

The \$20 Bill on the Sidewalk

If there is cash lying in the street, it must be false, as the following story illustrates:

My loot . . . and I really thought I was in for a good thing, was a large silver stork, quite six feet high, and beautifully modelled. . . . On arriving at camp, I sent it at once to the regimental gunsmith, who was also a goldsmith, that he might give me an idea of how much I might expect for my booty. His report was that the stork I had taken so much trouble over was not pure silver and therefore valueless. . . . As an experiment I cut a lump off one of the legs weighing a couple of pounds and threw it into the road. If it were of any value I knew it would have disappeared by morning. But when I went to look, although it had been moved, it was still lying in the road, so my hopes went down to zero. . . . After this the legs were thrown out in the road, then the head and neck, and finally the whole body that I had brought with so much care to camp, but no one would take even a little bit of the feast as a gift.

[Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*, electronic ed. (London: Pan Macmillan, 2011)]

Suggested by Wing Suen