

Letters from a Pilgrim Child

Autumn 1620

Dearest Aunt Constance,

I was so grateful to arrive in the new world, but I am now beginning to wish that we had never left home. I know that father had a hard life in England because he was punished for following his conscience and worshiping in the Separatist church, but I wonder if it could have been as hard as this.

We arrived here just as winter did. It is bitter cold and snow is almost always upon the ground, but God has blessed us with a place to start our new town. There is a fair brook running under a high hill that Father says will offer us protection from our enemies. The men have begun building houses on land, but we must remain on the ship until they are nearer to being finished. I never thought I would still be aboard the ship for so long after we arrived! I suppose it is safer on the ship. I know not what to think of the naturals of this place that are called Indians. The first time some of our men encountered them, there was a fight though by God's blessing no one was injured. We are on our guard now.

Master Goodman - the one with the dogs- has become quite ill. He was out cutting fat with Peter Brown when his dogs chased a great deer deep into the forest. They chased after them and were soon lost, and had to pass the night in the wilderness. When they found their way back the next afternoon, Master Goodman had to have his shoes cut off his feet as they were so swollen with the cold. Many of our party have already died, among them Mary's mother and father. I cannot think how lost I would be in this strange and frightful place without mother and father. I pray that they will not succumb to scurvy and other diseases.

I mean not to be so Grim, but I fear that things could get far worse. We are near to scraping the bottoms of the barrels of rice, peas, and biscuits, and the men have had little fortune in hunting. I am worried, though I know that with God's help we will survive this dark winter.

Your loving niece,

Lizzy

Letter from 12-year-old Lizzy, a fictional Pilgrim child on the Mayflower, to her Aunt Constance.