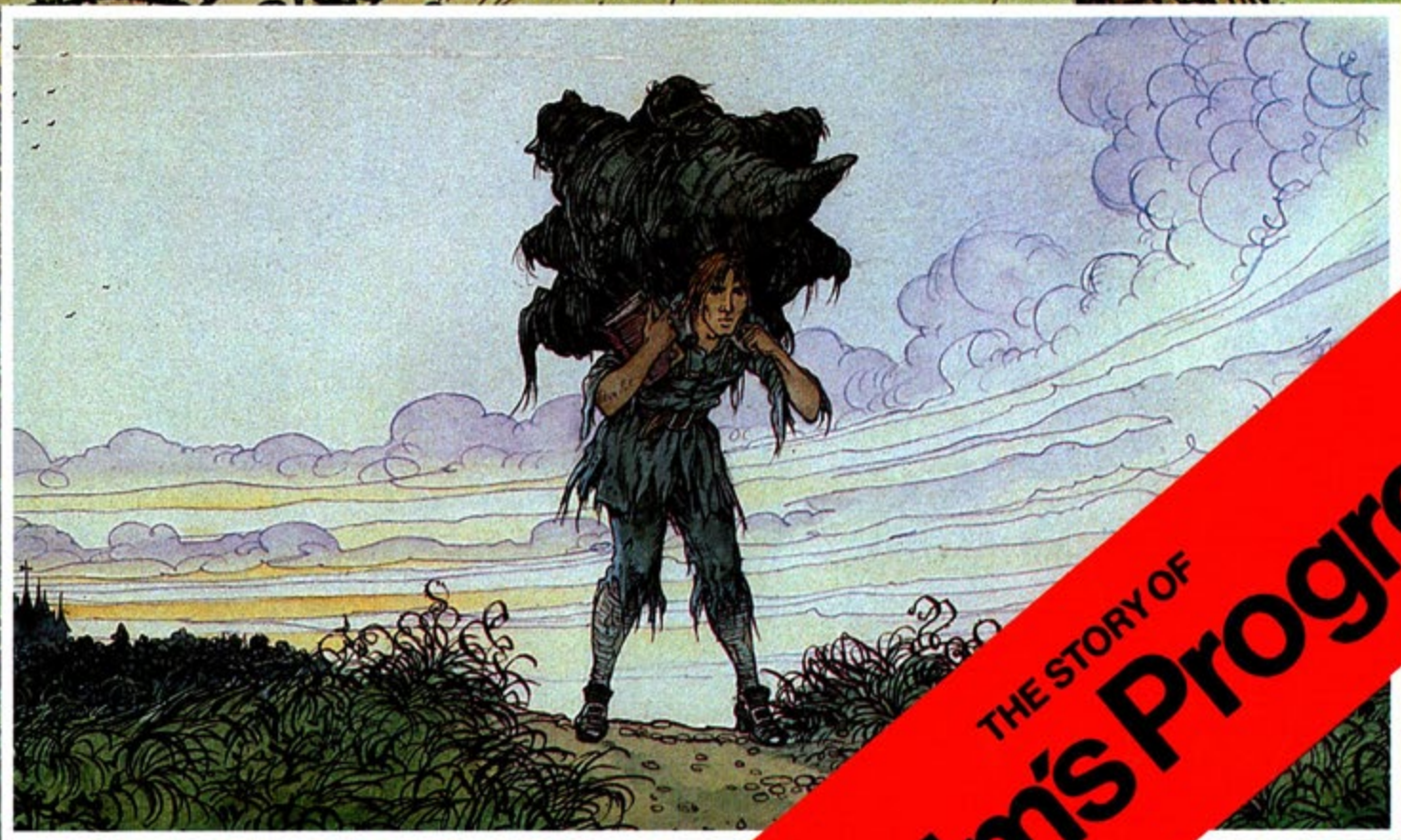
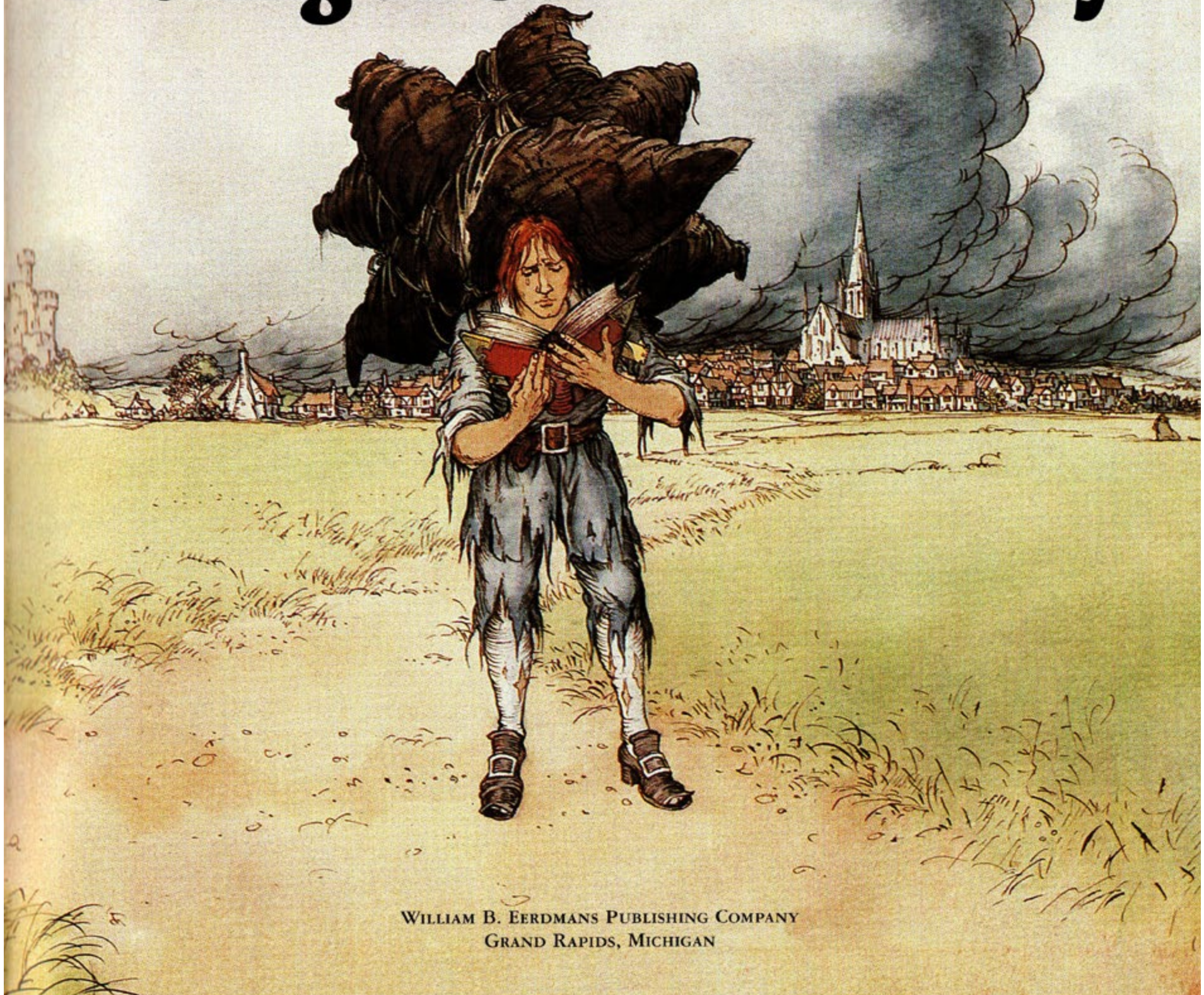


Dangerous Journey



THE STORY OF
Pilgrim's Progress

Dangerous Journey



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Introduction

In the year 1676, a poor tinker named John Bunyan was imprisoned in Bedford Gaol. While he was there, he began to write one of the most famous books in the English language. Pictures came crowding through his mind – faster than he could put them into words: quagmires and steep hills; sunny valleys and dark glens; a gloomy castle – its courtyard strewn with bones; a market town with all the bustle of a fair; and a narrow road – from which one must not stray – running uphill and down dale to the Dark River and the Shining Gate.

Bunyan was forty-seven when he wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and he drew on two main sources: first, his knowledge of the Bible; secondly, his considerable knowledge of the world. Thus he had in mind the escape of Lot from Sodom, as he wrote of the escape of Christian from the City of Destruction. There were many Pliables in his own congregation. Mr Greatheart was a veteran of Cromwell's army. As to Vanity Fair, it was probably modelled on Stourbridge Fair, near Cambridge; and the trial of Faithful before Lord Hate-good was based on Bunyan's own treatment at the hands of Justice Keeling.

Bunyan tells his story as if it happened in a dream. He had no one to help him. He showed his work to no one, till it was complete. Then many of his pious friends were shocked. It was, they said, an idle tale about giants, and lions, and goblins, and warriors sometimes fighting with monsters, and sometimes

being lightly entertained by ladies in their palaces.

To start with, it is true, the *Pilgrim's Progress* seems to have been published chiefly for the cottage and the servants' hall. The paper, the printing and the engravings were all of the meanest description. But rapidly the fame of Bunyan grew, and his work has become recognized by millions of readers not as an idle tale at all, but as a story with a hidden meaning – an 'allegory' of that Dangerous Journey, which is, in fact, the journey of Everyman from this world to the next.

Oliver Hunkin

I

The Slough of Despond

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I
lighted on a certain place and laid me down to sleep;
and as I slept, I dreamed a dream.

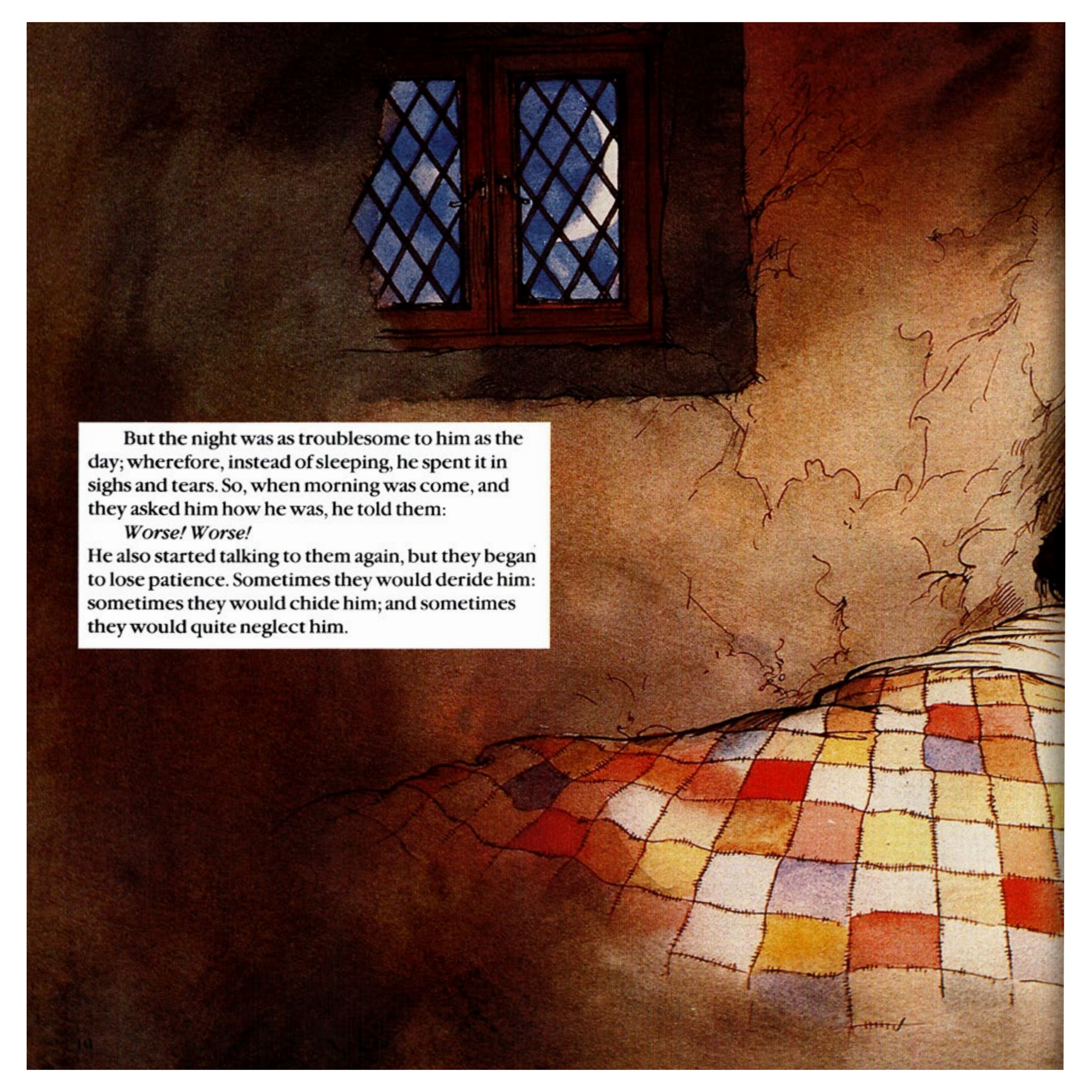
I dreamed that I saw a man, with his face turned away from his own house – a book in his hand, and a great burden on his back. I looked and saw him open the book and read therein; and, as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able to contain himself, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying:

What shall I do to be saved?

For he lived in the City of Destruction, which he learnt from his book was doomed to be burned with fire from heaven, in which fearful overthrow both himself, and his wife and their four sons would miserably perish – unless some way of escape could be found.

So Christian (for that was his name) went home to talk to his family. And they were greatly worried, not because they believed that what he said was true, but because they thought some kind of madness had got into the poor man. And as it was drawing towards night, they hoped that sleep might settle his brains. With all haste they put him to bed.





But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So, when morning was come, and they asked him how he was, he told them:

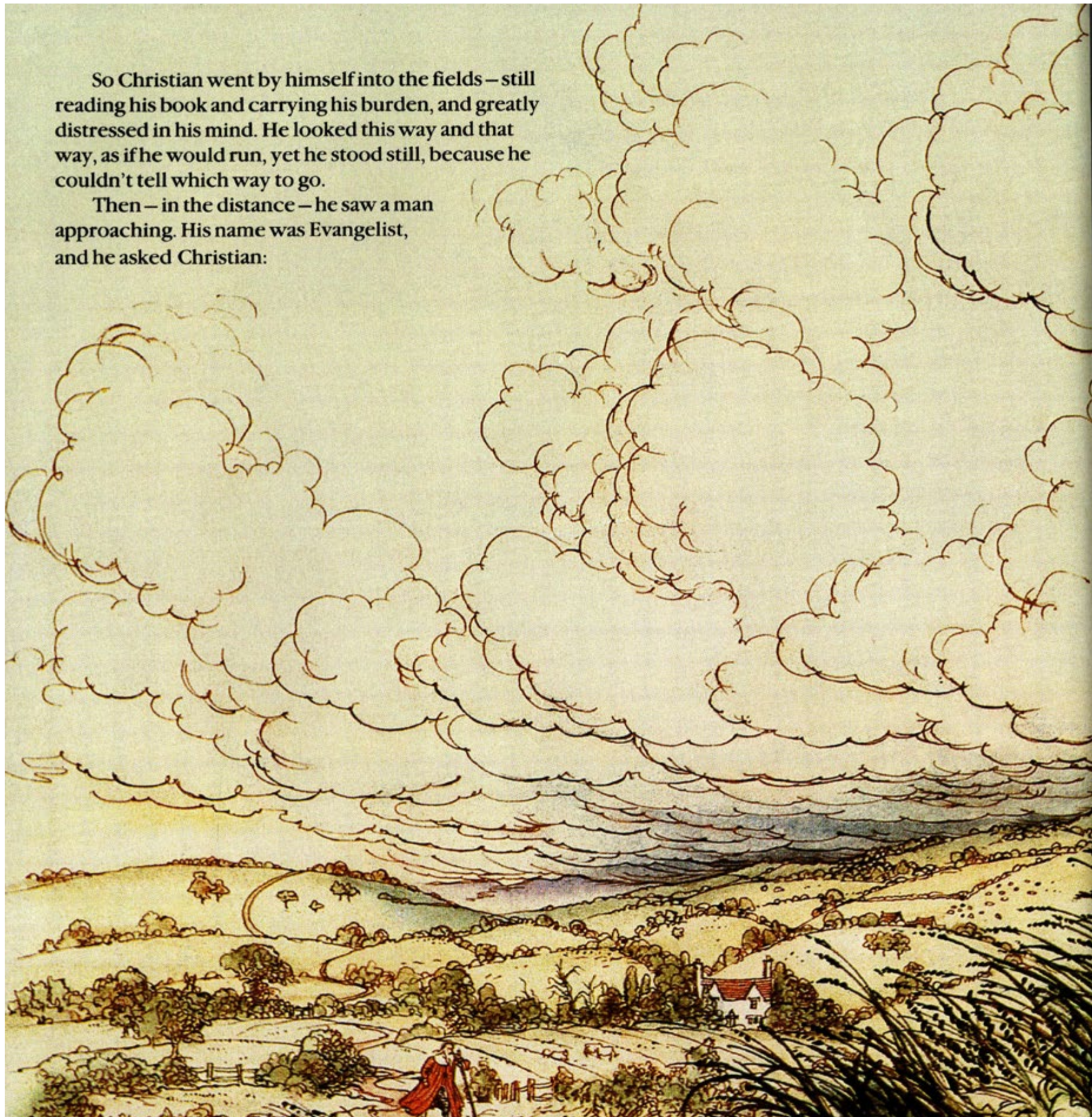
Worse! Worse!

He also started talking to them again, but they began to lose patience. Sometimes they would deride him; sometimes they would chide him; and sometimes they would quite neglect him.



So Christian went by himself into the fields – still reading his book and carrying his burden, and greatly distressed in his mind. He looked this way and that way, as if he would run, yet he stood still, because he couldn't tell which way to go.

Then – in the distance – he saw a man approaching. His name was Evangelist, and he asked Christian:







What are you weeping for?

Sir, he answered, this book in my hand tells me to flee from the wrath to come. Also, I fear that this burden, which is upon my back, will sink me lower than the grave. Therefore, I need to get rid of it.

If this is so, said Evangelist, then why are you standing still?

Because I don't know where to go, he answered.

Then Evangelist pointed with his finger over a wide field.

Do you see yonder wicket-gate, he asked.

No, said Christian.

Then do you see a shining light?

I think I do, said Christian.

Then said Evangelist:

Keep that light in your eye, and go in that direction. So shall you reach the gate. There, when you knock, it will be told you what to do.





So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. But he hadn't run far, before his wife and children saw him running, and called after him to return. But the man put his fingers in his ears and ran on. He didn't look back, but ran towards the middle of the plain.

The neighbours too came out to see him run, and as he ran, some mocked and others threatened. A couple of them were resolved to fetch him back by force; the name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other was Pliable. Now by this time the man had gone a good distance from them. Nevertheless, they pursued after him and overtook him.



Neighbours, why have you come? asked Christian.

To persuade you to come back with us, they said. *That can by no means be,* said Christian. *You dwell in the City of Destruction. Be content, good neighbours, to go along with me.*

What! said Obstinate, *and leave our friends and our comforts behind us?*

Yes. For I seek an endless kingdom, which we may inhabit for ever. Read of it, if you will, in my book.

Tush! cried Obstinate. *Away with your book. Will you go back with us or no?*

No, not I.

Pliable so far had held his peace. But now he spoke:

If what Christian says is true, I intend to go with this good man.

Very well, then, replied Obstinate. *I will go back to my own place. I'll be no companion to such fantastical fellows.*





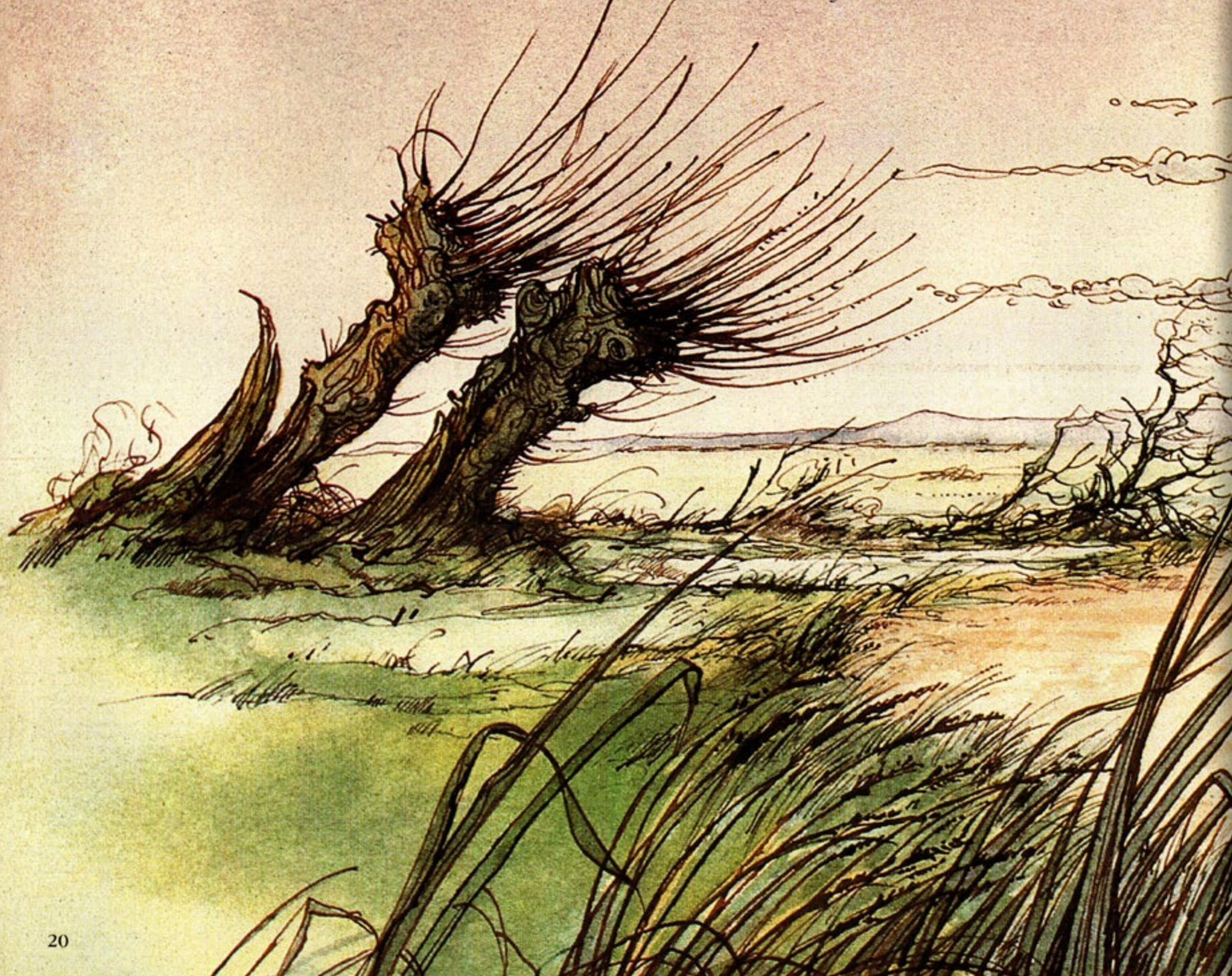
With that, they parted. Obstinate went back and Christian and Pliable went on over the plain, discoursing all the while.

Tell me more, neighbour Christian, enquired Pliable, about the place to which we're going. There are crowns of glory to be given us, and garments shining like the sun, Christian told him.

That's very pleasant; and what else? There shall be no more crying, said Christian. *For the Owner of the Place will wipe all tears from our eyes.*

Well, my good companion, I'm glad to hear these things. Come on, let's burry.

I can't go any faster, answered Christian, *with this burden on my back.*







Now I saw in my dream that, as they were hurrying along and talking, they had drawn near to a quagmire in the middle of the plain, which was called the Slough of Despond. And before they knew what was happening, they had both fallen into the bog. It was a bog where many travellers before them had been drowned. Here, therefore, they wallowed, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt. And Christian, because of the burden on his back, began to sink, first knee-deep – then waist-deep – into the loathsome scum.

Neighbour Christian, where are you now? asked Pliable.

Truly, I do not know, Christian replied.

So Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow:

Is this the happiness you promised me? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect between this and our journey's end?

With that, having no burden to contend with, Pliable scrambled out – on that side of the Slough which was nearest to his own house. And so he ran off home for a hot bath, leaving Christian to his fate. For his part, Christian was struggling to reach the side of the Slough nearest to the wicket-gate. Which he eventually did, but couldn't clamber out by reason of the burden on his back.

Then I beheld in my dream that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him what he was doing there.

Christian answered: *Sir, I was bidden to go this way by a man called Evangelist.*

But did you not look for the stepping-stones? Fear followed me so hard, that I fell in, replied Christian.

That is the snare and hazard of this place, said Help. *It so spues out its filth that, at the changes of the weather, these steps are hardly seen. Here, give me your hand.*

So he gave him his hand, and drew him out, and set him on firm ground again. And Christian continued on his way towards the wicket-gate.



Although he didn't know it, worse trouble lay in store. For a certain Mr Worldly Wiseman was now seen crossing the field to meet him. He dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy – a very great town, hard-by where Christian lived. This man then, having some inkling of him – for Christian's departure from the City of Destruction was much noised abroad – began to question him.

How now, good fellow, where are you going with that great burden?

I'm going to yonder wicket-gate.

Have you a wife and children? asked Mr Worldly Wiseman.

Why, yes, replied Christian. *But I am so heavily weighed down, I can't take pleasure in them any more.*

Who counselled you to start upon this dangerous journey?

A man that came to me. His name, as I remember, was Evangelist.

I thought as much, said Worldly Wiseman. *He is for ever leading travellers astray. There's no more difficult road in the world than the one he's directed you to. I see, by the dirt on you, that you've already been in the Slough of Despond. But that Slough is only the beginning of your troubles. In the way you are going you are likely to encounter far worse things than this – lions, dragons, darkness and death. This has been confirmed by many witnesses. So why should a man so carelessly risk his life, by giving heed to a stranger?*

After pausing for breath, Mr Worldly Wiseman proceeded as follows:

Hear me – I am older than you – and I'll give you some advice. In yonder village there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man – a man of very good name. He has skill to help men off with their burdens. He has, to my knowledge, cured several who were going out of their wits because of them. His house is not a mile from this place, and if he's not at home himself, his son – who's called Civility – will help you. Moreover, if you wish, there are houses standing empty in the village at reasonable rates. The food is cheap and good, and you can send for your wife and family, and all live happily together.





Christian, we fear, was all too ready to listen to Mr Worldly Wiseman and leave the straight path he was on.

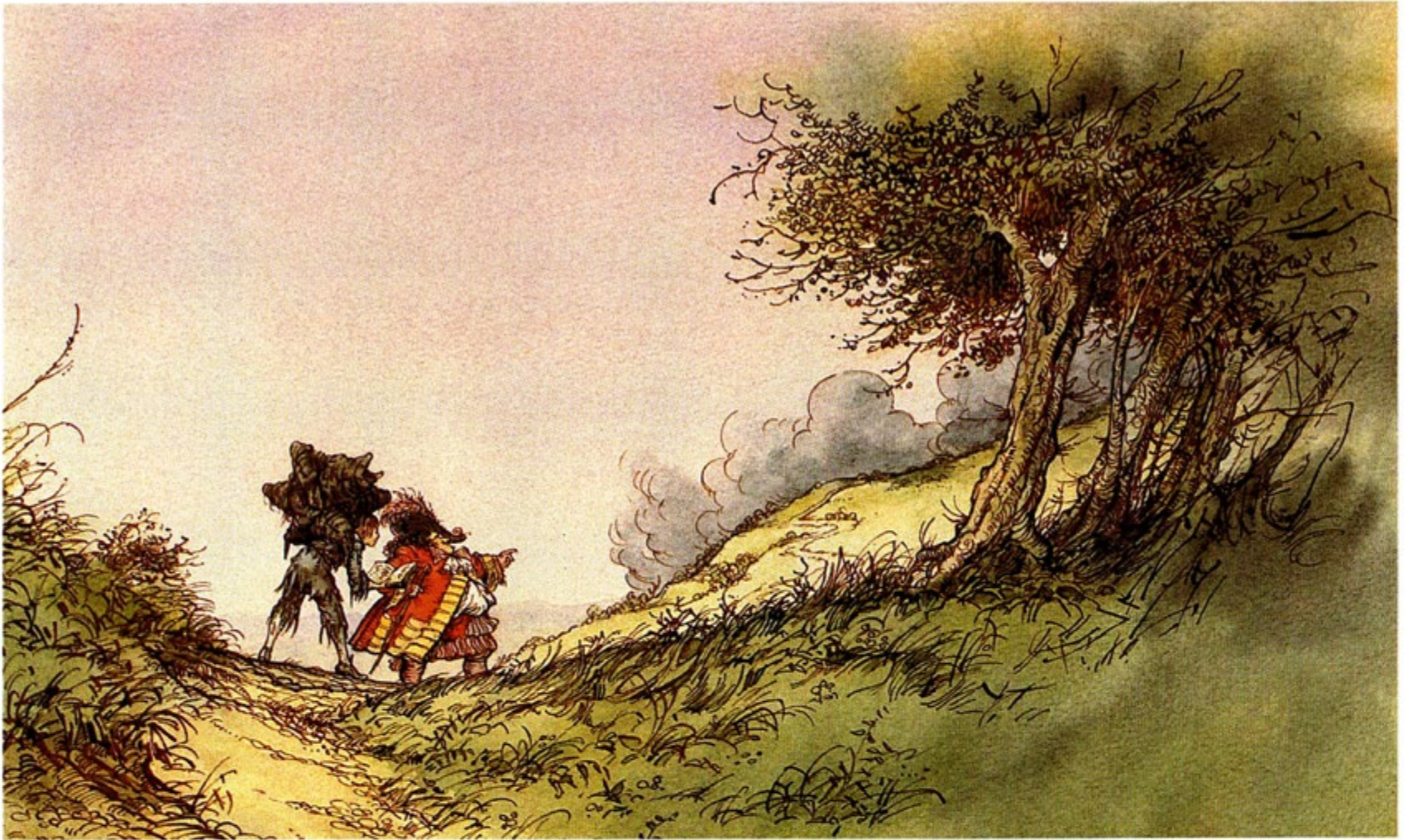
Sir, which is the way to this honest man's house? he enquired.

Do you see yonder high hill? asked Mr Worldly Wiseman.

Yes, very well.

By that hill you must go, and the first house you come to is Mr Legality's.





Thus did Mr Worldly Wiseman courteously direct poor Christian down the wrong road. For what he had failed to tell him was the hill ahead was a fearsome mountain. It seemed to overhang the road so much that Christian – looking up as the clouds scudded over it – was afraid that it would fall upon his head. Worse than that, there were flashes of fire coming out of it. And Christian, because of his burden, might easily have fallen, and thus early on his journey have been burnt to death. Wherefore, he did sweat and quake for fear.







At that moment, who should appear but Evangelist, coming to meet him with a severe and dreadful countenance, at the sight of which Christian began to blush with shame.

Aren't you the man I found weeping outside the City of Destruction? questioned Evangelist.

Yes, dear sir, I am the man.

Did not I direct you to the little wicket-gate?

Yes, dear sir, replied Christian.

How is it then that you've so quickly turned aside?

I met, you see, a gentleman; and he persuaded me that I might find in the village before me a man who could take off my burden. He said, moreover, he would show me a better way – not so attended with difficulties as the way, sir, that you set me in.

Then said Evangelist: *Stand still a little.*

So he stood trembling. And Evangelist said: *You have rejected the Word of God for the advice of Mr Worldly Wiseman. But Mr Legality cannot free you of your burden. Mr Legality is a cheat. As for his son, Civility, notwithstanding his simpering looks, he cannot help you either.*

As he spoke, there was a great clap of thunder.

And Christian called himself a thousand fools for listening to Mr Worldly Wiseman.

I am sorry I have hearkened to this man's counsel, he said, turning back with haste.

He spoke to no one on the way, nor, if anybody asked him, would he give them an answer. He went like one that was all the while treading on forbidden ground, and could by no means think himself safe, till he had regained the road he had abandoned.

But would he ever reach it? He wasn't at all sure.

For narrow is the gate. it says in his book, *and few are they who find it.*

2

The Interpreter's House

I saw then, in my dream, that ahead of Christian, on a grassy bank, lay three men fast asleep, with fetters on their heels. They were called Simple, Sloth and Presumption.

Christian knew that to sleep on this particular road was like sleeping in the rigging of a ship when a storm was brewing.

Wake up! he cried, *and I will help you off with your irons.*

But they only opened one eye at him, and yawned.

I see no danger, said Simple.

I want to go on sleeping, said Sloth.

Every tub must stand on its own bottom, said Presumption.

Then they all three rolled over, and went to sleep again.



The timeless story of Pilgrim's Progress
told again for another generation.
This version, prepared for the tv series
Dangerous Journey,
uses the original words of John Bunyan,
carefully selected by Oliver Hunkin
to present a gripping narrative.
Brilliantly illustrated throughout in full color
by Alan Parry.

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