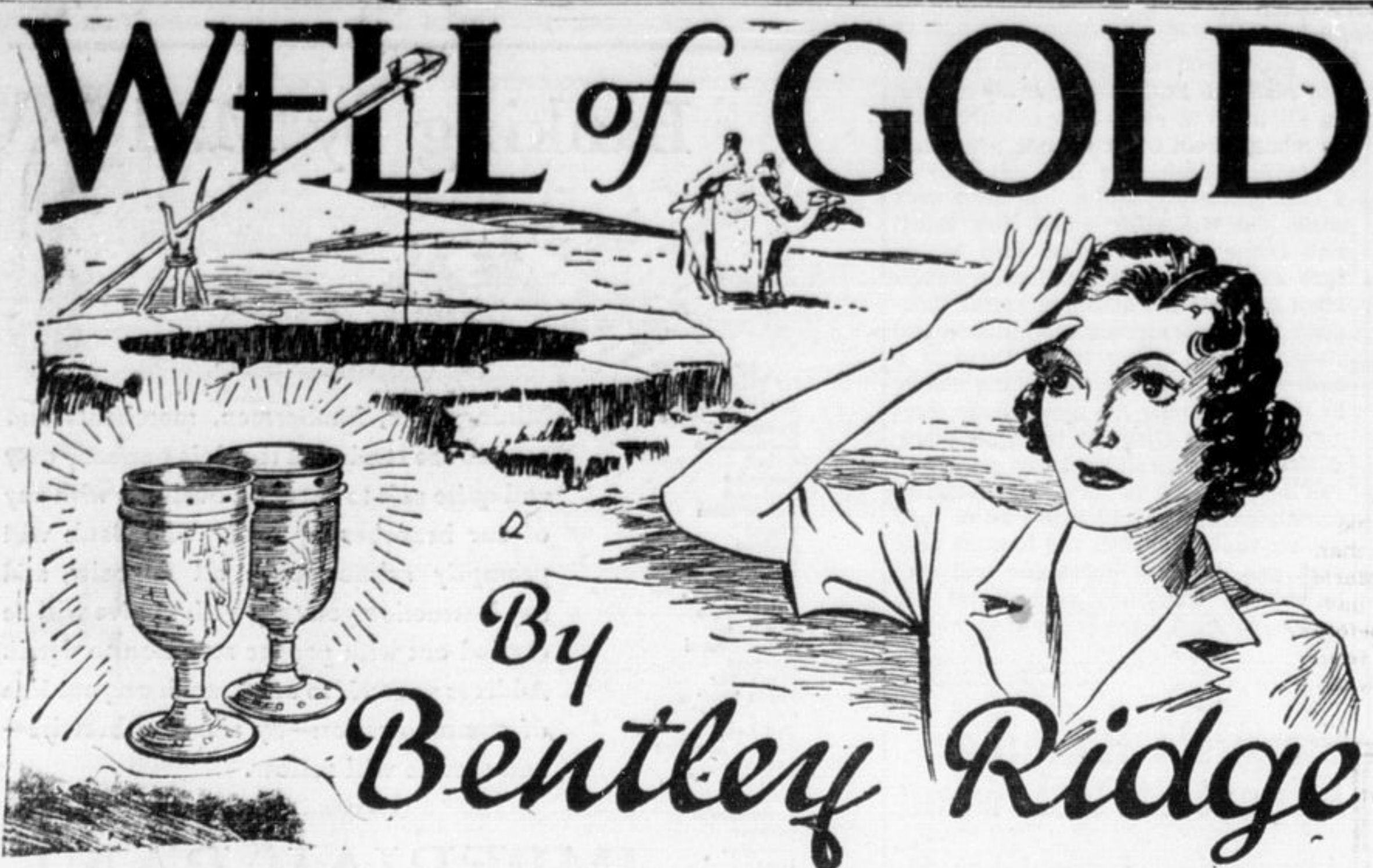


WELL of GOLD



By Bentley Ridge

CHAPTER XIX GOLD FOR LONDON

The night, when it came, passed without event. On the following midday they came to Kashan; behind them, still visible a hundred and fifty miles across the plains they could see Demaveend, the greatest peak of the Elburz range, a snowy wreath in the blue.

They rode in through the narrow, desolated streets of the town; the motley crowd gazed at them curiously. Lynne felt that she preferred the empty plains, the desolation of abomination of the salt desert, to this close, reeking horde of eastern life.

Mr. Salstira, the agent for the Parker and Jarvis Company was found sitting among many files in an office in the centre of the town.

Julian told him that they had some boxes of geological specimens for dispatch by the Isfahan air-mail service to Enzili, the port on the Caspian Sea. Mr. Salstira agreed to take care of them. The boxes were brought into his office; Lynne sat by watching, while at Julian's request, another nail or two was hammered into the lids. They were labelled, and Julian himself, with a paint brush, wrote on each:

J. Ormond,

c/o Parker-Jarvis and Company, London.

Via Enzili, Baku, Batoum and Marseilles. Mr. Salstira said that he hoped that they might reach England in six weeks.

"The aeroplane calls here to-morrow from Isfahan; the boxes will be at the Company's office in Enzili on Friday. At Enzili they will wait for ten days—before the ship takes them to Baku."

When they came out of the office, the boxes finally relinquished to the lackadaisical care of the black mustachioed Mr. Salstira, Lynne said to Julian:

"It seems as though they simply must get lost or stolen. Wouldn't it be much better if we took them with us?"

"No," said Julian, shortly.

Lynne was a trifle put out by his tone. It did not seem to her that finding the cups had roused his spirits as it might have done.

"We'll wait here until we're sure that the boxes have gone on the plane to Enzili," said Julian. He had a friend in Kashan, a young Frenchman who was agent for an Austrian firm of silk importers; they went to see this friend, going on foot along the narrow ways. The young Frenchman, whose name was Duhamel, was a pleasant enough fellow who seemed overjoyed at the sight of new European faces. He recommended a chapan-khanna or road-house in which he hoped that they might be comfortable that night.

Next morning, soon after 8.30 a.m. the mail plane arrived from Isfahan; the pilot was a gloomy young Englishman who was in some doubt at first as to whether the boxes were going to be too heavy for his machine; but to the Ormonds' vast relief, they saw the aeroplane winging away northward at last, bearing their treasure to Enzili en route for Baku, Batoum, Marseilles, and London.

Monsieur Duhamel asked them to lunch with him before they left Kashan. He was very interested in Persian history, and talked about Alexander's conquest of Persia with great erudition.

"Alas, in such an exile," he said. "There is nothing else to think about. Many times I have wished it might be possible for me to go to Kel-el-abir and Diala to see your countrymen at work at their excavation. I think they have the faith to go on as they do!"

"Do you?" said Lynne, a sparkle of secret joy in her eyes. "Why?"

"Oh, because I do not think these cups of Alexander will ever be found."

"No, it's all nonsense," said Julian, readily. "It's so unlikely that there

would be anything there now. That's what I've always thought!"

Lynne could not help smiling, though such dissimulation seemed a little unnecessary. He might, she thought, have just kept quiet.

"But still," said Monsieur Duhamel, "it is a great work, no doubt. So much toil, and so much sacrifice of time for no remuneration, even if the archaeologists are successful, is very noble to see."

"Well," said Lynne. "But if the cups are found they will be worth a great deal of money."

"Yes, but the archaeologists would not—" began Duhamel, but Julian cut him short:

A SHOCK FOR LYNNE

"The air service here must be a godsend to you," he said, in a loud, imperative tone. "Don't you find it so? The pilot this morning said that he thought the company would go bankrupt."

"Oh? I do not know. I know nothing of that. It may be so," said Duhamel.

Lynne was silent, thinking that Julian had interrupted in that abrupt manner because he thought that she was saying too much about the cups of Alexander.

But Duhamel himself took up the conversation where Julian had cut it short.

He said a very strange thing. "As I say," he resumed. "The archaeologists do not get anything for what they find. Perhaps they get paid for lectures, articles in journals, books they write; but for the cups themselves—nothing!"

"Nothing?" said Lynne, involuntarily, forgetting her caution.

"But, no! You see mademoiselle, all antiquities, whatever their value, belong to the Persian Government by law. They are the property of the Shah. How much more so, then, if they are of gold, worth many thousands of francs! They may not be taken from the country."

Lynne sat very still. Protests rose to her lips, but she controlled herself. She could not believe that Duhamel was right. It could not be true! She looked at Julian, and found him looking at her.

She froze. His face was a greater revelation to her than Duhamel's words. He was watching her closely, anxiously, stealthily, to see how she would take the information.

Then what Duhamel had said was true!

In the moments that followed, desperate as they were to Lynne, she sipped her pale golden tea calmly, while Duhamel talked of other things to Julian, and Julian made casual answers.

Lynne's mind was in a turmoil; she felt rather than knew the implications of what Duhamel had told her, and there began to burn deep down in her a bitter anger against Julian. She did not want to believe it. But she had to believe it. Julian had deceived her, he had let her down. She had to face it, though her whole soul cried out to have her faith in him preserved. Into what follies, what mistakes, what felonies almost, had he not led her?

Now all his appealing looks, the reassuring glances he threw at her while they were at Monsieur Duhamel's could have no effect. Above all, she knew one thing—Julian had deceived her in this, and he had deceived her in everything. Phillip Guthrie had been in the right!

It was all very well to find it out now. The cups were stolen—they were on their way to Enzili; they were gone!

Everything went on as though nothing had happened. When the meal was over they took leave. Monsieur Duhamel asked about their journey, and Julian said that they were going to Tehran, but intended to go there via Kel-el-abir.

"Your sister has not been there yet?" said Monsieur Duhamel, who had been told that Julian was taking Lynne on a sightseeing tour of the country.

"No," said Julian.

Lynne could have cried out in furious protest against this final lie.

As soon as they were alone, walking back to the chapan-khanna where the caravan was to be ready to set out, Julian said in a tone of forced heartiness:

"Well, we carried that off fairly well, didn't we?"

"Except that I learned what I wasn't supposed to learn," said Lynne.

"Oh, come, Lynne, don't be so upset about it. You knew that we were getting those cups on the quiet. I—"

"I didn't know! I had no idea! You didn't mean me to know, either!"

"Well," said Julian, impatiently, "from the fuss you are making now it's easy to see why I didn't stress the point!"

"If you knew I'd object to stealing the cups it was hardly fair to lead me into helping you to do it."

"Oh, rot! It was an adventure—"

"Adventure!" cried Lynne, bitterly. "That is how you worked on me—by using fine names for things! When I think of Professor Shaley, of Guthrie, and the others, working away in the interests of archaeology—just doing their jobs—and then of you and me; cheating and scheming to get the cups for ourselves—to sell them for money! It's loathsome!"

"Oh, don't be such a fool!" said Julian, sullenly.

"I have been a fool," said Lynne. "But I'm not fool now! To think that I believed you when you said that it was jealousy that made Guthrie turn you out of the expedition!"

Julian stopped. They were in a narrow alley, empty save for two veiled women, who slipped past them, their eyes, heavily laden with mascara, peeping curiously above the edge of their thick linen veils.

"I'm fed up with this!" said Julian, in a bullying tone, and his face was ugly. "Shut up, and come along. Forget about it, I'm sick of it, anyhow!"

Lynne was very pale as she faced him.

"All my life," she said breathlessly. "I believed in you. I thought you were wonderful. Now you've done this to me!"

"Done? what have I done to you? I've got you a few thousands pounds worth of solid gold—!"

"Would to heaven you hadn't! Oh, all the things I've done! I'll be ashamed of them to the end of my life!"

DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP

Across the street dim faces looked at them from the shadow of a doorway; voices murmured and somebody laughed. Conscious of prying eyes, of the curiosity they aroused, Julian took Lynne's arm and drew her along, saying in a gentler tone:

"You're making a mountain out of a molehill, Lynne. To the devil with the Persian Government!"

"It's not the Persian Government I mind about—at least, not very much!"

It was the thought of Shaley and Guthrie, of their work, their disinterested motives—and perhaps more particularly the thought of Guthrie—which filled Lynne with such bitter shame.

"Well," she said, after a pause, during which she gained some sort of composure. "There's only one thing to do now."

"Forget about it."

"No, we must get the cups back. Return them."

"Return them!"

"Return them to Guthrie—to Praemnon."

"What the devil? Not on your life, Lynne!"

She wrestled her arm away from him. They stopped again. Lynne drew back a pace or two.

"I mean it. It's the only thing to do. I'm going to do it!"

"You can't! The cups are gone—they'll be hundreds of miles away by to-morrow. By God, if you try anything like that, Lynne, I'll—!"

Julian's face was livid; but Lynne's eyes were not less bright and implacable than his own as she returned his gaze.

"Very well," she said. "We part company here then."

"You're mad! Come along down to the chapan-khanna. We've got to get started some time today."

"I'm not going another step with you," said Lynne in a choked voice. "I've gone too far already!"

She turned her back on him and hurried up the street by the same way that they had come. In a belt round her waist she had seventy-odd pounds in English notes. She was not helpless. Plans already formulated themselves in her head. She must return the cups to Praemnon. If it came to the worst, and she could not get to Enzili in time, she would inform the Deputy in Tehran that the cups were there.

Her aim, though, was to return them to Praemnon.

Lynne hurried up the street. The loitering Kashanis stared at her curiously; insulting voices called out after her. It was not usual for a European woman to be seen alone on foot in the streets of Kashan.

But at last she arrived back at the house of Monsieur Duhamel.

Monsieur Duhamel was very surprised to see her so much out of breath, and with so pale and determined a face.

But she gave him no time to ask questions.

"How soon can I get to Enzili from here?" she asked him. "Is there another airplane going?"

"Not for a fortnight, mademoiselle. One of the machines crashed last week, and the service has been interrupted."

"Then how can I get there? What will be my quickest route?"

"You are going with your brother, mademoiselle. I hope there is nothing amiss—?"

"Nothing amiss at all!" said Lynne.

in an abrupt tone, which hardly convinced him. "But I must get to Enzili at once."

"Then your quickest way will be from here to Tehran by car. From Tehran to Enzili there is a railway—"

"Where can I get a car?" was Lynne's next question. "Any old car—costing not more than sixty pounds."

"There are not a great number of cars in Kashan, mademoiselle, though they are used on the roads more and more. But I think my friend, Mr. Salstira, could get hold of one for us."

"Then I must go to him," said Lynne, jumping up; and she would have gone off to find Mr. Salstira then and there by herself, had not the young Frenchman followed her to the door, saying with a smile:

"You are in a great hurry, mademoiselle! I appreciate that, and I will do all I can to help you! But you cannot run round Kashan by yourself buying motor cars. If you will permit me I will come with you!"

"Thank you," said Lynne. "I'm afraid I'm very abrupt. I don't know what you must think of me. But I must get to Enzili..."

"Just so. And so I will come with you to Mr. Salstira. I do not know where your brother is, mademoiselle. You seem rather to have—how do you say it?—shed him." Indeed, he now seems to be not so say! But that is as it may be."

"My step-brother and I, as it happens Monsieur Duhamel is only my step-brother, have decided to go different ways," said Lynne.

(To be Continued)

If You Like Books

(By A. H.)

James Whitcomb Riley has written many and many a poem, every one of which has some delightful characteristic which appeals to the heart of the reader. "Go Read Your Book!" however, seems to be the one ideally written for this column. It really is too bad that there is not someone to tell everyone to do just that, and find, as the author did, that it was sound advice.

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"Go Read Your Book!" (by James Whitcomb Riley)

How many times that grim old phrase Has silenced me, in childish days!— And now—as then it did— The phantom admonition, clear The dominant, rings—and I hear, And do as I am bid.

"Go read your book!" my good old sire Commanded, in affected ire, When I, with querying look And speech, dared vex his studious mind

With idle words of any kind— And so I read my book.

Though seldom, in that wisest age, Did I discern on Wisdom's page More than the task: That led, At least to thinking, and at last To reading less, and not so fast, And longing as I read.

And, lo! in gracious time, I grew To love a book all through and through!— With yearning eyes I look On any volume—old, maybe, Or new—'tis meat and drink to me— And so I read my book.

Old dog's-eared Readers, scarred and inked With schoolboy hatred, long extinct— Old Histories that bored Me worst of all the school;—old, worn Arithmetics, frayed, ripped, and torn— Now Ye are all adored.

And likewise I revere and praise My sire, as now, with vainest gaze And hearing, still I look For the old face—so grave yet dear— Nay, still I see, and still I hear! And so I read my book.

Next even to my nearest kin— My wife—my children romping in From school to ride my knee— I love a book, and loathes My lap of it with loathfulness, For all their love of me.

For, grave or gay the book, it takes Me as an equal—calms, or makes Me laughing, overlook My little self—forgetful all Of being so exceedingly small, And so I read my book.

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Another Story About the Present Ontario Premier

One of the readers of The Advance told after the meeting here last week that he had given Premier Hepburn the clipping of the story published in The Advance recently in regard to the politicians (including Premier Hepburn) at the gate of Heaven. Here is another story about Premier Hepburn. This is no dream. It is from The St. Mary's Journal-Argus—

Good Clean Fun. It was a lawyer who told us this story, so it must be true. But the point may escape all but those readers whose taste demands the higher things in literature.

Our raconteur had business in Ottawa a few years back and looked in on the House to see Canada's law-makers at their toil. Mr. Bennett was prime minister then, and one of his supporters had the floor and was outlining some proposed legislation.

When the Conservative member had finished, a young fellow from the back benches on the opposite side caught the speaker's eye and rose to his feet.

This chap was, at that time, a very small fish in the big parliamentary pond—his name, Mitchell Hepburn.

"Mr. Speaker," he began, "I was extremely interested in the last gentleman's remarks. He declares that Mr. Bennett's new bill will 'quote, open the eyes of the world! If the legislation is that important, then it should be safe for us to assume that it will open the eyes of the Canadian people in general, and in particular it should open the

eyes of the people of Calgary—whom the honorable Prime Minister represents."

"In fact, Mr. Speaker, it will be no surprise to me if, in future, the Conservative leader becomes generally known as the Calgary Eye-Opener!"

That was what Canon Scott was telling us about here the other day, and that is why so many of us agree with him that the sacrifices of the Great War were not in vain, and should always be hallowed.

The matter is once again brought home in this echo from Noranda and from a soldier's grave in Toronto.



THIS GHASTLY TRAGEDY COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED!

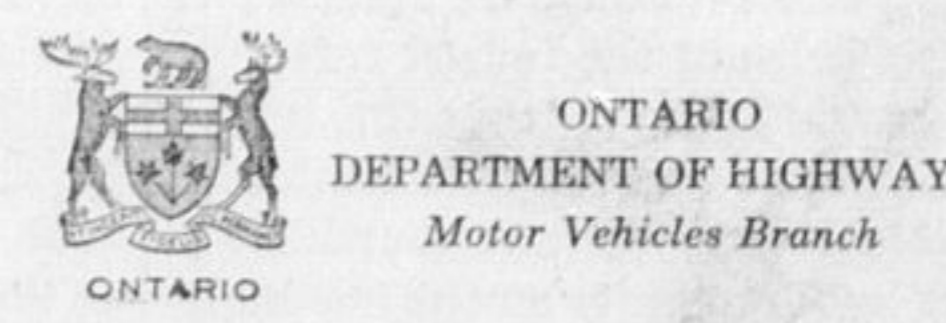
If it hadn't been for a foolhardy, reckless, criminal driver this accident would have been avoided. As it is, one victim was taken direct to an undertaker's parlours and two to a hospital. The driver who caused it is hopelessly crippled for the rest of his life.

YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE IF YOU DISREGARD THE LAWS

If you are a reckless driver travelling the Ontario highways, cutting in, passing on curves and hills, endangering the lives of others, you will find yourself in serious trouble. The appalling death toll must stop—and you who are responsible for it will be put off the road! A thousand eyes are watching you; so be forewarned!

Ontario Motorists Will Co-operate

When you see a motorist driving in a manner dangerous to the public, take his number, make a careful note of the actual time and place, and when you reach your destination write to the Motor Vehicles Branch, Department of Highways, Toronto, giving full details. We do not invite reports of minor infringements of the traffic laws; you are requested to use sound judgment. We will deal adequately with offenders.



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