

Pilgrim's Progress

Doubting Castle

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

I saw now in my dream, that they went on till they came to the *river* that was on this side of the *Delectable Mountains*. This was the river where fine trees grew on the banks; and the leaves of these trees were good for medicine. The meadows also were green all the year; and there were shady places where they might lie down and rest with safety.

In the meadows there were sheep pasturing, and folds for the sheep. There were also little houses for sheltering the lambs. And *One* was there who loved these lambs; he gathered them in his arms, he carried them in his bosom, he gently led them.

So as the pilgrims went on their way, they were filled with delight because of the delicious waters, the pleasant meadows, the dainty flowers, and the wholesome fruit. And they would have tarried there long, had not duty urged them to go onward.

Therefore, leaving the pleasant river, they came in due time to *By-path Meadow*; and there they saw the stile over which Christian and Hopeful went when they were taken by *Giant Despair*.

There they sat down, and consulted what they had best do.

"I have a mind," said Great-heart, "to go over and demolish the castle of old Giant Despair. He may have some pilgrims shut up in his dungeon, and I would be glad to set them free."

"That is a good thought, Mr. Great-heart," said Matthew. "I will go with you."

But some of the others were timid and made excuses. "I very much doubt if we ought to leave the King's highway even though it be to destroy Doubting Castle," said one.

"We had better go on and leave well enough alone," said another.

Then Great-heart stood up and drew his sword. "My master has commanded me to fight the good fight," said he; "and with whom should I fight this good fight, if not with Giant Despair?"

So saying, he climbed right over the stile. "Who will go with me?" he said.

"I will," said one and another of Christiana's sons.

"I will," said another pilgrim who had joined them on the road; and soon, leaving the women in a safe place, the brave men and boys went straight up to Doubting Castle, to look for *Giant Despair*.

When they came to the castle gate they knocked with unusual noise.

The old giant heard them and came out; and his wife, *Diffidence*, was with him.

"Who dares to make that great noise on my gate?" he roared in anger.

"It is I, Great-heart," answered the guide. "Open this gate, and let me in."

"What is your business with me?" asked the giant.

"I am the servant of the King," answered Great-heart, "and I have come to demolish your Doubting Castle."

Now Giant Despair was not afraid of any man, for he was a giant. So he harnessed himself and went out. He had a cap of steel upon his head; a breastplate of fire was on his arm; and he came out in iron shoes, with a great club in his hand.

Then Great-heart and his helpers made up to him, and beset him behind and before. They fought for their lives. They struggled long and hard.

At length Giant Despair was brought to the ground; but he was loath to give up. He fought after he was down, and he would have been up again had not Great-heart given him one final stroke with his sword, and thus ended his cruel life.

Then all went through the gate and began to demolish Doubting Castle. But this was a great task, even though Giant Despair was dead. They toiled seven days, and left not one stone upon another.

In the dungeon they found two pilgrims, whom the giant had shut up. These were *Despondency*, almost starved to death, and *Miss Much-afraid*, who was his

daughter. How glad these two people were to see the sunlight again!

Now when they had finished with the castle they went back to the highway, where they had left the women; and all rejoiced and were glad.

Christiana played a merry tune upon the violin, and Mercy joined her upon the lute. And since all were so merry, what should they do but dance right there in the road. Even the damsel, *Much-afraid*, joined them; and, I promise you, she footed it well.

As for *Despondency*, the music was not much to him. He was for feeding rather than dancing, for he was almost starved. So Christiana gave him a little wine and prepared him something to eat; and in a little while he came to himself and was finely revived.

Then the *company of pilgrims* went forward again. And Great-heart walked before them, and was their guide.

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