

HOMELESS AND CHILDLESS.

"I am homeless and childless," I heard a man say. As I sought my own fireside at close of the day. "But of gold I have plenty and friends by the score. And what, my good sir, can a man want more?" And he laughed as he turned on his way to the club. Because he knew not of dire poverty's rub; And because the world flattered and petted and feared; Himself for the fortune his hands had up-reared. But, alas! how empty and hollow the sound, And how sad seemed the life so imperfectly crowned! And I wept, as I flew to the arms of my own. For the sadness and sorrow of living alone. For, alone in the darkness of life without God, Or alone in the paths which our Saviour has trod, Or alone in suffering, sorrow or shame, Or alone in weak purpose, alone in high aim, There liveth no sorrow, 'mid sorrows so rife, Like a lonely and loveless fragment of life. "I am homeless and childless," it rang in my ears Like the wail of a wanderer lost on the years. No wife to befriend thee when friendship has done, To whisper so sweetly: "Dear heart, there is one Who loves and believes and trusts in thee still!" To rejoice in thy joy when thou passest the hill? No wife to inspire, advise and uplift? Unloved and alone, unclaimed and adrift? "I am homeless and childless," it beat on my brain, With the chill of the sleet in a November rain. "Homeless and childless?" No bairns of thine own, To be blood of thy blood, and bone of thy bone? No little ones running to hide in thine arms, Safe harbor of refuge from endless alarms? No fat, chubby hands to creep o'er thy cheek, No sweet, childish prattle of Latin or Greek? But, homeless and childless, unanchored and tossed, Like a bark on the sea when the compass is lost. -V. Vincent Jones, in Banner of Gold.

The Trouble on the Torolito.

BY FRANCIS LYNDE. (Copyright 1898, by Francis Lynde.)

CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

The morning of the last Sunday in September dawned bright and clear. A hunting party coming from North Park had stopped over night at the settlement, and one of its members, a young clergyman from the east, held a religious service in the schoolhouse. As I learned afterward, the young man had no lack of hearers. Anything in the way of a religious meeting was a novelty in the sequestered valley, and the settlement turned out almost to a man. Winifred went with Mrs. Selter; Angus was there with his cowboys, and there was even a goodly sprinkling of the workmen from the engineer's camp. For reasons of my own which were not grounded in any cynical prejudice, I did not go. To tell the truth, I was growing anxious about Selter. There was a mystery connected with his movements reaching back to a certain evening when I chanced to see him coming down from the northern gulch beyond the hog-back with a burden which he carried as one carries a sick child. The following morning I had found a new-made grave—or at least a place where something had been freshly buried—in the embankment of the great canal; and when my morning stroll up the gorge beyond the hog-back ended at the door of Wykamp's powder magazine, I had warned Angus to be prepared to provide an alibi at any hour of the day or night. As a corollary to all this I watched Selter beagle-wise. On the Sunday morning, therefore, a small thing kept me from going to the schoolhouse with Winifred and Mrs. Selter. It was a fact brought out by my field glass. On the higher slopes of the hog-back I had chanced to desery a moving speck making its way westward toward the upper canyon; in the object glass of the binocular it defined itself as a man zig-zagging across the ridge with a heavy burden of some kind on his back. It was Selter, and the mystery might then have pointed to its own solution if I had not been so deeply engrossed in Macpherson's affair. The time for the trial was drawing near, and if I watched Selter like a paid shadower of men, it was chiefly because I feared he might disappear before the critical moment. This going aft with a backload had the look of it. Doubtless he was preparing a hiding place somewhere in the mountains to which he could retreat at need. The schoolhouse meeting had begun when I lost sight of the moving speck and lighted my pipe to weigh the promings of an attempt to follow Selter. From my chair on the porch I could hear the singing quite distinctly above the murmur of the river in its bed across the road. The autumn storms were delayed, and the weather for a fortnight had been cool. In consequence the water was low and its thunder was softened until the cataract pouring over the waste weir of the completed dam was clearly audible. Up among the western peaks the clouds were gathering; and I remember thinking that Wykamp must be relieved to know that the season for cloudbursts was fairly over for the year. The thought had scarcely taken shape when the man himself came sliding by. As once before, anxiety

was in his face, but this time his gaze was not upon the river. It was fixed upon the cloud wreaths hanging over the western peaks, and he rode as one who lets his horse find out the way. The hither shoulder of the hog-back had scarcely hidden him before I heard a stir in the house and the gentle closing of a door. A moment later I saw Nan making her way across the upper field, and thought I divined her purpose. She had seen the engineer pass the house; had guessed that he was on his way to the dam, and had taken this chance, her last chance it might be, of finding him alone to plead once again for justice. It seemed a pity that the girl should have to fight such a hopeless battle alone. I know not, nor shall ever know, if she believed that he was free to marry her. But such poor amends as money may make should at least be hers; and at the apex of this thought I determined to follow her, and to do what a man and a lawyer might do to help her. When I came in sight of the high wall of masonry cutting the upper canyon across, the thunder was a-roll in the upper air. I could hear the mutter and growl of it, and the vivid sun brightness of the day, and the clear arch of the sky, with no other hint of a storm abroad, gave it a weird effect. The water of the diminishing torrent was pouring over the waste weir; and, as on that night when I had crept trembling across the flume bridge, the engineer was perched upon his barrier, gazing down at the flood. Nan was on the trail below, just where Macpherson had drawn rein on the night of the explosion, and when I came in sight she was calling to Wykamp. I was too far away to hear what she was saying, and the thunder of the waste weir must have made her words inaudible to the engineer; but her impassioned gestures were eloquent. She was pleading with him or warning him, I know not which, and while I looked Wykamp signed assent and turned to retrace his steps to the nearest abutment. I thought it might be as well to hold aloof until the time for interference should be fully ripe, and climbed to a perch on the steep slope where I should be out of their sight when they met. None the less, I watched the engineer narrowly, and when he stopped midway of the dam in the attitude of one listening intently, I listened, too. Above the thunder of the waste a hoarser roar filled the air, coming suddenly but persisting like the sustained jar of a distant explosion. Like the lion's roar, the sound once heard is unmistakable. It was a cloudburst, and the test of the great wall of masonry was fairly upon it. Wykamp hesitated but an instant, and in that instant a man darted out of the mouth of the outlet tunnel on the opposite side of the canyon and began to climb the mountain side as one who flies danger. It was Jacob Selter, and I took it he had been trying to ambush the engineer. He, too, had heard the ominous roar of the oncoming flood, and whatever his object had been he had apparently abandoned it to seek safety. It is doubtful if Wykamp saw him. The man in the engineer's—there is a man hidden in whatsoever outward husk of depravity poor humanity walks abroad—was alive at last, and he was racing down in great leaps and bounds toward the girl standing in the very shadow of the towering wall. While I looked, he reached her, gathered her in his arms and carried her swiftly aside and up the hither slope, and when he finally stumbled and fell with her there was a margin of safety behind them. I held my breath and my heart skipped a beat when I beheld the dark wall of water, brown and debris-laden, rushing down the upper canyon upon the great stone barrier. It seemed incredible that any work of man could withstand the impact of such a terrible battering ram; and I climbed still higher, though my perch was well above the level of the reservoir. The engineer had more courage, or a better confidence in his own work. He had risen and lifted Nan to her feet, and together they stood and watched the huge brown wall of water leap high in air to fling itself over the stone coping of the dam. The masonry stood the shock like a wall of living rock. The brown cataract choked the waste weir and poured many feet deep over the top of the dam, filling the channel below until at its maximum the foaming torrent was lapping at the feet of the man and the woman standing on the half-buried boulder on the hither slope, but they did not move. It was while the flood was roaring its loudest that I chanced to lift my eyes to the opposite cliff where Selter had disappeared. To my horror I saw him plunging recklessly down the declivity toward the submerged dam, and his frenzied yells came to me above the clamor of the waters. Not until that great day when the books shall be opened will his motive be revealed, but the pointing of it was clear enough. He was making frantic haste to reach the couple in the ravine below, and striving to anticipate by shriek and wild gestures the warning he was bringing. When he reached the stream's brink there was but one way to cross, and he took it without an instant's pause. The yellow-red arch of the flood springing clear from the edge of the dam was subsiding, but it was at least two feet deep over the masonry when he plunged in and began to wade across. For a dozen palpitant heart-beats I thought he would make it; and then the end came. A huge column of mud and water shot up behind the dam like a mighty geyser-jet; there was a deep growl of imprisoned thunder; a nauseating

shock that seemed to kill the very air; and the great wall of masonry toppled outward and downward, crumbling like sand in the forefront of the flood that gathered itself for the onrush to the doomed valley below. I closed my eyes in the sickening horror of it, and when I opened them I was alone with the clamorous waters. The boulder where Wykamp and Nan had been standing was gone, and in its bed the angry flood was cutting a wider and still wider channel in the loose shale of the canyon slope. CHAPTER XIV. "BETTER THE END OF A THING—" The flood subsided quickly, almost as quickly as it had risen, and I made my way down the canyon in the track of it, nerveless and horror-stricken. The sun was shining as brightly as before, and the Sabbath stillness was in the air. It seemed inconceivable that, but a few moments before, the great ravine had been the scene of a tragedy in which three lives had gone out like match-flares in a tornado. In the basin between the mountain and the hog back, flumes, ditches and trail had disappeared, and the very face of nature was changed. Where Macpherson's placer bar had been there was now a gully eddy; and a new bar had formed farther down the stream. I was obliged to head the northern gulch to reach the gap in the hog back, and when the strath of the settlement came in view I scarcely recognized it. The tidal wave released by the crumbling dam had been checked for an instant by the narrow gap in the ridge, and its charge upon the tilled lands beyond had been like the bursting of a second barrier. I can compare the devastation to nothing but the track of a crevasse on the lower Mississippi. Selter's holding, and the two farms adjoining, were swept clean, not only of buildings and fences, but of the very soil in the fields. Ditches were gone, boundaries obliterated, the great barrack below the engineer's camp was demolished, and as far as the eye could reach down the valley the main canal was filled and leveled until its course could scarcely be traced. But for the gathering at the schoolhouse on the knoll, the loss of life must have been terrible; and as it was, I could scarcely hope that the tragedy of which I had been an awe-stricken witness was the only one. When I topped the shoulder of the hog-back the schoolhouse knoll and the bit of road beyond the flood level were black with hurrying figures. Macpherson was the first to meet me as I picked my way across what, a few minutes earlier, had been the Selter infield. His greeting was an incoherent upbubbling of thankfulness, since he had taken it for granted that I had been swept away with the Selter house. There was no time for explanations, and I made none. Angus told me where to find his team and buckboard, and asking me to look after the women at the schoolhouse, hurried away to organize a rescue party. I found the team, did what there was to be done, and when the excitement had a little subsided took Winifred in the buckboard and set out to find shelter for her and for myself. We found accommodation at the Byres ranch, whose house was farthest removed from the scene of devastation, and there contented ourselves as best we might while the details of the disaster trickled in by littles. It was soon discovered that only Selter and his daughter and the engineer were missing, but it was not until the evening of the following day that Angus came to make his report. I saw him coming and went a few rods down the road to meet him. "Two, sure, and a possible third," he said, anticipating my query. "They're all accounted for except three, and two of the three were found on the bar below the engineer's camp this afternoon." "Wykamp?" I asked. "Yes; Wykamp and Nan Selter. They must have been overtaken together somewhere." "They were," I said; and I told him the story of the tragedy in the canyon so far as it touched these two. "You say he tried to save her? There was a bit of the man in him, after all, wasn't there?" Angus had shown no disposition to go up to the farmhouse, where Winifred was sitting on the porch, and we had drawn aside to sit on the embankment of the dry Byres ditch. "He did save her," I rejoined; "she would have gone down in the first rush of the wave over the top of the dam if he hadn't reached her just in the nick of time and carried her beyond the sweep of it." "And after that, they stopped to look at it, you say. That was the engineer in him; betting on his own game to the very last." "They were safe enough, so far as the cloudburst was concerned," I amended; and then: "Have you found Selter?" "No; and that's a bit curious. His wife says he went hunting on the north mountain early in the morning." "You'll never find him—alive." "What! How do you know?" "Answer me one question, and then I'll tell you. Does anyone suspect that it was more than a cloudburst?" "Why, of course not. It was a cloudburst. Kilgore and the Barnes boys have been up the canyon beyond the dam, and the track of it can be traced for two miles." "True; but if that were all the dam would be standing at this moment, Angus. It did stand the cloudburst,

and the pressure on was decreasing rapidly when it went out." "The mischief, you say! How do you know all this, Jack?" "As I have told you, I was within 50 yards of the dam when it went out. And Jacob Selter was trying to cross it!" "Good Lord! But what wrecked it?" "Selter, I think. There was an explosion as if a 12-inch shell had struck just above the masonry. He had fired his infernal machine from the mouth of the outlet tunnel, and was scrambling up to be out of harm's way when he saw Nan and Wykamp below the dam. When the shell exploded he was trying to reach them—for Nan's sake, I suppose." Macpherson smoked his pipe quite to extinction before he spoke again. Then he said: "Jack, I'm a little tangled on the ethics of this thing. Could it do any possible harm to anybody if we keep this thing to ourselves?" "I don't see that it can. Jake has paid the penalty. He's well out of reach of any court of ours." "That's what I was thinking. And if we publish it, it'll likely make it harder for a poor, miserable, destitute widow woman." "I'm with you," I agreed. "And now for your plans. I don't think the Glenlivet people will trouble you for a year or two, and the suit against you will fall to the ground without Wykamp's evidence. Will you go quietly back to your cow-punching and make hay while the sun shines?" [To Be Continued.] ONE ON CONNECTICUT. Incident Concerning Ancient Laws of That State—Punishment for Blasphemy. In Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly appears an entertaining account of the ancient laws and law courts of Connecticut. George King, a blasphemous sailor, says the author, Mr. B. J. Hendrick, was excused with what he evidently regarded as a mild punishment. He was accused of uttering the words: "By God," aboard a Dutchman—though whether the place of the malediction increased the severity of the crime is not clear. This was not King's first offense, as many of the good people testified. He was brought before the governor, who sentenced him somewhat in this style: "When the son of an Egyptian blasphemed the name of God it was not borne. It is the piercing through the name of God in passion which is the highest provocation of God. Whereas the rule is let your words be yea, yea, and nay nay, and by a man's word he may lose his life. I hope it was only a rash and sinful oath; some have been bored in the tongue; others have been in the stocks and their tongues put in a cloven stick. But I hope this has not been disrespectfully done, and so I sentence that you be whipped, and in the interim be kept in the marshal's hands." Neither King nor any of his compatriots reached that stage of contumely in their attacks upon public functionaries that has immortalized one Capt. John Stone, of Massachusetts, who, in his blasphemous assault on Mr. Justice Ludlow, called him to his face Mr. "Justass" Ludlow, and as a punishment was fined £100 and banished from the colony under pain of death. AN UP-COUNTRY RISING. Great Height of Hon. Jeremiah Mason Helped to Make His Word Respected. In spite of the old saying, the lawyer who conducts his own case does not always have a fool for a client. Hon. Jeremiah Mason, who was admitted to the New Hampshire bar in 1791, was a man of great height, but during the early part of his professional career, says the Green Bag, was so slight and apparently frail in build that, as the phrase is, "he looked like a boy." Traveling once in a sleigh after a great snowstorm, he met a countryman in a similar conveyance. Mr. Mason turned his horse and sleigh as far to one side as he conveniently could, and courteously requested the other person to do the same. The other man, however, was sturdy of figure and stubborn of nature, and taking Mr. Mason's courteous speech as a sign of a craven spirit, he refused to budge an inch, and demanded a free way for his vehicle. At this Mr. Mason's eyes flashed. The day was cold and he had sunk deeply into the robes of his high-backed sleigh; but now he drew himself up and sat erect on the seat for a moment; then he began slowly to divest himself of his wrappings and to get upon his feet, gradually displaying his real proportions to the astonished countryman, who exclaimed: "Say, mister, you needn't rise any more. I'll turn out!" Down for a Loss. Jack—Yes, at one time I was determined to marry Miss Golding, but her father finally discouraged me. Tom—Indeed! How did he do it? "Well, really, I can't tell you now whether it was a punt or a drop kick."—Philadelphia Press. Censure and Criticism. Censure and criticism never hurt anybody. If false they cannot hurt you unless you are wanting in manly character, and if true, they show a man his weak points and forewarn him against failure and trouble.—Gladstone. The Good-Natured Man. What we call a good-natured man is one who is bald headed and can stand being guyed about it.—Washington (Ia.) Democrat.



ING out, wild bells, A joyful paen to the sacred day, A sort of gleesome, glad-some roundelay. No dismal knells But gay bob-veysors of the tripest kind, To swell the northeast breeze— On second thoughts, however, never mind, Please Ring off. It isn't necessary, for the youth Of this broad, grand And prosperous and free and happy land Might flee and scoff. They know already Feb. the 22d Is the glad date upon The which occurred the birth of Washington And when school doesn't keep.

Than any Hessian Is, on the whole, a rather worse transgressor. Be like G. W. Or be like him as you're able to be, And conscience won't be very apt to trouble you. We Should be dignified, Courageous, always on our good behavior, Magnanimous and great, Seek the ideal and eschew the snide. It isn't hard. This hard Has tried the game, with some success for years, More than he cares to state. We cannot all be our loved country's savior— We've found The offices are too few to go round— And, it appears



And then the rest of us Might fuss, For, not compelled to work, we'd like to sleep A little late On this particular eventful date, And bells at such a time are not conducive To anything But language that's abusive, So cut the ring. Still, It won't do any harm for us to fill Our minds with calm and grateful meditation On George The fatherly relation He stood in to his country and his place In peace and war and in the cardiac Interiors of men; to trace In fancy his career from Valley Forge,

Widows of taste and prosperity are rare, Still one may scarce Up something even at this latter day And make it pay. His country's Father! We own to a mild Species of wonder How He'd feel if he could only see it now— What in Thunder He would think of his Childs! That's merely, by the way. We'd hate With truthfulness to undertake to say What he would think. It's probable he never learned to wink. But let us celebrate. Let young America stand up in rows and wave



Or farther back, To turn the fair historic sheet, To where at last he landed with both feet. From him we all should learn Oppression of taxgatherer to spurn Or kick at And most of us plain millionaires are sick at The way we have to give up for taxation Our goodly gelt. Representation Don't cut much ice, so some of us have felt, And sought the happy, tax-free Washington For residence. As evidence Of patriotic hatred of oppression, In which respect the brutal tax assessor

The stary flag about And chant a rousing stave Or two anent the same. The little and spout pieces that with care they've coned, And thus revive the patriotic flame. Doggoned If there is not some hope left for us yet. Let You and I Resolve that we will never tell a lie Except at stern necessity's decree, Although we own we can. There is no doubt, in fact, of our ability In that line, but as the famed cherry tree Fell to Oom George's hatchet, let us lop Our faults and get where he did and then stop.

