

as she re-read the brief letter, that it must be the girl who was living; for it was then a baby, and every one would have called it "the baby." By using the word "child," the poor father must have referred to the eldest, the boy.

"Ah! very likely," answered her brother, who had no secret preference to bias his expectations. So the conjecture came to be regarded as a certainty, until Wilfred shook off the deer-skin and stood before his aunt, a strong hearty boy of thirteen summers, awkwardly shy, and alarmingly hungry.

But her welcome was not the less kindly, as she heaped his plate again and again. Wilfred was soon nodding over his supper in the very front of the blazing fire, basking in its genial warmth. But the delightful sense of comfort and enjoyment was rather shaken when he heard his aunt speaking in the inner room.

"Forgill has come back, Caleb; and after all it is the boy."

"The boy, God bless him! I only wish he were more of a man, to take my place," answered the dreamy voice of her sick brother, just rousing from his slumbers.

"Oh, but I am so disappointed!" retorted Aunt Miriam. "I had been looking forward to a dear little niece to cheer me through the winter. I felt so sure—"

"Now, now!" laughed the old man, "that is just