

it used freely to eat in its home beyond the sea. The feeble sick woman languished, and there was no means of preparing for her what might tempt the decaying appetite. There was neither milk, nor sugar, nor eggs, nor chickens. Coarse bread, made of pounded corn, was what they depended upon for nourishment. But they were patient and thankful. And these circumstances are mentioned, that children may remember what our ancestors endured, and may learn not to complain if their now food is not always according to their fancy.

But there is a greater evil than being obliged to eat coarse food, namely, not being able to obtain food enough to support nature. This is called famine. This also came upon the colonists at Plymouth, or the pilgrim-fathers, as they are styled in history. In 1621, the year after their settlement, they were exceedingly distressed for provisions. For two or three months they had no bread at all. Their friends across the ocean, three thousand miles distant, knew not of their distress, and could not therefore relieve it. Many of the less vigorous were not able to bear it. The flesh wasted away from their bones, and they died. Children with dry and parched lips asked their parents for a little bread, and they had none to give. But they prayed to God, and besought him to have pity on his people in the wilderness. Vessels arrived from England bringing them aid; and summer ripening the corn which they had planted, once more supplied them with food.

In 1623 was another distressing famine. Scarcely any corn could be obtained. At one time the quantity distributed was only five kernels to each person. *Only five kernels to each person!* These were parched and eaten. This should not be forgotten by the descendants of the pilgrim-fathers. The anniversary of their landing at Plymouth is commemorated by public religious exercises. On the 22nd of Dec., 1820, was its second centennial celebration,—that is, the day on which two centuries had elapsed since their arrival. Great pains were taken by pious and eloquent men to impress the minds of a happy and prosperous people with a sense of what their ancestors had sustained in the first planting of this land. At the public dinner, when the table was loaded with the rich viands of a plentiful country, by each plate was placed five kernels of corn, as a memorial of the firm endurance of their fathers.

I have sometimes seen young people displeased with plain and wholesome food, when it was plentifully provided. I have even heard little children complain of what their parents or friends thought most proper for them. I have known them to wish for what they could not have, and be uneasy because it was denied them. Then I regretted that they should waste so much precious time, and even make themselves unhappy for such trifles, and forget the old maxim, that we should “eat to live, and not live to eat.”

My dear children, if any of you are ever tempted to be dainty, and dissatisfied with plain food, think of the five kernels of corn, and be thankful.