Guelph Evening Mercury

PLADAY EVEN'G, JAN. 16; 1874. MONTHLY CATTLE FAIRS

The Rival Clansmen

CHAPTER XV.

"And now, Hector, I feel weakened and unable to converse further. I am glad to see that you look forward to the responsibility which you will soon have to bear, with gendlenee, and that you have received the intelligence that your sire will not be many days with you, with the composure and firmness which becomes the son of the man who has spoken thus freely to you. It gives me no small pleasure to have you beside me at this moment, for I had almost made up my mind that you too were to be taken from me like my other noble boys. To the Lewlander, Ned Gordon, I owe my deepest gratitede, not only for your safety, but that I have been spared until now to address you as I have done. My words as I approached the Castle may have seemed to him cruel—when I was mourning that I had not been lost with the rest of my classmer.—but I spoke then under the pressure of feelings which I have partially subdued. Assist him in any respect you can, my son, in vindicating his inter's honour. Do it the more heartily since I an M'Kenzie is the villain who has betrayed her. And the Witch of Ben-Lair must never want a shelter so long as she is able to crawl to Castle M'Leod. She did us a great service, and I am mistaken if she not the possessor of some secret which it may be of importance for you one day to know. Now, Hector, leave me. Break the intelligence gently to my sister, and support and comfort her."

As he utterel the last words the old Chieftain rose to his feet, and clasping his son's hand shook it fervently, a look of calm resignation resting upon his face. Hector returned the pressure of hand, but his heart was too full for utterance, and, strive as he might to stifle them, the tears at length burst forth and trickled down his cheeks. It was an affecting sight: the high-minded, noble-souled son, with emotions fresh, sympathetic, and stonys, gazing into that calm, sad face, and remaining the end with a calm Socratic serenity; the not less noble-souled son, with emotions fresh, sympathetic, and stonys, gazing into that calm, s

ning to gather around before the Chieftain raised himself from its seat, and cast his eyes through the window upon the wide prospect, which lay stretched out before him. Then he staggered to his feet and paced the floor with irregular and unsteady steps.

"Ay," he suddenly exclaimed, "the ond is near at hand. Godghnows, the pride which filled my soul when I gazed upon the stern faces and the sialwart forms of my clausmen, with their eyes flashing with the wild fire of true Mr. Leods, received a check last night which has crushed me almost to the dust. But though broken in spirit I might have tried to be the avenger of my gallant kinstnen, had I not been compelled to fly exhausted as I was, like a hunted deer before my enemies. I knew I was hugging death to my breast every step I took but how could I encumber those noble youths more than I was doing? No. They are both young and strong and healthy, and life to them looks fair and pleasant, although both tasted of the cup of bitterness; but to me life—a life which has had many trials and many trimphs, but few pleasures—life, I say, was a burden; and if a sacrifice had to be made I judged it better that I should make the sacrifice."



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