

October, Donald. He was greatly improved externally by his trip and his associations—more manly and more handsome—while his manners had acquired a slight touch of hauteur that both amused and pleased his uncle. It had been decided that he should remain in Glasgow another winter, and then select his future profession. But at present Donald troubled himself little about the future. He had returned to Christine more in love with the peace and purity of her character than ever; and besides, his pecuniary embarrassments in Glasgow were such as to require his personal presence until they were arranged.

This arrangement greatly troubled him. He had only a certain allowance from his father—a loving, but stern man—who having once decided what sum was sufficient for a young man in Donald's position, would not, under any ordinary circumstances, increase it. David Cameron had already advanced him £70. James Blackie was a resource he did not care again to apply to. In the meantime he was pressed by small debts on every hand, and was living among a class of young men whose habits led him into expenses far beyond his modest income. He began to be very anxious and miserable. In Christine's presence he was indeed still the same merry-hearted gentleman; but James saw him in other places, and he knew from long experience the look of care that drew Donald's handsome brows together.

One night, towards the close of this winter, James went to see an old man who was a broker or trader in bills and money, doing business in Cowcaddens. James also did a little of the same business in a cautious way, and it was some mutual transaction in gold and silver that took him that dreary night into such a locality.

The two men talked for some time in a low and earnest voice, and then, the old man, opening a greasy leather satchel, displayed a quantity of paper which he had bought. James looked it over with a keen and practised eye. Suddenly his attitude and expression changed; he read over and over one piece of paper, and every time he read it he looked at it with a greater satisfaction.

"Andrew Starkie," he said, "where did you buy this?"

"Weel, James, I bought it o' Laidlaw—Aleck Laidlaw. Ye wadna think a big tailoring place like that could hae the wind in their faces; but folks maun hae their bad weather days, ye ken; but it blew me gude, so I'll ne'er complain. Ye see it is for £89, due in twenty days now, and I only gied £79 for it—a good name too, nane better."

"David Cameron! But what would he be owing Laidlaw £89 for clothes for?"

"Tut, tut! The claithes were for his nephew. There was some trouble anent the bill, but the old man gied a note for the amount at last, at three months. It's due in twenty days now. As he banks wi' your firm, ye may collect it for me; it will be an easy-made penny or twa."

"I would like to buy this note. What will you sell it for?"

"I'm no minded to sell it. What for do ye want it?"

"Nothing particular. I'll give you £90 for it."