The Rival Clansmen

A Scottish Vendetta.

CHAPTER X.

A REVELATION—NED GORDON AGAIN THWARTS
IAN M'KENZIE—BROTHER AND SISTER MEET
—FORWARD TO CASTLE M'LEOD.

"I should, indeed, be glad," she replied,
"as much, however, for Jeannie's sake as
for my own. I earnestly trust that I
shall not again be in their power until it
is too late for them to think of forcing
me into such a union as they propose.
God knows, it may be contemplated to
treat me as they have breated your
sister."

"But whaur is M'Leod?" asked Ned.
"A prisoner in the hands of Ian M'Kenzie and my uncle, Donald Cameron
of Droghdairen, and leader of the Caterans of Ben-a-Chrui."
"When was he taken prisoner?"
"Not many hours after you left 'us."
"Ah, I mind noo. I was on my way
fae Achnasheen tae Garre whan I met
him ralloping alang. Had I jaloosed
that Donald Cameron was your uncle in
pursuit o' you I micht hae turned back."
"I would that you had done so, for
shortly after M'Leod was attacked by
Cameron, assisted by Ian and a number
of men, either belonging to the Clan M'Kenzie or to the Cateraus."
"And whaur did they tak, him till?"
"He and I were taken together and
thrown into underground dungeons beneath Malrubha's Ruin, the haunt of the
Caterans. But the same night on which
we arrived there a strange woman whom
we met on our way to the dungeon—
named the Witch of Ben Lair—sent the
soldiers to the place, and necessitated the
Caterans removing. I was taken by
Cameron to Droghdairch, whene I have
just escaped, but I know nothing of Hector. There was a fearful struggle between the soldiers and the Caterans. I
overheard the men talk about it afterwards, and they blamed the Witch of Ben
Lair for informing upon them, and were
uttering terrible threats of vengeance
against her."
"The Witch o' Ben Lair?" repeated
Ned. "I hae heard o' the name, but in
a' my travels here about I never saw her
tae my kennins."
"There is one thing which puzzles me
not a little," said Jeannie, "and that is
the different names by which we have
known that wicked villains. I understood hie name to be Ranald Murray,
while you two appear to have known him
by the name of Ian M Kenzie."
"I knew him as Ranald Murray,
while you two appear to have known him
hy the name of the M'Kenzie of Lockmaree, and
now the Chier himself. Before he attacked Hector M'Leod in the hut he
announced that his name was not Ranald
Murray, but Ian M'Kenzie. I cannot
imagine why he should have gone under
an assumed name, unless it may have
been to assist him in his f

been to assist him in his faisincation towards you."

"It may have been so; but that will
not save him from the responsibility of
his misdeeds," said Jeannie.

"It will no dae that na," put in Ned.
"By my faith, it wad be a bonnie set o'd
tae let him aff merely because he said his
name wis something that it wisna. But
am sayin—am sae through-ither that I
forgot a' aboot it—hae ye onything to
eat!"

"Our little store is done," replied

Our little store is done," replied

"Our little store is done," replied Flora.

"Dod, isna that awfu'! You mann think am a thochtless muckle sumph no tae hae spoken o' that afore. Here sae. There's bread an' cheese, an' beef, an' mutton. Tak' yer fill o' them, an' ye'se get water i' the loch to wash them doon; or, if ye think ye wad like it. I've a drap stronger thing in my flask."

As he spoke, Gordon drew from a bundle which was slung over his shoulder a heterogeneous supply of eatables, which were a very pleasing sight indeed to the two poor girls, whose fare during the past day or two—and in Jeannie's case much longer—had been of a very meagre and slender kind. They hastily applied themselves te the meal, while Ned loudly blamed himself for not having brought forward the eatables much earlier.

This finished, Jeannie, at her brother's earnest solicitation, told him the story of her wanderings, and how it was that she came to search after the villain who had so cruelly deserted her. The story was one of grief, and pain and suffering, and during its recital many tears were shed by Flora and by the strong man. But in the great joy which brother and sister felt at being reunited after so much trial on the one hand, and patient, anxious waiting on the other, these griefs and sorrows, though not dissipated, became lightened.

Having ascertained from Flora her des Gordon generously agreed to accompany her—repelling, however, the grateful girl's thanks with the observation that

girl's thanks with the observation that through uniting with M-Leed of M-Leed he was placing himself in the way by which he was likely to come soonest face to face with Ian M'Kenzie.

And so, all being now well rested, and feeling it to be imprudent ro remain longer in the place where they had met, they arose and proceeded towards Castle M'Leed, which, however they were to reach at a critical moment and in strange company.

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See Maddock's

Aug 27 1873.

Alfred Porry. Solicitor, J. A. Perkins.

W. J. PATERSON,
Agent, Guelph.

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Aug 77 .1873.

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