

The Money-Box

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Robert Lynd (1879-1949)

Robert Lynd, an Irishman who later established himself in London, is regarded as one of the greatest essayists of modern English literature. A regular contributor to the New Statesman and several other British newspapers and periodicals, Lynd extended his range of interests and developed his natural prose style. His prose style made his journalistic writings not only deeply impressive but also greatly literary. His writings attempt to "find little bypaths for us, leading out of the thoroughfare of everyday interests into the gardens of fancy and thought." Lynd's writings are marked by typical Irish incisiveness and sense of humour and his observations of life often reflect insight of a meditative and creative mind. The use of wit, epigrams, ironies and bathos are ^{some of} the specialities of his prose.

In the prescribed essay 'The Money-Box' the writer, in his typical style, presents his observations on human tendency to save money. In order to prove that saving must have a rational approach, Lynd uses Money-box as a symbol in the essay device which symbolises a ^{very} common human instinct to accumulate wealth. In the beginning of the essay the essayist explains the habit of children to save coins with enthusiasm. They are also equally enthusiastic about spending the saved money. The parents give money-box to their children as gift, hoping that it would help the children develop saving habit. The parents also believe that once the

children develop this good habit they would retain this instinct for the whole of their lives. So money-box assumes the significance of a monument of worldly wisdom. The parents with their pragmatic approach ^{in order} to inculcate the valuable worldly wisdom in children often present money-box in the guise of toys which naturally attracts the attention of their young ones. The children too "have visions like their elders, and the vision of riches begins to be attractive long before one has ceased to eat liquorice alphabets."

But Lynd visualizes that together with the instinct ~~for~~ saving we are always impelled by the desire to spend. "Obviously, each of us consists of two selves - the self that wishes to save and the self that wishes to spend - and one of them differs as much from the other as each of them distrusts and is hostile to the other." Grudgingly the ~~self~~ self which saves watches the pennies in the fingers of the self which spends. The writer agrees that there is no one who dislikes saving or does not enjoy the pleasure of seeing himself rich. But he feels that it is unnatural to ~~to~~ ^{attempt} for saving at the cost of one's necessities. "The stomach is human, sensitive, and warm. The pocket is inhuman, unfeeling and cold. It is better that the pocket should serve the stomach than that the stomach should serve the

pocket."

Like we elders, the children are also haunted by the desire to spend for the satisfaction of their various fancies. The writer by his own experience feels the money-box begins to look like an enemy after some saving, because getting back ^{coins} money out of the money-box is always an exasperating experience. A child looking through the slit of the money-box has the vision of a paradise, but it alludes how the pleasure to spend. So the money-box is forced to be outwitted by the equipments of various kinds, till its shape is distorted and it becomes a "highly serviceable money-box."

Lastly the author expresses the view that no body can deny the usefulness of saving habit, but it must be sensible. To save for the future of one's children or to help some cause one loves, is always desirable, but it should not be a passion. Some people like to save for no reason than the pleasure of saving money. For them it is "a passion like drink, and a hobby like collecting old china." The writer wonders if the presentation of money-box as a gift to children be treated as a "fatal kindness". An early attempt to initiate a child into the habit of saving money may lead him to be growingly miser - "a monument of selfish self-denial." Hence he suggests that the parents should think twice before placing so ~~perils~~ perilous a

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gift like money-box in the innocent hands of children. The author concludes that only such savings are ^{useful} ~~fruitful~~ out of which one can get money for the fulfilment of necessary needs and requirements. proper living.

In the essay the writer uses a style which is humorous and rhetorical. He ^{also} uses concrete and expressive words and phrases to denounce irrational approach to the ^{human} instinct of saving money. We feel convinced to agree with the ideas expressed by Lynd in the essay.
