

Thanksgiving Poem/The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers/Felicia
Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835).

The Landing Of The Pilgrim Fathers

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods, against a stormy sky,
Their giant branches tost (tossed);

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and water o'er,
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear, -
They shook the depths of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

Thanksgiving Poem/The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers cont'd.

The ocean-eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roared-
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band:
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of the seas, the spoils of war? -
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They have left unstained what there they found -
Freedom to worship God!

- Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835) (born Felicia Dorothea Browne).
English poet and children's author. One of the most popular British poets
of her day. Married Captain Alfred Hemans, an Irish army officer.

Thanksgiving Poem/The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers cont'd.

The poem "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" comes from a volume of poetry for children, *The Home Book of Verse for Young People*. It is a Romantic hymn to religious liberty.

http://www.poetry-archive.com/h/landing_of_the_pilgrim_fathers.html

A small group of English men and women left their homes because of religious persecution and sailed from Southampton, England, on August 15, 1620. They had two vessels, the Mayflower and the Speedwell. The Speedwell soon proved unseaworthy and had to go back to Plymouth for repairs, while twelve of the thirty voyagers were added to the ninety who were already on board the Mayflower.

Nine weeks later land was sighted, and on the evening of November 19, 1620, the pilgrims brought their ship into what came to be known as Cape Cod harbor. Two days later the Mayflower dropped anchor off what is now Provincetown, which is the extreme point of Cape Cod, and a group of sixteen men, headed by Captain Miles Standish, landed to explore the shore. The first actual settlement was made a month later, on December 21, 1620, at Plymouth, a more protected harbor than that of Provincetown.

This desire of the Pilgrims for a place where they might be free to worship God as they pleased was the cause of the founding of the first colony in New England.