

field. I wondered at first what could have placed them there, but presently noticed a number of red squirrels running very swiftly along the fence, and perceived that they emptied their mouths of a quantity of the new wheat, which they had been diligently employed in collecting from the ears that lay scattered on the ground. These little gleaners did not seem to be at all alarmed at my presence, but went to and fro as busy as bees. On taking some of the grains in my hand, I noticed that the germ or eye of the kernel was bitten clean out."

"What was that for, nurse, can you tell me?"

"My dear young lady, I did not know at first, till, on shewing it to my father, he told me that the squirrels destroyed the germ of the grain, such as wheat and Indian corn, that they stored up for winter use, that it might not sprout when buried in the ground, or in the hollow tree."

"This is very strange, nurse," said the little girl. "But, I suppose," she added, after a moment's thought, "it was God who taught the squirrels to do so. But why would biting out the eye prevent the grain from growing?"

"Because the eye or bud contains the life of the plant; from it springs the green blade, and the stem that bears the ear, and the root that strikes down into the earth. The floury part, which swells, and becomes soft and jelly-like, serves to nourish the young plant till the tender fibres of the roots are able to draw moisture from the ground."

Lady Mary asked if all seeds had an eye or germ?

Her nurse replied, that all had, though some were so minute that they looked no bigger than dust, or a grain of sand; yet each was perfect in its kind, and contained the plant that would, when sown in the earth, bring forth roots and leaves, and buds and flowers, and fruits in due season.

"How glad I should have been to see the little squirrels gleaned the wheat, and laying it in the little heaps on the rail fence. Why did they not carry it at once to their nests?"

"They laid it out in the sun and wind to dry, for if it had been stored away while damp, it would have moulded and been spoiled. The squirrels were busy all that day. When I went again to see them, the grain was gone. I saw several red squirrels running up and down a large pine tree, which had