

**ALTEMUS' EDITION. THE  
IDLE THOUGHTS OF  
AN IDLE FELLOW. A BOOK  
FOR AN IDLE HOLIDAY**

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**JEROME K. JEROME**

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THE  
IDLE THOUGHTS  
OF  
AN IDLE FELLOW

A BOOK FOR  
AN IDLE HOLIDAY

BY  
JEROME K. JEROME

*Author of "On the Stage—and Off."*

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HENRY ALTEMUS

1894

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By HENRY ALTEMUS.

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TO  
THE VERY DEAR AND WELL-BELOVED  
FRIEND

OF MY PROSPEROUS AND EVIL DAYS—

TO THE FRIEND

WHO, THOUGH, IN THE EARLY STAGES OF OUR ACQUAINT-  
ANCESHIP, DID OFTTIMES DISAGREE WITH  
ME, HAS SINCE BECOME TO BE MY  
VERY WARMEST COMRADE—

TO THE FRIEND

WHO, HOWEVER OFTEN I MAY PUT HIM OUT, NEVER  
(NOW) UPSETS ME IN REVENGE—

TO THE FRIEND

WHO, TREATED WITH MARKED COLDNESS BY ALL THE  
FEMALE MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD, AND RE-  
GARDED WITH SUSPICION BY MY VERY DOG,  
NEVERTHELESS, SEEMS DAY BY DAY TO BE  
MORE DRAWN BY ME, AND, IN RETURN,  
TO MORE AND MORE IMPREGNATE  
ME WITH THE ODOUR OF  
HIS FRIENDSHIP—

TO THE FRIEND

WHO NEVER TELLS ME OF MY FAULTS, NEVER WANTS TO  
BORROW MONEY, AND NEVER TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF—

TO THE COMPANION OF MY IDLE HOURS,  
THE SOOTHER OF MY SORROWS,  
THE CONFIDANT OF MY JOYS AND HOPES—  
MY OLDEST AND STRONGEST

P I P E,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.

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## PREFACE.

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ONE or two friends to whom I showed these papers in MS. having observed that they were not half bad ; and some of my relations having promised to buy the book, if it ever came out, I feel I have no right to longer delay its issue. But for this, as one may say, public demand, I, perhaps, should not have ventured to offer these mere "idle thoughts" of mine as mental food for the English-speaking peoples of the earth. What readers ask now-a-days in a book is that it should improve, instruct, and elevate. This book wouldn't elevate a cow. I cannot conscientiously recommend it for any useful purposes whatever. All I can suggest is, that when you get tired of reading "the best hundred books," you may take this up for half an hour. It will be a change.

THE  
IDLE THOUGHTS  
OF  
AN IDLE FELLOW.

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*ON BEING HARD UP.*

IT is a most remarkable thing. I sat down with the full intention of writing something clever and original; but for the life of me I can't think of anything clever and original—at least, not at this moment. The only thing I can think about now is being hard up. I suppose having my hands in my pockets has made me think about this. I always do sit with my hands in my pockets, except when I am in the company of my sisters, my cousins, or my aunts; and they kick up such a shindy—I

should say expostulate so eloquently upon the subject—that I have to give in and take them out—my hands I mean. The chorus to their objections is that it is not gentlemanly. I am hanged if I can see why. I could understand its not being considered gentlemanly to put your hands in other people's pockets (especially by the other people), but how, O ye sticklers for what looks this and what looks that, can putting his hands in his own pockets make a man less gentle! Perhaps you are right though. Now I come to think of it, I have heard some people grumble most savagely when doing it. But they were mostly old gentlemen. We young fellows, as a rule, are never quite at ease unless we have our hands in our pockets. We are awkward and shifty. We are like what a music-hall Lion Comique would be without his opera hat, if such a thing can be imagined. But let us put our hands in our trousers' pockets, and let there be some small change in the right hand one and a bunch of keys in the left, and we will face a female post-office clerk.

It is a little difficult to know what to do with your hands, even in your pockets, when there