**My Lost Dollar**

**BY STEPHEN LEACOCK**

      My friend Todd owes me a dollar. He has owed it to me for twelve months, and I fear there is little prospect of his ever returning it . I can realize whenever I meet him that he has forgotten that he owes me a dollar. He meets me in the same frank friendly way as always. My dollar has clean gone out of his mind. I see that  I shall never get it back.

     On the other hand I know that I shall remember all my life that Todd owes me a dollar. It will make no difference, I trust to our friendship, but I shall never be able to forget it. I don't know how it is with other people; but if any man borrows a dollar from me I carry me recollection of it to the grave.

Let me relate what happened. Todd borrowed this dollar last year on the 8th of April (I mention the date in case this should ever meet Todd's eye), just as he was about to leave for Bermuda. He needed a dollar in change to pay his taxi; and I lent it to him. It happened quite simply and naturally, I hardly realised it till it was all over. He merely said, "Let me have a dollar, will you?" And I said, "Certainly. Is a dollar enough?" I believe, in fact I know, that when Todd took that dollar he meant to pay it.

    He sent me a note from Hamilton, Bermuda. I thought when I opened it that the dollar would be in it. But it wasn't. He merely said that the temperature was up to nearly 100. The figure misled me for a moment.

   Todd came back in three weeks. I met him at the train not because of the dollar, but because I really esteem him. I felt it would be nice for him to see someone waiting for him on the platform after being away for three weeks. I said. “Let’s take a taxi up to the club “. But he answered, “No, let’s walk.”

We spent the evening together, talking about Bermuda. I was thinking of the dollar but of course I didn’t refer to it. One simply can’t. I asked him what currency is used in Bermuda, and whether the American Dollar goes at par. I put a slight emphasis on the American Dollar, but found again that I could not bring myself to make any reference to it.

It took me some time (I see Todd practically every day at my Club) to realise that he had completely forgotten the dollar. I asked him one day what his trip cost him and he said that he said that he kept no accounts. A little later I asked him if he felt settled down after his trip, and he said that he had practically forgotten about it. So, I know it will all over.

      In all this I bear Todd no grudge. I have simply added him to the list of men who owe me a dollar and who have forgotten it. There are quite a few of them now. I make no difference in my demeanor to them, but I only wish that I could forget.

      I meet Todd very frequently. Only two nights ago I met him out a dinner and he was talking, apparently without self-consciousness, about Poland. He said that Poland would never pay her debts. You’d think a thing like that would have reminded him, wouldn’t you? But it didn’t seem to.

        But meantime a thought-a rather painful thought-has begun to come into my mind at intervals. It is this. If Todd owes me a dollar and has forgotten it, it is possible-indeed it is theoretically probable-that there must be men to whom I owe a dollar which I have forgotten. There may be a list of them. The more I think of it the less it, because I am quite sure that if I had once forgotten a dollar, I should never pay it, on this side of the grave.

        If there are such men, I want them to speak out. Not all at once; but in reasonable numbers, and as far as may be in alphabetical order, and I will immediately write their names down on paper. I don’t count here men who may have lent me an odd dollar over a bridge table: and I am not thinking (indeed I am taking care not to think) of the man who lent me thirty cents to pay for a bottle of pain soda in the Detroit Athletic Club last month. I always find that there’s nothing like plain soda after a tiring ride across the Canadian frontier, and that man who advanced that thirty cents knows exactly why I felt that I had done enough for him. But if any man ever lent me a dollar to pay for a taxi when I was starting for Bermuda, I want to pay it.

   More than that: I want to start a general movement a Back to Honesty movement, for paying all these odd dollars that are borrowed in moments of expansion. Let us remember that the greatest nations were built upon the rock basis of absolute honesty.

    In conclusion may I say that I do particularly ask that no reader of this book will be careless enough to leave this copy round where it might be seen by Major Todd, of the University Club of Montreal.

**About the Author:**

Stephen Leacock (1869-1944) was a Canadian humorist, educator and political economist. He may well be described as a bridge between two centuries. He graduated from Upper Canada College and joined the University of Toronto in 1887. In 1889, he took to teaching. The success of his first humorous article published in Grip, a Toronto magazine, in 1894, encouraged him to continue to write. His first book of humorous writing Literary Lapses came out in 1910. He was a prolific writer whose last book was Humor; Its Theory and Technique published in 1935. Besides he published biographies of Mark Twain and Charles Dickens in 1932 and 1933 respectively.

Stephen Leacock writes a delicious, leisurely tongue-in-cheek kind of critique of human nature in this uproariously funny essay. Tongue-in-cheek because we would not have others do unto us what we might do unto others. And how refreshingly different is Leacock’s manner?

 **MY LOST DOLLAR SUMMARY**

"My Lost Dollar " is a story narrated in first person by the author Stephen Leacock.   The one line summary is that he tries in many ways to get back that one dollar he lent his friend Todd for paying his taxi to go to Bermuda.   It is made to be funny by using exaggeration on the amount one dollar and on friendship.   There is humour made out in the efforts of the author, all efforts going in vain.  The author picked a tale of two friends who are found in common place.

      The author lends one dollar to Todd in the name of friendship and in kind.  After Todd goes to Bermuda, he had not forgotten about it.  He expected Todd to return it as soon as he could.  But Todd avoids it as if he had forgotten it.  After some days, Stephen gets a letter from Todd.  He mentioned the temperature in Bermuda but not about the dollar.

     When Todd returns to the town after three weeks and then Stephen meets Tedd at the railway station.  The author does not explicitly ask for the dollar.   Instead he puts in a word that they hire one taxi to go to Montreal.  Stephen said that to remind Todd about one dollar he paid for taxi ride to Bermuda.  Todd does not agree and then suggests that they walk.  So he did not get the hint of the author.

    The entire evening they spent talking about Bermuda.  All that while Stephen expected Todd to remember the one dollar that he owed him.  But he did not explicitly mention that.  Perhaps it was the embarrassement in asking directly.  It could be that in friendship one should not explicitly ask money lent to friends and that too small amount like a dollar.   Perhaps it is a shame to ask directly.

     Then he inquires about the currency in Bermuda and its value as compared to the American Dollar.  He expected that Todd would remember that one dollar.  Todd seemed to have forgotten about that dollar completely.  At dinner later, Todd says casually that Poland does not per her debts.

    Finally Stephen gives up the dollar from Tedd.  He adds the name of Tedd to the list of people owing him one dollar and have forgotten about it.   Also, he gets a thought that just as Todd has forgotten to return one dollar, perhaps he himself also forgotten to  return money he borrowed from others.  He does not remember any names.  He wishes to start a Honesty Movement for paying those the odd dollars (small amounts) that he borrowed earlier.  Honesty is important.   The author leaves a final comment in humour that he did not want Todd to see the copy of the book with this story and read this story.

    The moral of the story is that small or big, one should return the money owed to others.  That amount may be important for the lender.   Further, it gives a great pain to the lender, if the borrower totally forgets about money borrowed.  An honest man remembers the help done by friends.