

"I am owre young, maybe," he replied; "but I'm verra strong, and big for my age;" which was true enough, as he looked full two years older than he really was. "And then, ye ken, there'll no be anither such chance as this to see the world for the rest of my life."

The dominie smiled shrewdly. That was the usual talk of youth. He knew much better; but somehow the lad's passion for the adventure took strong hold upon him, and the upshot of their talk together that summer evening was that Donalblane went home joyful of heart because he had enlisted an ally who was pledged to help him in realising his desire.

Mr. Laidlaw was on excellent terms with Mr. Blane, and no excuse therefore was needed for a friendly visit, in the course of which the talk naturally enough came round to the Darien expedition, already in course of being fitted out.

"Hech! but I wad fain be going myself," said the dominie, heaving a huge sigh of regret, "and if it were na for this halting leg of mine, I'd be putting my name down."