

## The Angel and the Author – and Others

(Jerome K. Jerome)

I had a vexing dream one night, not long ago: it was about a fortnight after Christmas. I dreamt I flew out of the window in my nightshirt. I went up and up. I was glad that I was going up. "They have been noticing me," I thought to myself. "If anything, I have been a bit too good. A little less virtue and I might have lived longer. But one cannot have everything." The world grew smaller and smaller. The last I saw of London was the long line of electric lamps bordering the Embankment. Later nothing remained but a faint luminosity buried beneath darkness. It was at this point of my journey that I heard behind me the slow, throbbing sound of wings.

I turned my head. It was the Recording Angel. He had a weary look; I judged him to be tired.

"Yes," he acknowledged, "it is a trying period for me, your Christmas time."

"I am sure it must be," I returned; "the wonder to me is how you get through it all. You see at Christmas time," I went on, "all we men and women become generous, quite suddenly. It is really a delightful sensation."

"You are to be envied," he agreed.

"It is the first Christmas number that starts me off," I told him; "those beautiful pictures – the sweet child looking so pretty in her furs, giving Bovril with her own dear little hands to the shivering street arab; the good old red-faced squire shovelling out plum pudding to the crowd of grateful villagers. It makes me yearn to borrow a collecting box and go round doing good myself."

"And it is not only me – I should say," I continued; "I don't want you to run away with the idea that I am the only good man in the world. That's what I like about Christmas, it makes everybody good. The lovely sentiments we go about repeating! The noble deeds we do from a little before Christmas upto, say, the end of January! Why noting them down must be a comfort to you."

"Yes," he admitted, "noble deeds are always a great joy to me."

"They are to all of us," I said; "I love to think of all the good deeds I myself have done. I have often thought of keeping a diary – jotting them down each day. It would be so nice for one's children."

He agreed there was an idea in this.

"That book of yours," I said, "I suppose, now, it contains all the good actions that we men and women have been doing during the last six weeks." It was a bulky looking volume.

"Yes," he answered, "they were all recorded in the book." (The author tells of his good deeds.)

It was more for the sake of talking of him than anything else that I kept up with him. I did not really doubt his care and conscientiousness, but it is always pleasant to chat about one's self. "My five shillings subscription to the Daily Telegraph's Sixpenny Fund for the Unemployed – got that down all right?" I asked him.

"Yes," he replied, "it was entered."

"As a matter of fact, now I come to think of it," I added, "it was ten shillings altogether. They spelt my name wrong the first time."

"Both subscriptions had been entered", he told me.

"Then I have been to four charity dinners," I reminded him; "I forget what the particular charity was about. I know I suffered the next morning. He interrupted me with the assurance that my attendance had been noted."

"Last week I sent a dozen photographs of myself, signed, to a charity bazaar."

He said that he remembered my doing so.

"And, of course, you remember my performance of "Talbot Champneys in Our Boys" the week before last, in aid of the Fund for Poor Curates," I went on. "I don't know whether you saw the notice in the Morning Post, but—"

He again interrupted me to remark that what the Morning Post man said would be entered, one way or the other, to the critic of the Morning Post, and had nothing to do with me. "Of course not," I agreed; "and between ourselves, I don't think the charity got very much. Expenses, when you come to add refreshments and one thing and another, mount up. But I fancy they rather liked my Talbot Champneys."

He replied that he had been present at the performance, and had made his own report.

I also reminded him of the four balcony seats I had taken for the monster show at His Majesty's in aid of the Fund for the Destitute British in Johannesburg. Not all the celebrated actors and actresses announced on the posters had appeared, but all had sent letters full of kindly wishes; and the others – all the celebrities one had never heard of – had turned up to a man. Still, on the whole, the show was well worth the money. There was nothing to grumble at.

There were other noble deeds of mine. I could not remember them at the time in their entirety. I seemed to have done a good many. But I did remember the rummage sale to which I sent all my old clothes, including a coat that had got mixed up with them by accident, and that I believe I could have worn again.

And also the raffle I had joined for a motor car.

The Angel said I really need not be alarmed, that everything had been noted, together

with other matters I, may be, had forgotten.

(The Angel appears to have made a slight mistake.)

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## About the Author

Jerome Klapka Jerome was born on 2nd May 1859. His father's business collapsed and he moved to east of London.

Jerome left school at fourteen and worked as a clerk and also as a school teacher. He travelled widely all over Europe. It was his utmost desire to become a member of the Parliament.

## Theme

In this story the author dreams that he is dead and is going up and up. Now he feels that he has lost all opportunities to do good. He tries to recall whatever good he had done during his life time when he was living in this world. He realizes that he has done no deed of great benevolence during his life time. The angel who records good deeds of people is flying with him. He asks him what deeds of goodness he has recorded for him.

## Reading Notes

vexing	annoying
luminosity	bright, giving out light
throb	the rhythmic beat of the angel's wings
weary	tired
envy	feeling of disappointment and resentment for another with better fortune
shivering	trembling
shovelling out	scooping out with a large tool or a spoon
jot down	to note down
subscribe	to give a sum of money for some cause
charity	help in form of money, food, etc. to the needy
raffle	sale of an article by lottery

## EXERCISES

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- i. At what point of journey in his dream did the author hear the throbbing sound of wings?
- ii. What time of the year was it?
- iii. What does the author like about Christmas?
- iv. Write down the good deeds the author has admitted are a great joy on Christmas.
- v. Why are the noble deeds always a great joy for the author?

### 2. Read the story and fill in the blanks.

(diary, weary, vexing, deeds, fortnight, recording, good, rummage, money, raffle)

- i. I had a \_\_\_\_\_ dream.
- ii. It was about a \_\_\_\_\_ after Christmas.
- iii. I turned my head to see it was the \_\_\_\_\_ angel.
- iv. He had a \_\_\_\_\_ look.
- v. Noble \_\_\_\_\_ are always a great joy to me.
- vi. I have often thought of keeping a \_\_\_\_\_.
- vii. The author told the angel of his \_\_\_\_\_ deeds.
- viii. The author remembered the \_\_\_\_\_ to which he sent all his old clothes.
- ix. The show was well worth the \_\_\_\_\_.
- x. The author had joined the \_\_\_\_\_ for a motor car.

### 3. Read the lesson and tick the correct word. Write the correct sentences in your notebook.

- i. The author had the dream about a (week, fortnight, month) after Christmas.
- ii. It was the recording (machine, device, Angel) following the author in his dream.
- iii. At (Easter, Christmas, New year) men and women become generous in London.
- iv. The author subscribed (ten, three, five) shillings to the fund for the unemployed.
- v. He had been to (four, five, six) charity dinners.
- vi. The notice appeared in the (Morning, Afternoon and Evening) Post.

- vii. It was a (huge, large, monster) show in aid of the fund for the destitute.
- viii. The (journey, dinner, show) was well worth the money.
- ix. There were many other (big, great, noble) deeds of the author.
- x. The author sent all of his old clothes to the (annual, rummage, grand) sale.