

## Pilgrim's Progress

By-Path Meadow

By [John Bunyan](#)

*The Pilgrim's Progress from this world — to that which is to come, in the similitude of a dream*

*Retold for Children and Adapted to School Reading, by James Baldwin, 1913*

Now I saw in my dream, that Christian and Hopeful went until they came to a pleasant river; and for a time their way lay just upon the bank of the river.

Here, therefore, they walked with great delight. They drank of the water of the river, and it was pleasant and strengthening to their weary spirits. On either side of the stream there were beautiful trees that bore all manner of fruit; and the leaves of these trees were for medicine.

Here, also, they came to a meadow that was curiously beautified with lilies, and it was green all the year round. In this meadow they lay down and slept, for here they were safe from all harm. When they awoke, they ate of the fruit of the trees, and drank of the life-giving water. Then they lay down again to sleep.

Thus they rested and refreshed themselves for several days; and when they were disposed to go on, they ate and drank and departed. But soon the river and the road parted — and at this they were very sorry. For now the way was rough to their travel-worn feet; and as they went on, they wished for a better way.

By and by, they saw on the left hand of the road — a green meadow; and there was a stile to go over the fence into it. And a sign by the stile told them that this was By-path Meadow.

Christian's feet being tender, he went to the stile and looked over; and behold there was a pleasant path on the other side of the fence.

"This suits me," said Christian. "Here is the easiest going. Come, Hopeful, let us get over and follow this soft, cool path."

"What if it should lead us astray?" asked Hopeful.

"Oh, no danger of that!" said Christian. "It keeps close along the roadside fence."

So they climbed over the stile and found the path very easy for their feet. They soon overtook a man who was walking the same way, and they asked him, "Where does this pathway lead?"

"To the Celestial City," he answered.

"Are you quite sure?" asked Hopeful.

"I am confident of it," answered the stranger.

"There, didn't I tell you so?" said Christian. "And to make us doubly sure, see that finger board which says: TO THE CELESTIAL CITY."

So the stranger, whose name was VAIN-CONFIDENCE, went on before; and they followed him. But soon the night came on, and it grew very dark. They could not see the path. They lost sight of him, that went before.

Presently, as they were groping in the dark, they heard a fearful scream, and then a crash — as of some one falling into a pit. They called out, and asked, "What is the matter? Where are we now?"

But the only answer they heard was a groaning in the darkness. And now it began to rain; and the thunder and lightning were most dreadful. The water also began to rise in the meadow, and they were fearful lest they should be drowned.

"Oh, that I had kept in the right way!" groaned Hopeful.

"But who would have thought that this path would lead us astray?" said Christian.

"I was afraid of it at the first," said Hopeful, "and there I gave you a gentle hint. I would have spoken plainer — but you are older than I."

"Well, good brother," said Christian, "I am truly sorry that I have led you out of the way. Pray, forgive me; I did not intend wrong."

"Certainly, I forgive you," said Hopeful, "and I believe that this shall be for our good."

"Let us go back again, and try to find the road," said Christian.

"Yes, let us go; but I will lead the way," said Hopeful.

"No, let me go first," said Christian.

"Indeed, I will go first," said Hopeful; "for you might miss the way again."

Then they heard in the darkness a voice saying, "Set your heart toward the highway, even the way which you went."

But by this time the waters were risen very high, and they were in great danger. They started bravely back, however, feeling their way at every step. And the flood was so high that nine or ten times they came near being drowned.

At last, reaching the high ground, where there was a little shelter, they crouched down in a dry place to rest. And being very weary, they fell asleep.

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