEISURE HOURS: A  
THING OF SHREDS  
AND PATCHES**

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Leisure Hours: A Thing of Shreds and Patches by J. C. Stewart

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# Leisure Hours.

"A THING OF SHREDS AND PATCHES."

BY

J. C. STEWART.

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*PRIVATE CIRCULATION.*

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## LEISURE HOURS.

### The Return.

LAND of my childhood, happy land, once more  
My footsteps tread thy wild romantic shore ;  
Once more thy mountains, tow'ring to the skies,  
Thy "cloud capp'd" hills, before my view arise ;  
Once more along thy burnies' sides I rove,  
List to the warbling songsters of the grove,  
Or tread the mazes of the wooded glen,  
Far from the noisy haunts of busy men.

Yes, lovely scenes, unchanged ye still remain,  
Your beauty still ye favour'd haunts retain !  
But where are they who ever used to be  
Partakers with me in my boyish glee ?  
Who clamber'd with me up the mountain steep,  
Who with me braved the dangers of the deep ;  
Advent'rous souls, who o'er the rush-bound lake,  
In tiny bark would dare the voyage make ;  
Who nimbly with me up the rocks have sprung,  
To rob the blackbird of her unfledged young ;  
Or pillaged oft, 'mid merriment and glee,  
The village lawyer's or the parson's tree ?

Time has been busy ; Ah ! how busy here :  
My play-hour cronies and companions dear

Are gone, like snow-flakes melting in the sun,  
Or, like ripe fruit, have dropt off one by one ;  
And few are left, alas ! how very few,  
Of all the numbers whom in youth I know.

And where is she who on the village green,  
Year after year we hail'd our fair May Queen ?  
To whom we bent the knee of homage low,  
And placed the rose-wreath on her snowy brow ?  
Who the fond heart of many a swain had bound,  
The standing toast of all the country round ;  
The light of heart, the careless, happy, free,  
Unmatch'd in mirth industrious as the bee ?

Go, ask the sexton, he perchance can tell  
The fate of one whom all had loved so well ;  
And as he tells the oft-told tale, he tries  
In vain to hide the moisture of his eyes ;  
For tales of sorrow reach the poor man's heart  
Sooner than all the pageantry of art :  
" 'Twas in the summer," thus his tale he told,  
" There to our village came a seaman bold ;  
Reckless and wild, he own'd but passion's law,  
And sigh'd to grasp each budding flower he saw.  
Our village rose hung on the parent stem,  
Blooming and sparkling like a costly Gem ;  
He gain'd possession of her guileless heart,  
But, ah ! the scoundrel play'd a villain's part :  
The flower was worn in triumph for a day,  
Then faded, withered, heedless, thrown away.

" He went to sea and left the ruin'd maid,  
Whose rosy cheek had now began to fade ;  
She seldom spoke, was never known to smile,



But pined in secret o'er her lover's guile.  
 A babe was born; her father spurn'd his poor  
 Heart and health-broken daughter from his door:  
 Weeping, she turn'd her silently away,  
 Sunk on the threshold, and essay'd to pray.

" 'Twas dead of winter, bitter was the blast  
 That, snow drift laden, went careering past;  
 Toward the beach with faltering step she turn'd,  
 While in her brain the fire of frenzy burn'd.

" Next morn they found her on a rock reclined,  
 Her babe and breast unshelter'd from the wind;  
 Death was enstamp'd upon her pallid brow,—  
 And there," he pointed, " she is sleeping now."  
 No marble tells her lineage or her name,  
 No stone records the story of her shame.

Ah! what a change a few short years have made;  
 How many a loved one in the tomb is laid!  
 Those whom I left in manhood's strength and prime,  
 Are standing, grey-hair'd, on the verge of time;  
 And the young sprigs who were but newly blown,  
 Are saplings strong, or trees maturely grown,  
 The laughing maidens with the flaxen hair,  
 Are women fighting with a world of care;  
 And a strange group of little ones are seen,  
 Filling our places on the village green.  
 A stranger sits upon the teacher's stool,  
 And a new generation throng the school.  
 I too am changed, for few, alas! can trace  
 A former feature in this care-worn face;  
 Soon must I follow to that distant bourne,  
 " From whence no traveller can e'er return."

## The Wreck.

MORN on the waters, proudly away  
Dashes the bark through the ocean spray,  
With sounds of joy, with the voice of song,  
Borne by the breezes gaily along ;  
While the parting prayer is breath'd around,  
Onward is speeding the homeward bound.

Hearts from care and from sorrow free,  
Child of the Ocean, are dwelling in thee ;  
Mothers are calming their children's fears,  
Wiping away their terror-caused tears,  
Pointing their thoughts to that distant land  
Where awaits an eager expectant hand ;  
Brothers whose noisy mirth shall hail,  
Sisters whose welcome cannot fail  
To cheer their hearts and excite their glee,  
When safe from the dangers of the sea.

Night on the ocean, dark overhead,  
The black clouds hang like the pall of the dead ;  
The waters are boiling and bubbling below,  
The voice of the seamen is fearfully low :  
Now the canvas dangles against the mast,  
Then swells with a gust of the fitful blast ;  
And prayers are rising, alas ! in vain,  
For safety in 'midst th' Atlantic main.

Morning again, so lovely and fair,  
Who could think the storm had been there ?  
Where is the vessel that proudly reared  
Its head, as it on through the waters steered ?  
Where are the hearts so happy and gay,

That but yesterday sported the time away ?  
Where are the babes and their mothers, where ?  
And the sire whose brow was marked with care ?  
All sunk in the overwhelming wave,  
All buried deep in that living grave !

Friends at land, ye no more may meet  
With those ye fondly waited to greet ;  
Sisters must sigh for the loved and lost,  
Brothers must weep for the tempest-toss'd,  
Sorrow must whiten the maiden's cheek,  
And grief the fond mother's heart may break ;  
But that barque and its crew have pass'd away,  
And are sleeping sound 'neath the ocean's spray.

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*The Two Poets.*

THE rich aspirant after public fame,  
The candidate for notice and a name,  
Softly reclining on his cushion'd seat,  
A rich and costly Brussels at his feet,  
With all the comfort affluence may command,  
(Perchance some titled Nabob of the land),  
With tiny fingers sweeps the living lyre,  
And warms enraptured with poetic fire ;  
In Annual or Album writes his lays,  
And gains, at least, a fashionable praise.  
But, lo ! the Poet of the poor behold ;