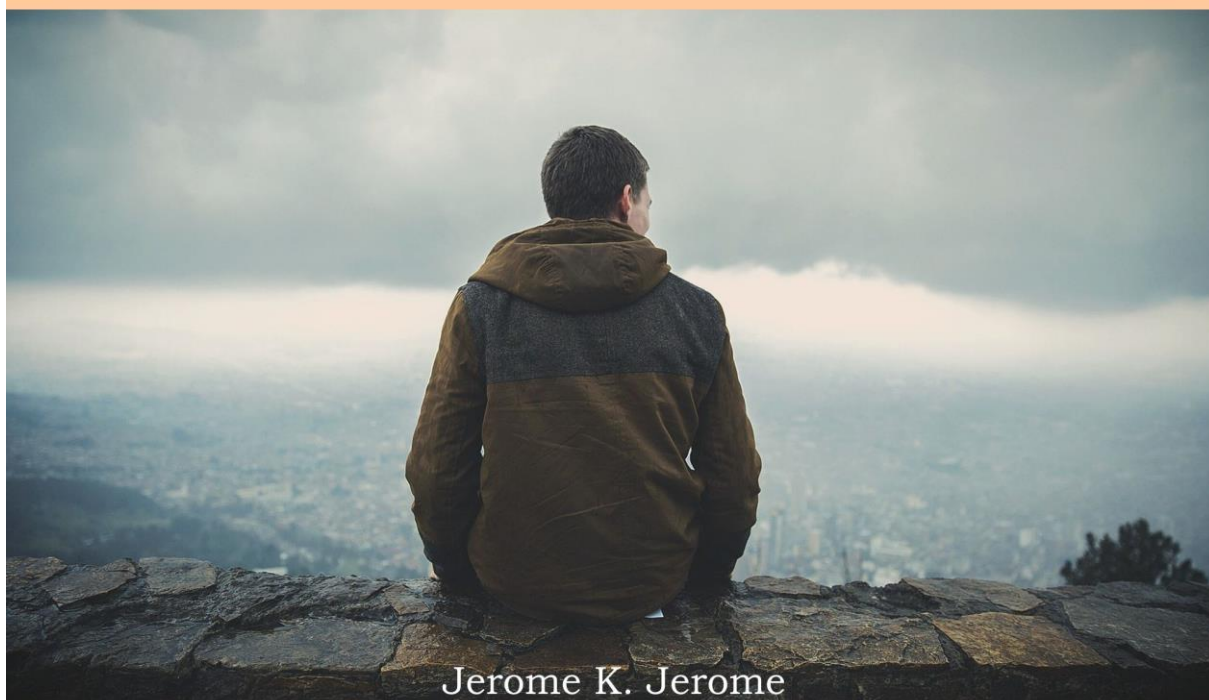


Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow

Z rozmyślań
próżniaka



Jerome K. Jerome

WYDANIE
DWUJĘZYCZNE

JEROME K. JEROME

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THE IDLE THOUGHTS

OF

AN IDLE FELLOW.

by JEROME K. JEROME.

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 ACQUAINTANCESHIP 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 COOLNESS BY ALL THE FEMALE MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD, AND REGARDED 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 ODOR 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

PIPE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

PREFACE

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 nowadays 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.

On being idle

Now, this is a subject on which I flatter myself I really am au fait. The gentleman who, when I was young, bathed me at wisdom's font for nine guineas a term—no extras—used to say he never knew a boy who could do less work in more time; and I remember my poor grandmother once incidentally observing, in the course of an instruction upon the use of the Prayer-book, that it was highly improbable that I should ever do much that I ought not to do, but that she felt convinced beyond a doubt that I should leave undone pretty well everything that I ought to do.

I am afraid I have somewhat belied half the dear old lady's prophecy. Heaven help me! I have done a good many things that I ought not to have done, in spite of my laziness. But I have fully confirmed the accuracy of her judgment so far as neglecting much that I ought not to have neglected is concerned. Idling always has been my strong point. I take no credit to myself in the matter—it is a gift. Few possess it. There are plenty of lazy people and plenty of slow-coaches, but a genuine idler is a rarity. He is not a man who slouches about with his hands in his pockets. On the contrary, his most startling characteristic is that he is always intensely busy.

It is impossible to enjoy idling thoroughly unless one has plenty of work to do. There is no fun in doing nothing when you have nothing to do. Wasting time is merely an occupation then, and a most exhausting one. Idleness, like kisses, to be sweet must be stolen.

Many years ago, when I was a young man, I was taken very ill—I never could see myself that much was the matter with me, except that I had a beastly cold. But I suppose it was something very serious, for the doctor said that I ought to have come to him a month before, and that if it (whatever it was) had gone on for another week he would not have answered for the consequences. It is an extraordinary thing, but I never knew a doctor called into any case yet but what it transpired that another day's delay would have rendered cure hopeless. Our medical guide, philosopher, and friend is like the hero in a melodrama—he always comes upon the scene just, and only just, in the nick of time. It is Providence, that is what it is.

Well, as I was saying, I was very ill and was ordered to Buxton for a month, with strict injunctions to do nothing whatever all the while that I was there. "Rest is what you require," said the doctor, "perfect rest."