

**ON THE STAGE - AND  
OFF: THE BRIEF CAREER  
OF A WOULD-BE ACTOR**

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On the stage - and off: the brief career of a would-be actor by Jerome K. Jerome

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**JEROME K. JEROME**

**ON THE STAGE - AND  
OFF: THE BRIEF CAREER  
OF A WOULD-BE ACTOR**





"I thought that all acting was making love in tights to pretty women."

*Vide p. 2.*

*On the Stage-*



*and Off:*

THE BRIEF CAREER OF  
A WOULD-BE ACTOR

BY  
JEROME K JEROME

WITH ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
KENNETH M. SKEAPING.

— **E** —

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## PREFACE.

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**I**N penning the following pages I have endeavoured to be truthful. In looking back upon the scenes through which I passed, I have sought to penetrate the veil of glamour Time trails behind him as he flies, and to see things exactly as they were—to see the rough road as well as the smiling landscape, the briars and brambles as well as the green grass and the waving trees.

Now, however, that my task is done, and duty no longer demands that memory should use a telescope, the mellowing haze of distance resumes its sway, and the Stage again appears the fair, enchanted ground that I once dreamt it. I forget the shadows, and remember but the brightness. The hardships that I suffered seem now but picturesque incidents; the worry only pleasurable excitement.

I think of the Stage as of a lost friend. I like to dwell upon its virtues and to ignore its faults. I wish



to bury in oblivion the bad, bold villains and the false-hearted knaves who played a part thereon, and to think only of the gallant heroes, the virtuous maidens, and the good old men.

Let the bad pass. I met far more honest, kindly faces than deceitful ones, and I prefer to remember the former. Plenty of honest, kindly hands grasped mine, and such are the hands that I like to grip again in thought. Where the owners of those kindly hands and faces may be now I do not know. Years have passed since I last saw them, and the sea of life has drifted us farther and farther apart. But wherever on that sea they may be battling, I call to them from here a friendly greeting. Hoping that my voice may reach across the waves that roll between us, I shout to them and their profession a hearty and sincere God Speed.



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