

Laidlaw he went with his scheme. Now, as it happened, no man in Scotland had been more fired by Paterson's daring project than this school-teacher of Leith. He was a Scot of the Scots, and the bitterest regret of his life was that a crippled leg, which made active movement impossible, barred his own way to joining the expedition.

Disappointed in that direction, he had done what was perhaps even better—he had invested the entirety of his own savings in the stock, and he had by tongue and pen done all in his power to promote the interest of the enterprise. It was therefore only natural that he should listen to Donalblane's bashful confidence with a swelling and sympathetic heart.

"Ay! ay! laddie," he said, regarding the eager, earnest boy with a look of unwonted tenderness, "and so ye wad fain gang tae Darien? I dinna blame ye. Glad wad I be to gang myself, if I were na too auld for sic a far-going. But if I be too old, are ye na too young, Donald?" And he bent a keen look upon him from under his shaggy brows.

Donalblane flushed and moved uneasily on his seat. That was the very argument he most feared.