

Richards Laura Elizabeth Howe

# Pippin; A Wandering Flame



**Laura Richards**  
**Pippin; A Wandering Flame**

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# Содержание

CHAPTER I	4
CHAPTER II	19
CHAPTER III	35
CHAPTER IV	50
CHAPTER V	72
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	86

# **Richards Laura Elizabeth Howe Pippin; A Wandering Flame**

## **CHAPTER I PIPPIN SAYS GOOD-BY**

THE chaplain seemed to be waiting for some one. He was sitting in his office, as usual at this hour of the morning the little bare office in a corner of Shoreham State Prison, with its worn desk and stool, its chair facing the window (what tales that chair could tell, if it had power of speech!), its piles of reports and pamphlets, its bookshelf within arm's reach of the desk. (Bible, Concordance, Shakespeare, the "Life of John Howard," Pickwick, the "Golden Treasury"; these, thumbed and shabby, jostled the latest works on prison reform and criminology. An expressive bookshelf, as all bookshelves are.)

One would not have picked out Lawrence Hadley for a prison chaplain; if chaplain at all, he surely belonged in the army. Look, bearing, voice – that clear ringing voice we remember so well – all bespoke the soldier; and a soldier he was, not only because of his service in the Philippines – he was in the army till his health

broke down – but because he was born one.

As I said, he seemed to be waiting for some one. His eyes were watching the yard, taking note of each figure that came and went, seeing that old Pete was walking lame, that French Bill was drooping and poking his head forward, a bad sign with him, that Mike was whistling, a good sign always; but while his eyes looked, his ears listened; and now, when it seemed that he had been listening a long time, came the familiar knock.

"Ah!" The chaplain's chair, which had been tilted back on two legs for meditation, came down on four for action. "Come in!"

"Pippin, sir!"

"Come in, Pippin! I was looking for you."

A young man entered and closed the door behind him, making no sound. He moved with an extraordinary grace and swiftness, like some wild creature, yet there was no haste or hurry about him. At first glance, the two men were of something the same build, both tall and square shouldered, holding their chins well up and looking straight forward; but there the resemblance ceased. The chaplain was sandy fair, with blue eyes as kindly as they were piercing; the other was all brown: brown, crisp, curling hair, brown skin, brown flashing eyes. The eyes were not flashing now, though; they were as nearly dim as they could be, for Pippin had been saying good-by, and now was come the hardest parting of all.

"Well, here I be, Elder!" he said. "I s'pose it's time I was off."

"Yes!" said Mr. Hadley. "Yes, I suppose it is. Well, Pippin,

we're going to miss you here. The place won't be the same without you."

Pippin made as if to speak, but the words did not come.

"I just want you to know," the chaplain went on slowly, "what a help you've been to me this past year, especially the past six months. I don't know – I really do not know – how I shall get on without you, Pippin!"

Pippin cleared his throat and spoke huskily.

"Elder," he said, "say the word and I'll stay! Honest I will. I'd be proud, sir, if I could help you, any way, shape, or manner. I would so!"

The chaplain laughed rather ruefully, and rose from his chair. "That would never do!" he said. "No, no, Pippin, you mustn't think I'm not just as glad to have you go as I am sorry to lose you. You'll be helping outside instead of inside, that's all. We shall not let go of you altogether. How about Sandy Colt, Pippin?" he asked with an abrupt change of voice. "You've been with him a good deal this past month, I've noticed. How about him?"

Pippin considered a moment.

"Sandy," he said, "is all right; or I think so, Elder. I've been round with him, as you say. I kind o' thought mebbe you got him put on bindin' with me?"

The chaplain nodded.

"I kind o' thought it squinted that way. Well, sir, that boy is about ready to go on the straight; leastways he's sick to death of crooks and their games, and that's the first step. I – kind o' –

think – " the words came more and more slowly – "it's about time to leave Sandy alone with the money box, Elder."

"What do you mean?" The chaplain looked up sharply; met a glance full of meaning, and smiled. "So you knew, eh?" he said musingly. "I wondered if you did, Pippin."

"Know!" Pippin's eyes were shining now, and he spoke with suppressed energy. "What would you think of it? Lemme tell you, Elder! I've wanted to tell you ever since. I'd ben tryin' – tryin' hard. I'd found the Lord – found Him for keeps, and I knowed it; but yet, along that summer, after – that day, you know, sir – I couldn't seem to keep holt of Him *stiddy*. Now wouldn't that give you a pain, sir? Honest, wasn't it awful? But 'twas so!"

"Not awful in the least, Pippin! Did you ever see a baby learning to walk? He'll tumble down twice for every new step he takes. You were learning to walk, Pippin."

"Well, I got the tumbles all right!" Pippin shook his head. "Here was the Lord helpin' me, helpin' me good, and you too, Elder, and Warden, and Pete: and yet with all that – gorry to 'Liza! – with all that, if the devil didn't get in his licks too, call me pudd'n head! He'd wait till I was dog-tired, mebbe, or some one had spoke ugly to me. 'Huh!' he'd say, 'you're no good; what makes you think you are? You're spoilin' a first-rate crook,' he'd say, 'and you'll never make anything else, 'cause that's where your gifts lie,' he'd say. 'Nobody'll ever trust you, either!' he'd say. 'Sweat all you like, and pray all you're a mind to, and sing your insides out,' he'd say; 'twon't make any difference. A crook you

are, and a crook folks'll think you!' he'd say."

"But you knew better!"

"Course I knew better; but there's times when knowin' don't seem to help; and them times he'd get me down, Satan would, and kneel on my chist, and lam into me – Green grass! he *would* lam in!"

Pippin was silent a moment; the chaplain watched him, silent too.

"Come one day," Pippin went on, "he got me bad. I tried singin', but that wouldn't do; I tried prayin', and all I could make out was the Lord was real sorry for me, but I'd got to play this hand alone. When you come round I tried to speak up and answer pleasant and cheerful, but I guess I made a poor fist of it. I see you look me over; then you went off kind o' thinkin', whistlin' that tune – what is it, that tune you give us when you're thinkin' somethin' up, Elder?"

The chaplain laughed outright.

"Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" he said. "You know too much, Pippin."

"I know this much!" cried Pippin. "I know you sent for me half an hour later, and I come. Here were you, and there was I, and on the table was a box full of money, and you were counting it over; might have been a hundred dollars."

"Just!" said Mr. Hadley. "My quarter's salary!"

"Looked to be! Well, sir, I don't need to tell you. You began to ask me about my cell, and was I careful about this, that or

the other; all of a sudden you pulls up and looks at your watch. 'Hello!' you says. 'Ten o'clock! I've got to go and speak to the Warden about something. Just watch this money till I come back, will you, Pippin?' And off you go full chisel, and leave me – "

Pippin's voice broke, and he brushed his hand across his eyes. The chaplain laid a quiet hand on his shoulder; his own eyes were dim for a moment.

"And you think Sandy is ready for that?" he said quietly.

"I do, sir!" Pippin straightened his shoulders and threw up his chin again. "I know for myself that was the devil's last kick. I've never had no more trouble with him since that day; and I think Sandy's time has come to find there's somebody trusts him and looks to him to be a decent chap from now on. Then there's Tom Kidd – but I'm keepin' you, Elder! Mebbe you was goin' out, sir? Pleasant day like this – "

"I'm keeping you!" The kind hand still on his shoulder, Pippin was gently propelled toward the door. "Time you were starting, Pippin, since you are determined to go in this way, without help or company. I'm coming down with you, and you can tell me about Tom as we go."

Down the stone stairs, talking earnestly as he went, pausing now and then for the unlocking of an iron door which clanged "good-by" as it shut behind him; through the narrow corridors whose brick walls shone with the rubbing of generations of shoulders; through the guard room, pausing here to shake the friendly hands of a dozen turnkeys, clerks, attendants, all wishing

him good luck, all bidding him not forget them for they would sure miss him; down the final stairs at last went Pippin, the chaplain still at his shoulder, through the door behind which he had left hope three years ago, to find her again on the other side – out into the air and sunlight, a free man.

Now came the last handclasp – long and firm, saying many things; the last clear glance of love and trust between blue eyes and brown; the last word.

"And remember, my son, that wherever you look for the grace of God, there you will be pretty sure to find it!"

"That's right, Elder!" said Pippin. "Amen! I'll look for it, sure! And I'll never forget all you've done for me. So long, Elder!"

"Good-by, my son! Good-by, Pippin! The Lord be with you!"

The chaplain stood on the steps, watching the lithe, alert figure as it strode along the highway; coming to the corner, it turned, waved a salute and vanished.

The chaplain sighed; he was glad, heartily glad, that Pippin was "out," but he would miss him sadly; everybody would miss him. He had been the sunshine of the place, these six months past. He looked up at the gray walls, the frowning windows, and gave a little shiver; sighed and smiled, squared his shoulders, and went back into the prison.

Pippin, too, as he waved his farewell at the corner, smiled and sighed and squared his shoulders, then he thrust out his jaw in a way the parson knew well.

"Now, bo," said Pippin, "it's up to you! Green grass! I'll miss

that man, I sure will. I'll miss him, and the Warden, and them little tads of his, and Pete, and – gee! I'll miss the whole darned show. Now wouldn't that give you a pain? Let's look it over a spell!"

He looked carefully about, and, finding a large stone, flicked the dust from it with a clean pocket handkerchief (which he then inspected anxiously, shaking every speck of dust from it before repocketing it) and, after laying down the bundle he carried, sat down.

"It is up to you, son!" he repeated. "The Lord will see to His end, you needn't worry about that any; you'll find your own enough to heft. The Elder knows a lot!" he added meditatively. "He doesn't give you no easy talk about blessin's an' golden crowns an' that: no, sir! 'You've got to behave,' he says, 'or you'll be back here again. And the way for you to behave is to hold fast to the grace that God has given you and to get hold of what He has given to others.' Yes, sir! Straight talk is what Elder Hadley gives. An' I'm goin' to do them things; just watch me! And to begin with, I'm goin' to do some forgettin', a heap of it. I'm goin' to forget the crib, an' the gang, and the – the *entire* b'ilin'! Yes, sir! I'll say good-by to 'em." He stopped, and taking off his cap, turned it slowly round and round in his hands. "Say good-by to 'em!" he repeated under his breath.

He stared before him, as one seeing visions at once strange and familiar. A cellar, dark and noisome, under a city street: an old woman in a long blue cloak and a white cap, crouching over

a spark of fire: a half-naked child playing on the naked floor: in a corner a man sprawling half-drunk, smoking a clay pipe. The child stumbles over the man's feet, is clutched and held fast in one hand while the other shakes the burning dottle from the pipe on the little bare back.

"To larn ye manners!" growls the man.

The woman rises painfully, totters across the cellar and brings down her staff with astonishing force on the man's head – "She must have been a hundred!" Pippin thinks – bidding him get out for the drunken brute he is. Whack! Whack! The second blow brings the man staggering to his feet and out of the door, protesting thickly, "I was only larnin' him manners! He'll remember that, see if he don't."

The child shrieked when the fire touched him; he is now whimpering piteously. The old woman finds a rag and rubs something cooling on his back, muttering some words – what were they? Pippin racks corners of his memory.

"White – white – patter, was it?" And then, "St. Peter's brother," and – no, it is gone. But he knows the other! He sees her now take the child's two hands in hers, hears her croon the unforgettable words to the unforgettable tune:

There was an old man,  
And he was mad,  
And he ran up the steeple.  
He took off  
His great big hat,

And waved it over the people!

"I won't forget that!" said Pippin. "No, nor I won't forget the whole of Granny Faa: some parts I'll keep. She was good to me many a time, and give me snuff out of her box. But I'll forget Dod Bashford all right. Just watch me – "

He paused, for the vision came again. A dark night, a dark house, shrubbery gleaming wet about it. A match flickers, carefully sheltered by brawny hands, and shows a small window, as of a pantry, standing partly open. Somebody is bidden with an oath to "boost the kid up!" A boy of ten is seized by other hands and raised to the window. "Get in!" says a rough whisper. "Round to your left and open the first door. If you make a noise, I'll cut your heart out!" For some reason – it is not clear what – the boy is unwilling, hangs back, struggling in air, pushing away from the window-sill toward which he is thrust. "Will you?" growls the rough voice, and the lighted match is held to his leg. Still the child struggles dumbly for a little; at last, with a smothered shriek, he gives up and climbs in at the window.

"Green grass!" mutters Pippin. "I'll forget *that*: watch me!"

He blinked twice or thrice, then straightened himself. "There!" said Pippin. "There ain't no such folks in the world. I don't know as there ever was – except old Granny! I'll keep her in it, 'long of them things she done for me. And anyhow Granny was out of it before we begun to do auto sneakin', country houses, and like that. She was dead by that time. Now, son, you think of

all the *good* folks you know. Count 'em over, what say? Take the other taste out of your mouth, see? There's Elder Hadley first and foremost: keep your eyes on him right straight along: he's like – like a window that's open, and no bars to it, and you see the Lord through it, some way. Then there's the Warden, and Mis' Warden – gee! remember that dinner she sent me in one day I pulled her little tad out the water? There was – "Pippin's eyes kindled – "roast beef, mashed potatoes – " he was checking the items off on his fingers – "fried parsnips, pickles, apple pie – green grass! that was a dinner! And she sent it to me by name, and her thanks, Elder Hadley said, all because I see that kid fall into the cistern and hauled him out. Well! and the kid – some kid that! – and he follerin' me round after that, every chanst he got; and the others, too, and nothin' doin' but I must sing to 'em. And then old Pete! gee! Pete'll miss me, and me him. You make brooms 'longside of a guy for a year and you know what each other thinks; and Pete is *all right!*"

He paused once more, seeing things. No distant vision this time, but the familiar scene on which he had just turned his back – forever, he and the Elder hoped. A long vaulted room, bare and bright; forty or fifty men at work making brooms; the clean, sweet smell of the broom corn almost driving out the prison smell – almost! – near the door, under the watchful eye of an official, two men working together, binding and clipping, himself and Pete. Pete was talking, as he had talked that last day they worked together. He knew Pippin was going out, and he, Pete, was in

for life. Seemed an awful waste, Pippin thought. Just because his mad got away with him once – Hear Pete telling his story in a husky rumble, cheerfully, as a matter of course, this fourteen years now.

"I was cuttin' and rollin' my tobarker on the palm of my hand, and the old woman come along and give me a slap in the face. I shoved her off with my elbow and went on rollin' my tobarker. She come up again and hit me over the head with a stove lifter. I forgot I had my knife in my hand, and I just hit out and jabbed it into her. I hadn't oughter done it, but yet it oughter *been* done, 'pears like."

"Old Pete! And him, you might say, the Warden's right hand now, after ten years in solitary under the old management. Warden Merrow had him out of that in good shape, now I tell you! Takes care of the cows and pigs, sleeps with 'em, or so handy by he could hear if a shoat had the toothache, or like that. Warden sends him off to buy cows, order in his pocket, proud as a peacock; back in three days and he *is* back, on the dot. I tell ye! That's the way!"

Pippin lifts his chin, squares his shoulders once more. "Look at here!" he says. "If I'm goin' to set here all day belly-achin' over the folks back there, I mought as well *go* back there and stay back! It's bein' on my own, you see, after bein' a bunch of corn in a broom, as you might say. Green grass! I wish't I had some folks of my own!"

A silence followed. Pippin studied the road before him,

drawing patterns in the dust with his stick. Mike Hooligan give him that stick: it come from Ireland, and was the pride of Mike's heart; he wouldn't take gold for it. Now wouldn't that – He examined the stick carefully. It was an excellent blackthorn with an anchor carved on the head. Mike had been a sailor, and was "in" for making too free with a marlinspike on a shipmate's head. Finally, holding it up before him, he addressed it as if it were a living creature.

"Well! I ain't got no folks, see? But supposin' I had – what I would say – I'd have 'em dandy, that's what! And – what's to prevent my kind o' keepin' in the back of my head that if I *had* folks, and they *was* dandy – and they would be, for the reason I wouldn't have the other kind – why, I would act accordin' *to*. See? Well, you would! Now lemme tell you about the folks I'd have. Kind o' get 'em set up, see, and then I can carry 'em along, some kind of way, in the back of my head, and they'll do me good and keep out – other things."

Whistling softly, he took off his cap and turned it slowly round and round, considering.

"I'll have me a ma first!" he said. "She'll have a blue dress and a white apron, and – sort o' pink cheeks, and when she speaks, she'll sort o' smile all over her face. 'Sonny,' she'll say, 'sonny, come here and I'll give you a piece of pie!' No! I'm goin' too fast. 'Sonny,' she'll say, 'have you washed your hands? Go wash them good, and *then* come here and I'll give you a piece of pie.' That's the talk. Golly! – think of her carin' whether my hands was clean

or not. She would, though; you bet she would! I've seen fellers as had that kind of ma. We'd have real good times together, Ma and me! I'll have me a pa, too. Lemme see what kind I'll have!" Again he paused, considering, his head on one side, his face grave and earnest. "Tall, I guess, and big; big enough to lick me if he wanted to, but he wouldn't want to, and I wouldn't make him want to, neither. Smoke a pipe, and talk kind o' slow. Fought in the Civil War, I expect Pa would have, and no end of stories to tell. When he came in from – from – I expect he'd be a farmer: that's it! that's it! Nice white farmhouse with green blinds and a garding and white ducks and all the rest of it – Green grass! I wish't I was feedin' the ducks this minute! – Well, when Pa came in, he'd set down and smoke his pipe and then's my time. 'Tell me about Shiloh!' I'll say, or Gettysburg, or some place else. And pa'll take me between his knees – I see the Warden take his boy so, and it stays by me yet – and smoke, and talk, and gee! I'll hear the bullets zip and see the flag – old Pa! he'd be a good one, surely! Then – I wouldn't have no grandmother, because there's Granny Faa; no kin to me, but she give me snuff – but – there's brothers and sisters. How about them?"

Pippin whistled "There was an old man" carefully through three times, weighing, sifting, comparing. At last, "My brother ought to be a baby!" he announced. "That's the best way. See? That way I can watch him grow, and see him cut his teeth, and learn him manners – " he frowned, and drew his breath in sharply; then he shook himself and squared his shoulders. "Didn't I tell

you I'd forgot that?" he said. "But my sister'd be in between. Call her about four; pretty little gal – pretty little gal – "

Once more the vision! An alley, or narrow court, where clothes are drying. A mite of a girl trying to take the clothes down. She cannot reach high enough; she stamps her little foot and cries. A boy comes and takes them down for her.

"Thank you, boy!" she says prettily.

"Say Pippin!" says the boy.

"Pip-pin!" cries the child in a clear, high little voice.

Pippin runs his fingers through his close-curling hair with a puzzled look.

"Now – now – " he said; "when was that? 'Twas after the first things I've forgot, and before the second. Pretty little gal! What was her name now? Polly? No! Dolly? No! Well, anyhow, I guess I'll have my sister like that little gal. Say her name was Dolly – and *that* ain't right somehow, but 'twill do. Now! you understand? Them's the folks I'd have – if I had 'em! See?"

He nodded to the stick, rose from his stone, and stretched his arms with a cheerful gesture; then he took up his bundle, a large bandanna neatly tied (it held a change of linen; the chaplain had offered him a small trunk and a second suit of clothes, but he liked to travel light, and could wash as he went along, he said) and swinging it over his shoulder on the end of his stick, Pippin took the road.

## CHAPTER II

# PIPPIN MAKES A FRIEND

ELDER HADLEY had tried hard to persuade Pippin to commit himself to some definite plan when his time was up. He wanted to give him letters to this friend or that, who would help him to this or that position.

"Give you a leg up!" said the good man. "Why not? I'll guarantee your conduct, Pippin, and they'll be glad to help you, and give you a good start. It may make all the difference in the world to you."

"No offense, Elder," replied Pippin, "but I'd ruther not. I'd ruther walk on my own feet than other folkses', even yours. Long as I've ben here, I've took all you gave, and thankful; but now it's up to me and the Lord, and we'll go on our own. No offense in the world, and thanking you kindly, sir!"

"But what are you going to do?" asked Mr. Hadley.

"Haven't the first *idea*!" replied Pippin cheerfully. "But I'll find the right thing, just watch me! You see, Elder, this is the way I look at it. I was fetched up to a trade, and it was the devil's, wasn't it? Well! So I got a wrong start, you see. Now I've got to find the Lord's trade, the one He meant for me to find, and you can't find unless you look. That's the way I see it. I'm going to take the road and find my own trade that I was meant for: I'll

know it when I see it, don't you have no fear!"

Pippin fared merrily onward, walking briskly. As he went, he talked aloud, now addressing the stick, which he called his pal, now an imaginary comrade, now the beloved figure of the chaplain. This habit of talking aloud had been formed in his prison days. A wholly social creature, he loved the kindly sound of the human voice, and when there was no other to hear he must listen to his own. He even called up the family that his fancy had fashioned, and pictured them walking the road with him, "Ma" in her blue dress, with her pink cheeks and bright eyes, "Pa" brown and stalwart as himself ("only he'd wear a beard, kind of ancient-like and respectable"), the little girl, even the baby. A fanciful Pippin; but "I like to have things interestin'," he would say, "and they can't be real interestin' unless you have somebody to chin with. See?"

He was deep in an imaginary argument with the chaplain concerning the merits and demerits of Chiney Pottle, who had occupied the next cell to his.

"I don't say he's lively company, Elder, nor I don't say he's han'some. Take a guy like that, color of last week's lemon, and he's got somethin' wrong with his liver, most likely, and Chiney sure has. He has pains something fierce; I hear him groanin' nights. I see a yarn in a book about a bird interferin' with some guy's liver: well, Chiney sounded like that. But what I would say, you start anybody else groanin' or belly-achin', any way, shape, or manner, and Chiney's *all there!* Shuts up on his own, and is

orful sorry you – "

"Hi!" said a voice close beside him. Pippin started violently. He had been so absorbed in talk that he had not heard the sound of wheels in the soft dust of the road.

The driver of the wagon pulled up his horse and surveyed him curiously. "Who were you talkin' to?" he asked.

Pippin blushed, but met his questioner's look cheerfully. A thickset, grizzled man with an honest face, now screwed up in a puzzled expression, bent forward over the dasher.

"Who were you talkin' to?" he repeated.

"I was just talkin'!" said Pippin. "I admire to talk, don't you?"

The man looked about, to see if any one else were near: then again at Pippin. "You don't look like a drinkin' man!" he said.

"That's because I ain't!" Pippin smiled.

"Nor yet you don't look loony! Yet there you was, footin' it along, and talkin' nineteen to the dozen. Looks queer, to me!"

"Does it? Now I maintain that it's more natural for a man to talk than to keep still."

The man studied Pippin with shrewd, observant eyes. At last, "Like a lift?" he said.

"Thank'ee!" said Pippin, and in another minute they were jogging along the road.

"Nice day!" said the stranger.

"Dandy! Havin' elegant weather right along. Don't know as ever I see better. As I was sayin'," Pippin turned toward his companion, "talkin' is the way of natur', or so I view it. When a

man keeps still – well, it may mean one thing and it may mean another. He may be gettin' religion: I never spoke for three days when the Lord was havin' it out with me: but then again it may mean that he's plannin' to get out, or that he's goin' home. Why, I've known men that never stopped talkin', mornin' till night, fear they'd lose their minds if they did; in solitary, they was."

The man looked at him sharply. "What are you talkin' about?" he asked in a different tone.

Pippin's eyes met his squarely. "When a thing is so," he said, "it's so. I found the grace of God, and there's no lyin' in mine from now on. I've ben doin' time, sir! I'm just out of State Prison."

"Is that so?" The man was silent, his kindly face grave. "What were you in for?" the question came at last.

"Breakin' and enterin'!"

"Whew!" The gray-haired man drew in his breath with a long, slow whistle. Again he studied Pippin's face intently. "You foolin'?" he asked at length.

Pippin shook his head. "Poor kind o' foolin' I'd call that, wouldn't you? I'm tellin' you the truth."

"Whoa up!" the man checked his horse, and looked about him. A lonely road, no house in sight, no sound in the air save the distant barking of an invisible dog. After scanning the landscape, he took a careful survey of his horse, leaning forward to scrutinize every buckle of the harness; at last his eyes came back to Pippin with a very grave look. "I guess we'd better go into this a mite!" he said. "I ain't accustomed to – no, you needn't

get down! I don't mean that. I want to understand where I am, that's all. Out on parole, are you, or – "

Pippin stared at him; then broke into a laugh. "Or run away? That what you was thinkin', sir? Why, if I'd run away, would I be tellin'? I guess nix! No parole, neither. I'm out for good; served my turn – and had my lesson!" he added in a different tone.

"Breakin' and enterin', too!" the gray-haired man repeated. "How come you to be breakin' and enterin'? Weren't you sayin' something about religion just now? That don't go along with burglary, young chap!"

"Brought up to it!" Pippin replied briefly. "My trade, from a baby as you may say. I've give it up now, and lookin' for another."

"How long were you there? In prison, I mean!"

"Three years. It'll sound queer to you, sir, but I count them three years the best I've had yet in my life."

Glancing at Pippin, and seeing the bright eagerness of his face, the stern look of the elder man softened. "How's that?" he said, not unkindly. "Git up, Nelson!" he clucked to the horse, which started obediently on a jog trot. Pippin drew a long breath, and threw his head back with a little upward glance. One would have thought he was giving thanks for something. Then he looked at his companion, timidly yet eagerly.

"I don't know as you'd care to hear about it, sir," he said, "but perhaps if you had a boy of your own – "

"I had! I'd like to hear, son!"

Pippin breathed deeply again, and squared his shoulders,

settling himself in his seat. "I thank you, sir. I'll make it as short as I can. Well! I hadn't no parents, to know them, and I growed up anyhow, as you might say, kickin' round the streets. Come about ten years old, a man bought my time of the old woman who had a kind of an eye to me – she was no kin, but she was good to me sometimes – and I went with him, and learned sneakin'."

"Sneaking?"

"Sneak-thievin'! Hallways, overcoats, umbrellas, like that! I hated it, but I learned it good. Shopliftin', too, and pocket-pickin'! I could pick your pocket, sir, and you'd never know I'd moved my hands. Your pocket-book is in your inside breast pocket – " the man recoiled involuntarily – "and I'd advise you to change it, for you see, sir, in a crowd, any one in that line that knew his business would slit your coat and pinch it just as easy – Well! So I learned that, and at the same time I was taken on breakin's. I was small up to about twelve, and I did the openin' and gettin' in part. I always hated that. You may not believe me, but I didn't really like any of it much, but it was my trade, and I wanted to do my best; and anyhow – anyhow I had to or I'd been killed."

"What do you mean?"

"Just that! He was that kind of man, the boss who bought my time. I saw him kill a boy – I guess I won't go into that! Well, sir, I grew up big, as you see, and I cut loose from Bashford's gang. I'd learned all he had to teach – all that was worth learnin' – and I was counted a master hand for a young un. Pippin the

Kid – I had other names, too, but no need to go into that. I was as proud of 'em as I am ashamed now, and I guess that's enough. He tried to keep me, but I was fed up with him and his kind, so I licked him in good shape and went over to Blankton, 'crost the river. Along about then I got in with some fellers of my own age, who thought breakin' was the only trade in the world. They were keen on it, and they meant to be gentleman burglars, and get rich, and own the earth, or as much of it as they could cover. They'd been readin' a book about a feller named Snaffles; I called him a mean skunk, but they thought he was all creation; well, they were good fellers, and we chummed up together, and pretty soon I got my pride up and wanted to show 'em that I knew all they did ten times over. *I did!* They had growed up in homes, nice clean homes, with mothers – green grass! mothers that took care of 'em, taught 'em to say prayers, kept their clothes mended; wouldn't that give you a pain? If I saw them boys now, wouldn't I put the grace of God into them with a jimmy – not that I carry a jimmy now!" he added hastily. "I wouldn't, not if it was handier than it is, and it's dreadful handy! Now a file's different!"

"Why is it different?" asked his companion, half smiling at his earnest look.

Pippin's hair curled thick and close all over his head, like an elastic cushion. He ran his fingers through it and produced a small file.

"Anybody needs a file, you see!" he explained. "There's your nails, for one thing; a crook has to keep his nails and hands just

so, or he'd lose his touch – and yet an honest man takes care of 'em too, or ought so to do! This file is a good friend to me!" He replaced it carefully, the other following his motions with wondering eyes. "But a jimmy, you see, sir," turning an animated face toward his companion, "is a crook's tool, and no one else's. Well! Where was I? Oh, yes, I had joined them fellers. Well, we made up a gang, and we got us a name; the Honey Boys we were. Crooks are real childish, or apt to be; I expect most folks are, one way or another, but there's lots of crooks that ain't all there, or maybe they wouldn't be crooks. Elder Hadley would say – but I haven't come to him yet. So we was the Honey Boys, and we was goin' to steal di'monds and jool'ry, and the kings of the earth wouldn't be in it with us."

"My! My!" said the stranger. "An' you lookin' like an honest feller! I'm real sorry – "

"I *am* an honest feller!" cried Pippin. He leaned forward and laid his hand on the other's knee. "Just look me in the eye! I couldn't pinch the Kimberley di'mond, not if it was stickin' out in your shirt front this minute. There's no pinch in me! Just you wait! Now was the time when the Lord began to take a hand. That is, of course He was playin' the game right along, but you couldn't see the cards; now they was on the table, so to say. He'd give me just so much rope, and that was all I was goin' to have. The first big job we undertook I got pinched and run in. Green grass! how mad I was! You see, it wasn't my fault. One of our gang had a hunch against me – I'd licked him one day when he

robbed a kid. Brought home a little gal's bracelet he'd took off her at the movies; wouldn't that make your nose bleed? Well, I made his, I tell you, and he laid it up; kind of Dago he was, with an ugly streak in him. There was four of us on the job – country house job, and him and me was the two to go in while the others kep' watch. So we went through the rooms, did it in good shape too, got quite a lot of swag and didn't wake a soul till just as we was gettin' out the window. He got out first and I give him the bag; just then a door opened into the pantry where we was. He caught me on the sill, give me a shove with all his strength and knocked me back into the room, then he slammed the window and run off. I was too mad to move for a minute, and then before I could get the window open, there was a woman standin' by me – a tall woman she was, in a white gown. She just looked at me and says she, 'Why, it's a boy! Oh, your poor mother!' That took me kind of sudden, because I hadn't no mother, so to say – and I guess she see the way I felt. I believe she would have let me off, but just then her husband came in, and – well, it wasn't to be expected he would look at it any such way. So I was run in, and I got three years."

"In Shoreham?"

"In Shoreham! P'raps you know the place, sir?" Pippin's eyes lightened inquiringly.

The stranger shook his head. "I never was in it, but I've seen some that have been – and more that ought to be. Pretty hard place, I'm told!"

"It used to be!" said Pippin. "They tell tales – and there's things still that don't seem to belong, someway, to the Lord's world. Left-over barber – barberies – no! barbarisms, Elder Hadley calls 'em. That's it, barbarisms! Him and the Old Man – that's the Warden, sir – are doin' of 'em away as fast as they can, but you can't clean a ward with one pail of water. And there's old crooks that wouldn't understand; they – I dono – " Pippin shook his curly head, and was silent, seeing visions. His companion jogged him with his elbow. The story was proving interesting.

"You say you found the Lord there; or the Lord found you! How was that?"

"I found Him!" Pippin laughed joyously. "He didn't find me, and reason good: He never lost me. He knowed where I was all the time. I'll cut it as short as I can. The first year I was no good. I was mad, and I stayed mad: there was nobody I inclined to chum up with. There was some kind o' made up to me, but I didn't take to 'em someway. They was dirty, too. One thing I'll always lay kind to the Honey Boys, they was clean. Brought up clean, you see; learned to wash, and brush their hair, and that; mothers learned 'em. Green grass! and think o' their – Well, anyhow, I took to that like a cat to cream; I've never been dirty since, nor I can't abide dirty folks. I just grouched off by myself, and planned what I'd do when my time was up; nobody thought I was any good, and I wasn't. All I thought of was how to get out, and then get back at Chunky – he was the Dago guy I was tellin' about. I'd study over it all day long. I wouldn't kill him, I thought, just

smash his face (good-lookin' guy, great on the girls, an' they on him), or break his back so he'd never walk again, or —*I'm tellin' you this because I am ashamed to tell it*, and because I want you should know what the Lord raised me up out of. I tell you I'd sit there after workin' hours, hunched up in my cheer, never speakin' to a soul, just feelin' him under my hands, feelin' his flesh go soft and his bones crunch – "

Pippin stopped abruptly, flushing scarlet. "Lord, forgive me!" he said simply.

"Amen! – Well?" The gray-haired man was looking expectantly at him. "Go on, young feller! You can't stop there." Pippin gave a gulp and went on.

"The chaplain used to come and see me once or twice a week, and he give me papers to read – nice papers they was, too; I liked 'em – and said I was in a bad way and didn't I repent, and I said no, I didn't, and he'd shake his head and say, 'Hardened! hardened!' kind of sad, and go away. He'd ben there a long time, and it had soaked into him, as you may say. He'd lost his spring, if ever he had any. Well! come one day – I'll never forget that day! bright, sunshiny day it was, just like this – I went to chapel as usual. I liked to go to chapel, 'count of the singin'. I'd rather sing than eat, any day. I never noticed the words, you understand, but I liked the tunes, and I sang out good whenever I got a chance. So I went in with the rest, like a sheep, and sat down, never lookin' up. I'd got a piece of string, and a feller had showed me a new knot, and I sat tyin' it, waitin' for the singin'. I never took no notice of

anything else. Then a voice spoke, and I jumped, and looked up. It was a strange voice, and a strange man. Tall and well set up, he was, kind o' sandy hair and beard, and eyes that looked right through you and counted the buttons on the back of your shirt. Yes, and his voice went through you, too; it wasn't loud nor yet sharp, but you couldn't help but listen. '*The Lord is here!*' he said. He let that sink in a minute; then, 'Right here,' he said, 'in this chapel. And what's more, you left Him behind you in your cell. And what's more, you'll find Him there when you go back. *You can't get away from Him!*' I can't tell you all he said, but every word come straight as a rifle bullet. I wasn't the only one that sat up, I tell ye! 'Twas different talk from what we was used to. He spoke about ten minutes, and it didn't seem three; then he stops short and says, 'That's enough. Now let's sing! Hymn 464!' Well, there was some sung, like me, because they liked it, and there was a few here and there was professors, but half of 'em didn't pay no attention special, just sat there. After the first verse he held up his hand. 'I said *sing!*' says he. 'And when I say *sing* I mean *sing!* Never mind whether you know how or not; *make a noise!* I ain't goin' to sing alone!'

"Gorry! I can see him now, standin' there with his head up, clappin' two hymn books together to beat the time and singin' away for all he was worth. In two minutes every man in the place was singin', or crowin', or gruntin', or makin' what kind of noise was give him to make. Yes, sir! that was Elder Hadley all over. I let out my voice to the last hole; I expect I bellered like a bull,

for he looked at me kind o' quick; then in another minute he looked again, and that time he saw all there was to see. I felt it crinkle down to my toes, so to say. Bimeby, as we were goin' out, after service, he come down and shook hands with us all, every man Jack, and said somethin' pleasant. Come to me, he looks me right through again, and says he, 'Well, boy, what are *you* doin' here?' I choked up, and couldn't say a word. It wasn't so much what he said, mind you, as the way he said it. Why, you was a real person, and he *cared*; you bet he cared! Well, sir, 'twould take the day to tell what that man did for me. He told me that 'twas true, the Lord *was* there. And that – that *He* cared too. It took a long time to get that into my head. I'd been kicked about from one gutter to another; nobody ever had cared – except old Granny Faa; she give me snuff sometimes, when she was sober, and she kep' Bashford off me as much as she could – but still —

"Well! I'll bile it down. Come one day, somethin' started me wrong; I don't know what it was. My head ached, and the mush was burnt, and I didn't give a tinker's damn for anything or anybody. I did what I had to, and then I sat down and just grouched, the way I told you. Crooks is childish, as I said; maybe other folks is too, I dono. Well! So Elder Hadley come along, and he says, 'Hello, Pippin! What's the matter? You look like you'd been frostbit!' he says. I tried to fetch a grin, but it wouldn't come. 'Nothin' doin', Elder!' I says.

"'What's the matter?' he says again, his kind way.

"'Hell's the matter!' I says. I used language, them days; never

have since, but I did then.

"He sits down and looks me over careful. 'What's "hell"?' he says.

"'Everything's hell!' I says: and then I biled over, and I guess that mush was burnt all right. He listened quiet, his head kind o' bent down. At last he says, 'How about takin' the Lord into this, and askin' Him to help?'

"'Nothin' doin'!' I says. 'There's no Lord in mine!'

"'*Stop that!*' says he. I looked up; and his eyes was like on fire, but yet they was lovin' too, and – I dono – somethin' in his look made me straighten up and hold up my head. 'None of that talk!' he said. 'That's no talk for God's boy. Now, hark to me! You like me, don't you, Pippin?'

"'You bet I like you, Elder!' I says. 'There's nothin' doin' in your line here, but you bet I like you. You've treated me white, and you're a gentleman besides.'

"'Now,' he says, slow and careful, 'what you like in me is just the little bit of God that's in me. The little bit that's in you finds the little bit that's in me, do you see? And *likes* it, because they belong together. There's another bit in the Warden, and another in Tom Clapp there, though I'll own he doesn't look it (and he didn't); and there's a bit in everybody here and elsewhere. And that's not all! Go you out into that field yonder and sit there for an hour, and you'll find other little bits, see if you don't! And see if they don't fit together.'

"He pointed out of the window to a field a little ways off: I

could see the buttercups shinin' in it from where I sat. I stared at him. 'Go along!' says he. 'What do you mean?' I says. 'I mean *go!*' he says. 'I've the Warden's leave for you whenever I see fit, and I see fit now.' I looked at him, and I see 'twas true. I got up kind o' staggerin', like, and he tucked his arm into mine, and he opened the door and we went out. Out! I'd been in there a year, sir. I don't believe you could guess what 'twas like. He marched me over to that field – we clum over the fence, and *that* done me a sight of good – and told me to set down. Then he give me his watch – gold watch and chain, handsome as they make 'em – and said, 'Come back in an hour. Good-by, boy!' and he went off and left me there. Green grass! do you understand? He never turned round even. He left *me* – a crook, a guttersnipe, a jailbird – out there alone in the sunshine, with the buttercups all round me."

Pippin's voice broke. Mr. Bailey produced a voluminous bandanna handkerchief and blew his nose loudly. There was silence for a few moments. Pippin went on.

"Then, after a while, I found the Lord, like the Elder said. He come all round me, like the air; I couldn't get away from Him. A little bird come and tilted on a bush by where I was sittin', and he sang, and there was a bit of the Lord in him, and he said so, over and over, plain, and I heard him. And the sun shined on the buttercups, and they had a bit too, and appeared like they knowed it, and kind o' nodded and was pleased; and the leaves on the trees rustled, and they appeared pleased, too. And like a voice said inside me, 'It all belongs, and you belong too!' and all

at once I was down on my knees. 'It's the Lord!' I says. 'I've found Him, and He's the Whole Show!'"

# CHAPTER III

## PIPPIN FINDS A TRADE, "TEMP'RY"

THERE was a silence when Pippin finished his story. He had no more to say. He sat erect, looking straight before him, with parted lips and shining eyes. Jacob Bailey glanced at him once or twice, and cleared his throat as if to speak, but no words came. Again he looked his horse over, slowly and critically, as if he rather expected to see something out of place.

"That strap's worked a mite loose!" he muttered. "He crabs along so, you can't keep the straps in place."

Finally he blew his nose with much deliberation, and turned toward his companion. "Young man," he said, "I'd like to shake hands with you!" He held out a brown, knotty hand, and Pippin grasped it eagerly. "I believe every word you say, and I thank the Lord for you. I – I'd ought to have trusted you from the beginning, same as your face told me to, but – "

Pippin shook his head emphatically. "I couldn't ask no more than what you've done. I thank you, sir! I thank you much!" he cried. "You've listened real kind and patient, and it sure has done me good, gettin' this off my chest, like; a heap of good! It has so! And how could you tell? I've seen crooks looked like – well, real holy and pious, different from me as a dove from a crow, and they

wasn't, but the reverse. Behooved you be careful, is what I say."

"Especially being guardian of the poor!" said Jacob Bailey. "Yes, son, I run the Poor Farm, up to Cyrus. It's as pretty a piece of farm land as there is in the state, and a pleasant place whatever way you take it. Now – you say you are lookin' for a trade? How about farmin'? Ever think of that?"

Pippin pondered. "I never had any experience farmin'," he said, "but I love to see things grow, and I love the smell of the earth, and like that. I should think 'twould be a dandy trade all right."

"Well!" Jacob Bailey's eyes began to shine too. "Now, young feller, I tell you what! I – I take to you, some way of it. I don't take to everybody right away like this; I'm some slow as a rule; but – what I would say is this: I'm kinder short-handed just now at the Farm, and unless you find something you like better, why, you might come and have a try at that."

"You're awful good!" cried Pippin. "Say, you are, Mr. Bailey, no mistake. I feel to thank you, sir. As if you hadn't done me good enough, lettin' me blow off steam, without this!"

"Nuff said about that!" Bailey spoke with the gruffness of a shy man. "You done me good too, so call it square. Well, you think it over, that's all. No hurry! I'm there right along, and so's the Farm; and farmin' is as good, clean, pleasant a trade as a man can find – or so I hold, and I've farmed thirty years."

"I'll bet it is!" Pippin climbed down from the wagon, and the two men shook hands again, looking each other in the face with

friendly eyes. "I'll bet it is, and I wouldn't wonder a mite but I might take you up some day, Mr. Bailey. I only want to make sure what it's meant I should do, and if it is farmin' I'd be real pleased, I wouldn't wonder. And anyway, I'll look you up some day, sir. I will, sure."

"So do! So do, son! Good luck to you, Pippin, if that's your name. Git up, Nelson!"

Pippin returned the greetings with enthusiasm, and Jacob Bailey drove off with many a backward wave and glance.

"Real nice man!" said Pippin. "Ain't it great meetin' up with folks like that? Now behooves me hasten just a mite, if I'm goin' to get to Kingdom before sundown! He said 'twas about a mile further. Hello! What's goin' on here?"

Pippin was not to get to Kingdom before sundown. He stopped short. A man was lying beside the road, motionless, his feet in the ditch, his head on a tuft of grass: asleep, it seemed. An elderly man, gray and wizened, his face seamed with wrinkles of greed and cunning. Near him on the dusty grass lay a scissor-grinder's wheel. Pippin bent over him, looked, looked again, then knelt down in the dust.

"It's Nipper Crewe!" he said. "He's – no, he isn't! Hi, there! Crewe! Hold up! What's the matter?"

"Some kind of fit!" said Pippin. "There's no liquor in him. Here, Crewe, wake up!"

He shook the man gently: the lids quivered, opened; the bleared eyes wandered, then fixed, and recognition crept into

them.

"Pippin!" he said faintly.

"That's right! It's Pippin, all right. How you feelin', Nipper?"

"What's the matter?"

"Search me!" said Pippin cheerfully. "You appear to have had a fit, or something. You'll come out all right."

"Where is it?"

"Where's what? Your wheel? Right handy by; I expect it dropped when you did, but it looks to be all O.K. Took up grindin', eh? Good trade, is it?"

A cunning look crept into the dim eyes.

"Good enough. Gets you into the house, and then – " his breath failed; he lay back, gasping, in Pippin's arms.

"Now wouldn't that give you a pain?" muttered Pippin. "Nipper," he said aloud, "you're feelin' bad, ain't you? Now here we be on a good road leadin' to a town only a mile off. There's three things to do: I can carry you a little ways at a time till we get to a house; or we can set right here and wait till somebody comes along; or I can lay you so you'll rest easy – as easy as you can – and go and fetch somebody. Now – "

"Don't go!" It was only a whisper, but the groping fingers caught Pippin's sleeve and held it convulsively.

"Go! Not likely, if you feel that way!" Pippin sat down cheerfully. "It's nice to sit down, anyway. Say we put your head on my knee – so! That's easier? Good enough! Why, we've been – not to say pals, Nipper, but we sat side by each for a matter of

a year. It's not likely I'd leave you, is it?"

The man shook his head feebly.

"I ain't comin' out!" he whispered. "I'm goin'! I'm used up, Pip!"

"Sho! What a way to talk!" Pippin glanced round him uneasily. "Somebody'll be comin' along in a minute, and we'll get you into the city, into a nice hospital – "

The man shook his head feebly, but vehemently.

"No you don't!" he said. "No more hospital in mine! They had me in one, and I shammed well till they let me out. No more of that for me! I'll die on the road."

No one came; it was a lonely road at best, and at this twilight hour the Kingdom folk were at their suppers. Impossible to leave the man, who was evidently dying! Pippin rolled up his coat and put it under the sufferer's head. Still looking about him with keen anxious glance, he spied a tiny runnel near by, wet in it one of the two new handkerchiefs the Warden's wife had given him, and bathed the gray face which seemed to sharpen as he watched it. He bent lower.

"Crewe! Nipper! Have you got any folks? Can I take any message?"

"No! All gone!"

"Nipper!" Pippin's voice grew eager, his face glowed. "You have got some one! You've got the Lord, and He's got you. You're goin' to Him. Ain't that great? Listen!"

The sick man raised himself suddenly.

"The wheel!" he said. "Take the wheel, Pippin! You was always white – I bought it; I leave it to you – "

He was gone. Pippin laid him down gently, and covered his face with the hankerchief.

"Poor old Nipper!" he said. "But there! He's better so. He hadn't hit it off, as you may say, Nipper hadn't. I never knew much about him, but I knew that much. Give him a new start, some place where there's no rum, and he might do great things. Now what comes next? I expect we've just got to wait here till somebody comes along. I couldn't leave him this way, what say?"

Pippin sat down by the roadside. He made no pretense of regret for the departure of Nipper; seeing that he hadn't hit it off here, what object in his remaining, bein' he was let to go?

"Nipper's ma, now, may have thought he was a nice kid, and no doubt done her best by him, but if she'd had any idea how he was goin' to look an' act when he growed up, why that lady would have been discouraged, she sure would. Hark! there's somebody comin' at last!"

The disposal of poor Nipper's earthly part was a tedious business, but it was accomplished finally. Pippin followed the coffin to its resting place as in duty bound. The authorities questioned him pretty sharply, but finally let him go with an admonition not to go sittin' round the ro'ds, but get to work at something. There had been one doubtful moment by the roadside, when the man who picked them up (he chanced to be a selectman of Kingdom) asked who owned the wheel. Pippin

looked at him with puzzled eyes, and fingered his file. Why not? he was saying to himself. He knew scissor-grinding, knew it from A to Z. Why not take hold, now, since it had dropped right into his hand, so to say? Yes, but how did he know – he, Pippin, was on the straight now, forever-and-ever-give-glory-amen, and Nipper was a crook from 'way back. How did he know – but then again, *did* he know? 'Twas all right to stand straight, but no need to straighten so far you fall over backwards! See? Mebbe this was what the Lord had in view, he wouldn't wonder!

"I expect it's mine!" he said.

The man looked him over sharply. "You expect it's yours?" he repeated. "What do you mean by that?"

"It's mine, then!" said Pippin, decidedly, and laid his hand on the wheel. It was a leading, he decided. The man stood irresolute a moment, but Pippin smiled at him, and nodded assurance. "It's all right, boss!" he said. "It's mine right enough, see? And I'll see to it. What we've got to do now is to get this poor old guy buried, what?"

Finally, here was Pippin with a trade ready to his hand.

"Temp'ry!" he assured himself. "I don't feel that the Lord picked out scissor-grindin' for me, but while I'm lookin' about, 'twill keep the pot a-b'ilin', and while I'm grindin', I'll grind good, just watch me!"

Pippin had spent for supper and lodging one of the dollars Elder Hadley had given him, but he had no idea of spending the other. Sharp-set for breakfast, he carried his wheel through

the main street of Kingdom, his quick eyes glancing from side to side, and stopped before a door bearing the legend, "Bakery and Lunch." The window beside the door was polished to the last point of brilliance; the loaves, rolls, pies and cakes displayed within were tempting enough. "This for mine!" said Pippin, and stepped in.

"Mornin'!" he said to the crisp, fresh, rosy-cheeked woman behind the counter. "Nice mornin', ain't it?"

"It sure is!" was the reply. "What can I serve you?"

"Well! I was wonderin' if we could do a little business, you an' me. Say I sharpen your knives and you give me a mite of breakfast; how would that suit?"

The woman looked him over carefully. "You a knife-grinder?" she asked.

"*And* scissors! Wheel right outside here. I'll grind while you get the coffee. That's straight, isn't it?"

"Pears to be! What do you ask for a bread knife?"

"You tell me what you're in the habit of payin', and I'll ask that. I'm new to the trade, and I aim to please. Here, sonny!" as a black-eyed urchin bobbed in from the bakery, his arms full of loaves. "Gimme your jackknife and I'll sharpen it just for luck, so your ma'll see I mean business! Sing you a song, too! Hand it over. My! that's a handsome knife!

""There was an old man – ""

The stroke succeeded. The jackknife brought to murderous sharpness, the mistress of the bakery declared that the others could wait. Soon Pippin was enjoying to the full what he declared a breakfast that a king would cry for: eggs and bacon, coffee and rolls, all excellent of their kind.

"I wonder why they *call* it coffee over there!" he confided to his stick. "'Cause if this is, that ain't, you see! But 'twas good as I deserved! That's the way they look at it, I take it; and I expect they're right. No, ma'am, not another morsel. I'm full as much obliged to you. That sure was a good meal! Now I'm ready to sharpen all the knives and scissors in the county. I'll stand my wheel close to the door where it won't be in folks' way, and then just watch me!"

The baker's wife brought an apronful of knives and scissors, and Pippin set to work, blessing the Old Man, who had put him in the tool shop for six months and made him keep the tools in order while old Grindstone was laid up with rheumatism. Old Grindstone! Pippin wondered what his real name was. "They called him Grindstone, account of a song he used to sing when he was grindin'. He said 'grinstone' where I say 'grindstone,' and I always maintained I had reason, because it grinds; but he thought otherwise, and he'd grind away – wonderful hand he was at it; in for twenty years, and ground all the time except when laid up as he was now and again; arson, though he says he never knew there was any one in the house, and anyway they was got out alive, though some damaged – well – so he'd grind away, the old man

would, and all the time he'd sing in a kind of dry, wheezy voice:

"Grin, grinstone, grin!  
Grin, grinstone, grin!  
When you're out  
You roam about,  
But it's otherwise when you're in – grin!  
It's otherwise when you're in! Grin!  
It's otherwise when you're in!"

Pippin's voice rang out round and full; his wheel turned merrily, the blades flashed in the sun. A little crowd gathered round him, watching the whirling wheel. Looking up, he saw some children among them. Was this quite the song for them? He checked himself and broke out with

"There was an old man  
And he was mad – "

The children clustered nearer.

"Sing another!" said a little flaxen-haired girl in a pink pinafore.

Pippin looked at her approvingly, and reflected that she was the very moral of the "little gal," that little sister he had – or as good as had, almost! He ran over his repertory: most of the prison songs were not what her ma would choose – certainly not! But – there was one the cook's boy used to sing – how did that go?

"Dum de rido! dum de rido!

I had a little dog, and his name was Fido – "

"What's that?" Something seemed to speak in his heart. "Why not sing one of the Lord's songs? Well, I *am* a duffer! And tryin' to think of some that would do!"

He threw back his head, and let out his voice in a shout that made the listeners start:

"Oh, Mother dear, Jerusalem,

When shall I come to thee?

When shall my sorrows have an end,

Thy joys when shall I see?"

The baker's wife came to the door and stood, wiping her eyes with her apron. The baker, flushed and floury, left his ovens and came to peer over her shoulder, open-mouthed; people appeared in the neighboring windows and doorways, and the crowd on the sidewalk thickened silently. Pippin neither saw nor heard them; his voice poured out in waves of song, longing, rejoicing, triumphant.

"Thy gardens and thy goodly walks

Continually are green,

Where grow such sweet and pleasant flowers

As nowhere else are seen."

"You bet they do!"

"Right through the streets with silver sound  
The living waters flow,  
And on the banks on either side  
The trees of life do grow."

"There, ma'am, there's your knives and scissors as good as I can do 'em, and I hope it's pretty good, to pay for that good breakfast. I surely do."

"Good land, young man!" cried the baker's wife. "Who learned you to sing like that? Why, you'd sing the heart out of a stone statue!"

Pippin laughed joyously, eyes and teeth flashing together.

"I expect the Lord did, ma'am!" he said. "Anyhow it's His song, and you have to sing it as good as you can, ain't that so? Don't know of a job goin' beggin', do you, ma'am?"

"What kind of job?"

"Most any kind! I'm lookin' for a trade to work in with my grindin' for a spell. I'm handy, var'ous ways: make brooms, set glass, carpenter or solder, I've done 'em all."

"Ever been in a bakery?"

"Not yet, but I'd admire to, if there was a chance."

Pippin's face kindled, and he looked eagerly from the baker's wife to the baker himself who was considering him gravely. He was a stout, kindly-looking man; his right hand was bandaged, and he wore his arm in a sling.

"I'm in need of an extry hand myself," he said slowly, with a glance at the bandage. "I don't know – " He looked at his wife, who nodded emphatically.

"Step inside a minute, young man! Move on, boys, if you'll be so good! You're cluttering up the whole sidewalk."

The crowd slowly dispersed, one or two neighbors lingering to question the good woman of the shop about the young stranger who sang so wonderfully. Who was he? Where'd he come from? Good-lookin', wasn't he? Their own knives would be none the worse for goin' over —

Inside the neat, fragrant shop, with its tempting display of coffee cakes, brown and varnished, of shapely loaves and rolls, cookies and doughnuts, the baker questioned Pippin. At first the questioning promised to be brief, for when, in response to "Where do you come from?" he heard, "State Prison!" the good man shook his head resolutely.

"I guess that isn't good enough!" he said, not unkindly. "I'm sorry, young feller, for I like your looks, and you sing like a bird; but – my shop has a good name, and – "

"Hold on!" Pippin laid a hand on his arm. "I know how you feel, sir! I'd feel the same in your place; but it would be because I didn't know. I won't hurt your shop, nor you! I'm *straight*! Lemme tell you!"

He told his story briefly, the baker listening with anxious, doubtful looks.

"So you see," he ended, "I couldn't go on the crook again, not

if I wanted to, and I don't!"

Still the comfortable-looking baker shook his head. "I've heard pious talk before," he said; "it don't always hold good. I'm afraid – " he rose, as if to close the interview; Pippin rose too. His eyes roved round the pleasant shop, and came back, meeting the baker's squarely. "This is a dandy place!" he said slowly; "and you have the look of a dandy person, if you'll excuse the freedom. I'd like to work for you, and – I'd hate – to think – that you wouldn't help a guy that wanted help and wanted to work for it. I think you make a mistake; but it's your store, and what you say goes."

With a little bow and another regretful look around him, Pippin turned toward the door. A moment, and he would be gone. His hand was on the latch.

"Hold on!" said the baker. "I didn't say positive. I'm not a hard man by nature, only – "

"I bet you ain't!" said Pippin. "That's why I say I think you make a mistake – " He turned back with his smile that seemed to warm and brighten the whole shop. "Try me, Mister! Try me a week, and see for yourself. No satisfaction, no pay, as it says on the medicine bottles. And I couldn't pinch anything off'n you now if I wanted to. I've put you wise, and you'll be on the watch, see?"

The baker laughed in spite of himself. "We'll make it a week, then!" he said. "But not a word to my wife of where you come from. She's timoreous, and she wouldn't sleep a wink all night."

"Now!" said Pippin, "I wouldn't break that good lady's rest,

not for all the elegant things in this bakeshop."

## CHAPTER IV

# PIPPIN GOES TO CYRUS

PIPPIN always looked back on the weeks he spent in Kingdom as one of his good times. Folks were so everlastingly good to him; they couldn't hardly have been better, he thought, not unless they had been your own. Mrs. Baxter, the baker's wife, was like – well, call it an aunt. Yes, she sure was like a good aunt, and equally so was her uncle; as for Buster, the boy – well, that was Pippin's moral of a boy. Buster would grow up a fine man, you see if he didn't. He'd *better*! As to looking for the grace of God like he promised Elder Hadley, why, he didn't have to. It stuck right out of 'em, like – like electric lights!

Pippin lodged with the Baxters and paid his board in work, lighting the fires in the morning, heating the ovens, sweeping out the shop, and doing a "hand's turn" in many directions. Mrs. Baxter declared Providence sent him just at that time, when Father had caught his hand in the oven door and lamed him so; she did not know what upon earth they would have done without Pippin. Indeed he showed himself so handy that after the first week Mr. Baxter offered him a permanent job, declared he would make him the smartest baker in the county. Pippin promised to think it over. He loved the smell of new bread; he loved to handle the dough, and rake out the glowing coals; yes, it

was a pleasant trade, it sure was; but yet – but yet —

Other offers came to him. Among the crowd who had gathered to hear him sing that first day were Father O'Brien of St. Bridget's and Elder Stebbins, the Methodist Minister. Both were music-lovers. Both made it in their way to drop in at the bakery in the course of the next few days, and invite the young scissor-grinder to sing in their choir while he sojourned in their midst. Was he a Catholic? Father O'Brien asked. No? More was the pity, but let him come and sing in the church, and 'twould be good for him and the rest besides. Pippin assented joyfully. He would be real pleased to come, and sing the best he knew how. Then came Elder Stebbins, ostensibly to buy a coffee cake for supper. Was his young friend a Christian? "You bet!" replied Pippin, wrapping up the cake with deft fingers. "I'd have to be, wouldn't I? Unless that the Lord had seen fit to have me a Chinee, or like that, and I'm just as glad He didn't!"

Mr. Stebbins hoped his young friend was also a Methodist; but Pippin shook his head; he guessed not. They were all good, he guessed; he presumed he belonged to every church there was, in a general way, you know. Mr. Stebbins looked grave, and said that was not a very safe doctrine. He hoped his young friend would join their service of song on Sunday evening; it might be helpful to him, and would assuredly minister to the enjoyment of others. Pippin assented joyfully, after ascertaining that service would be over in time for him to set his sponge to rise.

So on Sunday, and other happy Sundays, he went to St.

Bridget's in the morning, and sang stately old Latin hymns and chants; inhaled incense (which he thought real tasty, but yet nothing to what the Lord could do with a field of white clover), kneeled reverently with the rest, listened respectfully to Father O'Brien's excellent little sermon, and liked it all. And the evening found him behind the green moreen half-curtains in the Methodist meetinghouse, pouring out his soul in gospel hymns and assuring his hearers that they would meet beside the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river, in such tones and with such feeling that every woman in meeting wept, and there was a mighty blowing up of nasal trumpets among the men. Elder Stebbins' discourse was rather long-winded and rambling, but when Pippin lost the thread, he would take refuge in a psalm, or recall one of Elder Hadley's brief, pistol-shot addresses, or think how the buttercups shone in the field that day he found the Lord. And here, too, he loved it all, every bit, and came home in a glow of happiness and fervor that was enough to make the dough rise at the sight of him.

The baker was puzzled at first by his new assistant; as the good man himself expressed it, he didn't get on to Pippin's curves. There were things that jarred – for a time – on his sensibilities; as thus. They were together in the shop one evening, and a customer came in for his evening loaf; the shoemaker it was, Jere Cargo, a man of dry, critical humor. He commented on the loaf; it was a shade deeper brown than usual.

"One minute more, young man, and that loaf would have been

burnt, that's what!"

Pippin scanned the loaf carefully. "Is that so?" he said. "Now! Why, I was pleased with this batch, I thought the Lord give me an elegant bake on it: that's what I *thought*! But if folks likes 'em pale, why, pale it is!"

The shoemaker stared; Mr. Baxter coughed apologetically as he accompanied him to the door, and – on a summoning jerk of the head – followed him outside.

"What have you got there?" asked the shoemaker. "A preacher? Where'd you get him?"

"No, he isn't a preacher, though I dare say he might have been, if he'd had education. He's just pious, that's all. It's his way of talking."

His tone was conciliatory, but the shoemaker sniffed.

"Just pious!" he repeated. "Look out for 'em, I say, when they're just pious. They'll bear watching. Where'd you say he come from?"

"He's traveling!" Mr. Baxter knew his customer, and had no idea of telling him whence Pippin came. "He's a scissor-grinder by trade, and a master hand at it. I hurt my hand last week, and he come along just in the nick of time and has been helping me since. Real good help he is, too."

"Humph!" said Jere Cargo, shrugging his dry shoulders. "You look out for him, that's all I say. Sharp-looking chap, I call that; he'll bear watching."

Returning to the shop, Mr. Baxter coughed again, this time

with his eye on Pippin, who was arranging a tray of creamcakes with a lover's ardor.

"Ain't them handsome?" he cried. "I ask you, Boss, ain't them handsome? And dandy to eat – green grass! Mis' Baxter give me one. *They* drop fatness all right, no two ways about that!"

Here Pippin broke into song, proclaiming joyously that he was a pilgrim, he was a stranger, he could tarry, he could tarry but a night.

"Do not detain me,  
For I am going – "

"Ahem!" said Mr. Baxter, "I was thinking, Pippin – "

Pippin came to attention instantly. "Yes, sir! You was thinkin' – "

"I was wondering – " the baker spoke slowly, in a tone half admonitory, half conciliatory, and wholly embarrassed – "whether maybe you – just in a manner, you understand, just in a manner – was in the habit of making a mite too free with – with your Maker, so to speak."

Pippin's eye grew very round. "Meanin' – with the Lord?" he said.

"Yes! with – with – as you say, with the Lord!" Mr. Baxter was a godly man, but his Deity lived in the meetinghouse and was rarely to be mentioned except within its four walls. "For example," he went on, "I was wondering whether it was exactly

a good plan to bring the – the Almighty – into the bakeshop."

"Gorry!" said Pippin. "I'd hate to leave Him out of it!" His eyes, still round and astonished, traveled slowly about the pleasant place. Three sides of it were filled with glass counters displaying a wealth of pies, pumpkin, apple, mince and custard, with cakes of every variety, from the wedding cake which was Mr. Baxter's special pride, to his wife's creamcakes, eagerly sought by the neighborhood for ten miles round. Behind the counter, on neat shelves, were stacked the loaves of bread, white and brown, the crisp rolls and melting muffins. The shop looked as good as it smelled; "ther nys namoore to seye!"

"I'd hate to leave Him out of it!" repeated Pippin. "Dandy place like this! Don't know as I get you this time, Boss!" He turned bewildered brown eyes on Mr. Baxter, who coughed again and reddened slightly.

"What I meant – " the baker ran his eye along a pile of loaves, and straightened one that had slipped out of place – "isn't it making rather free with – ahem! what say?"

"Oh!" Pippin's face lightened. "I get you! Now I get you, sir! Lemme tell you! Lemme tell you just the way it is." Fairly stammering in his eagerness, Pippin leaned across the counter, his eyes shining. "You see, sir, I was raised a crook!"

"Hush!" Mr. Baxter looked over his shoulder. "No need to speak out loud, Pippin. Just as well to keep that between ourselves, you know."

"I was raised," Pippin repeated in a lower tone, "a crook, and I

heard – and used – crooks' language. Nor it isn't only crooks!" he cried, smiting the counter. "Where I was raised, 'most everybody had the name of God on their tongues every hour in the day, but not in the way of praisin' Him; no, sir! There's plenty folks – good folks, too – they can't name hardly anything, whatever be it, without 'God damn' before it. You know that, Mr. Baxter. You know what street talk is, sir." The baker nodded gravely. "Well, then! That's what I was raised to, and it run off my tongue like water, till – till I come to know Elder Hadley. I'm tol'able noticin', sir; I expect crooks is, when they're all there; you have to be, to get on. I noticed right off the way he spoke, clean and short and pleasant, no damnin' nor cussin'; and I liked it, same as I liked clean folks and despised dirty ones. That was all there was to it at first. But yet I couldn't stop all of a sudden; it took time, same as anything does, to learn it. Then – come to find the Lord, like I told you, sir, why – I dunno how to put it. I'd ben askin' Him all my life to damn everything, this, that, and the other, folks, and – everything, I say; I didn't mean it, 'twas just a fool way of speakin', but what I thought was, supposin' I was to ask Him to help right along, 'stead of damn, and *make* it mean something! What say? You get my idea, Mr. Baxter, sir?"

Mr. Baxter nodded again. "I get it, Pippin. I won't say anything more."

"But yet – but yet – " Pippin was stammering again, and halfway across the counter in his passion of eagerness. "I get you, too, Boss! I do, sure thing. You mean it brings some folks up

short, like that gen'leman that stepped in just now? He's no use for me, I see that right off; I wondered why, and now 'tis clear as print. I'd oughter sized him up better. Take that kind of man, and he may be good as they make 'em, prob'ly is; but yet – well – you say the Lord's name *except'* in the way of cussin' – I don't mean that he's that kind himself – but —*it's like he stubbed his toe on the Lord's ladder, see?*"

"You've got it! you've got it!" the baker was nodding eagerly in his turn. He laughed and rubbed his hands. "Stubbed his toe on – on the Lord's ladder! I – I expect I stub mine a mite, too, Pippin, but I won't say another word."

"'Cause we're awful glad the ladder's there, ain't we, sir?" Pippin's voice was wistful enough now.

"Ahem! Yes! yes!" The baker took out a clean red handkerchief and rubbed an imaginary spot on the shining glass. "That's all right, Pippin. Do what comes natural to you; only – what *are* you doing now?"

There was a little stove in the shop, behind the middle counter, used for "hotting up" coffee or the like when people were in a hurry. Pippin, after a glance at the clock, had taken some pennies out of the till, and was laying them carefully on the top of the stove, which glowed red hot.

"What are you doing?" repeated the baker. Pippin grinned.

"Tryin' an experiment!" he said. "There was a quarter missin' yesterday, Boss, you rec'lect, and ten cents the day before, and so along back."

"Yes!" Mr. Baxter looked serious. "I'm afraid, Pippin – "

"Don't be afraid, sir! Just watch me!" Pippin tested the pennies carefully and taking them up one by one on the blade of his jackknife, deposited them on the counter. "I've noticed along about this time every night – there they come! Don't say a word, only watch!"

He retired behind the counter as the door opened and two children came in, a boy and a girl. They were poorly dressed, and there was something furtive and slinking about their looks and manner, but they came forward readily, and the girl asked for a five-cent loaf of white bread, putting at the same moment five pennies on the counter, close beside those which already lay there. As Pippin was tying up the bread, the girl began to ask questions. How much was them cookies? Were they molasses or sugar? What was the price of the custard pie, and when was it baked?

"Baked this mornin'!" Pippin replied cheerfully. "Cost you a quarter, and worth a dollar. What – "

A piercing howl interrupted him. The tinkle of metal was heard, and the boy sprang back from the counter and danced about the shop, crying and spluttering, his fingers in his mouth. Pippin vaulted the counter in an instant.

"What's the matter, Bo?" he asked kindly. "Hurt your finger? Lemme see!" The boy clenched his fist, but Pippin forced the fingers open, not ungently. "Why, you've burnt 'em!" he announced. "My! my! that *must* hurt! How in the name – why,

you must have made a mistake and took up some of Mr. Baxter's pennies. Yes, sir, that's what you done. Didn't you know that bakeshop pennies was hot? They be, sure thing! There goes Sissy!" as the girl, seizing her loaf, slipped noiselessly out of the door. "Now you foller her, Bo, and go home and tell your ma what I say. *Bakeshop pennies is hot!* Think you'll remember that? Here's something to help your mem'ry!"

Leading the boy to the door, he gave him a carefully modulated kick, and with a friendly, "So long, Bo!" returned to the shop.

"I've had my eye on them kids for two three days!" he explained. "Smart kids! If I met 'em in the city, I should say they was in trainin'. I'll set Father O'Brien on 'em; they go to his gospel shop. I see 'em there."

"I never should have thought it!" said the baker, and he shook his head sadly. "Those little kids! Why, the boy doesn't look to be more than eight years old, and the girl only a year or so older."

"That's the time to start 'em!" Pippin spoke with emphasis. "If you're aimin' to make a first-rate crook, you've got to start in early with him. But Father O'Brien'll see to 'em; he's smart as a jimmy, Father O'Brien is."

"We won't tell the wife!" said Mr. Baxter. "She is nervous, and 'twould ha'nt her, and keep her awake nights. One comfort, they're not Kingdom born, those kids. They belong to them French folks over by the dump, down Devildom way."

Weekday mornings Pippin spent mostly in the bakery,

working, singing, whistling, all with a hearty will. After dinner he would take his wheel and go his way through the pretty shady streets of the country town, or out along the green roads that led from it in various directions. When he came to a promising looking corner with houses set within comfortable reach of one another, he would stop, and leaning on his wheel, would put up his shingle, as he called it: in other words, sing his grinding song. He had made it up, bit by bit, as the wheel turned, humming, under his hands. Here it is: but you should hear Pippin sing it!

Knives and scissors to grind, oh!  
Have 'em done to your mind, oh!  
Large and small,  
Damaged and all,  
Don't leave any behind, oh!

Knives and scissors to grind, oh!  
Every specie and kind, oh!  
Bring 'em to me,  
*And* you will see  
Satisfaction you'll find, oh!

"Yes, sir, made it my own self!" he replied to Elder Stebbins' questions on the song. "I don't know how I done it. I expect it was a kind of miracle. I sang the first line through two three times, and lo ye! the next one turned right up matchin' of it. Now that isn't nature, you know, but yet it's *right*, and it fits straight in.

When a thing comes like that, I call it a miracle. What say?"

"Very interesting, my young friend! Do you – a – might it perhaps be better to substitute 'species' for 'specie'? The latter means, as you doubtless are aware, current coin; and – "

"Great!" said Pippin. "Current coin is what I'm after every time, so I get it honest. Specie'll do for me, Elder!"

Before he had sung the song through once, doors and windows would be opening, housewives peering out, children running to gather round the magic wheel, listening open-mouthed to the singer. It was all play to Pippin; wonderful, beautiful play.

"I tell you," he would say, "I tell you, seems though just to breathe was enough to keep gay on. Over there to Shoreham – I dunno – I expect the air got discouraged, some way of it. They'd open the windows, but the outside air was shy of comin' in – like the rest of us! But out here in the open – and things lookin' like this – green grass! I'm happy, and don't you forget it!"

Sometimes he got a lift on his way. Solitary drivers, plodding along the road, and seeing the trim, alert figure ahead stepping out briskly with its wheel, were apt to overhaul it, and after a glance at Pippin's face would most likely ask, "Goin' along a piece? Like a lift?" and Pippin, with joyous thanks, would climb eagerly in, all ready to begin a new chapter of human intercourse.

Once, so clambering, he found himself beside a tall man, brown-eyed and brown-haired, who drove a brown horse. Pippin's eyes were brown, too, but they danced and sparkled like running water; the stranger's eyes were like a quiet pool under

shady trees, yet there was light in them, too.

"Goin' far?" he asked. His voice was grave, and he spoke slowly.

"Four Corners was what I'd aimed at," said Pippin, "but if you ain't goin' that way – ?"

"Goin' right past it, on my reg'lar route! I do business there to the store. I see you carry your trade with you, same as I do!" He jerked his head backward toward a neat arrangement of drawers and tiny cupboards which half filled his roomy wagon. "Nice trade, I expect?"

Pippin laughed his joyous laugh. "Real nice, only it isn't mine, not for keeps, I would say. 'Twas a – well, you might call it a legacy, and you wouldn't be far wrong. It come right to my hand when I was lookin' for a job, and I took it up then and there. Yes, sir, 'tis a good trade, and a man might do well at it, I don't doubt, but yet I don't feel it to be my own trade that I was meant for. So I go about seekin' for that one, and workin' at this one, and helpin' in the bakery – Baxter's to Kingdom; I'm boardin' there – helpin' there mornin's an' evenin's."

The brown eyes studied him carefully.

"About twenty-one years old, son? Twenty-two? I thought about there! Well, what have you been doin' up to now?"

Pippin told him, much as he had told Jacob Bailey. The brown man listened attentively, murmuring, "Sho!" or "Ain't that a sight!" occasionally to himself.

"So you see," Pippin concluded, "I want to be right down sure

I've got the real thing before I settle down."

"Sure!" the other assented. "That's right!"

"And I keep feelin' at the back of my head that what I want is work with my hands; not this way, but farmin', or like that. The smell of the earth, and to see things growin', and – don't you know?"

The stranger assented absently.

"Elegant!" he said. "Farmin's elegant, when you've got the gift, but – ever thought of goin' to sea?" he asked; an eager look came into his face.

Pippin shook his head. "Not any!" he said. "I see the sea once, an' honest, it give me the creeps. Cold water mumblin' over the stones, like it wanted to eat 'em; and brown – kind o' like hair it was, floatin' about; and every now and then a big wave would come *Ssss!* up on the shore – well, honest, I run! I was a little shaver, but I've never wanted any more sea in mine!"

The brown man laughed. "You'd feel different, come to get out in blue water!" he said. "Smell the salt, and get the wind in your face, and – gorry! I'm a sea-farin' man," he said simply. "I spent good part of my life at sea. I'm runnin' a candy route at present – have a pep'mint! Do! 'Twon't cost you a cent, and it's real good for the stummick – but where I belong is at sea. Well! you can't do better than farmin', surely. Would you like a temp'ry job pickin' apples? I dunno but Sam – "

"There's more to it than that!" Pippin was speaking absently now; there was a wistful look in his eyes. "There's all that, the

smell of the ground, and – and buttercups and – things; but there's more to it. There! You seem so friendly, I'll say it right out. I want to help!"

"That's right!" murmured the brown man. "Help! that's the stuff!"

"I want to help them that needs help. I want there shouldn't be so many kids in cellars, nor so many boys go wrong. Green grass! Tell you what!" Pippin's eyes were shining now, and his hands clenched. "I've been sayin' along, this month past, I'd forget all that time when I was a kid; I'd forget everything up to where I found the Lord. I kind o' think there was where I was wrong, mister – ?"

"Call it Parks!" said the brown man. "Calvin Parks is what I was christened, and I'd like to know your name, son."

"Pippin!"

"Meanin' – ?"

"Just Pippin!"

"Christian name or surname?"

"All the name there is!"

"But Pippin ain't no given name; it's an apple!"

"That's right! But it's all the name I've got. Fur back as I remember, Granny Faa called me it, and Dod Bashford called me 'pup' or 'snipe.' That's all I have to go by, so you see how 'tis!"

How should you remember anything more, Pippin? You were a baby when Granny Faa, then still able to travel, living in and out of the tilt cart which was home to her, found you by the

roadside with your dying mother. The woman was almost past speech. "Don't roof me!" she muttered, flinging her arms out as the old gypsy lifted her. "Don't roof me!" and so died. Granny Faa felt no responsibility for the corpse. She rifled the body methodically, but found nothing of value. The shoes were better than her own, so she put them on. As for the baby, she took it partly because it smiled in her face and made something stir in that withered region where her heart was still alive, but more because her son wished it. Gypsy Gil (short for Gilbert), bent over the child delightedly; he snapped his fingers, and the baby crowed and jumped in the withered arms that held it. "Hell! ain't he a pippin?" said Gil. "Say, kid, ain't you a pippin?" "Goo!" said the baby. That was all. It was very simple. During the week Gil had still to live, he was "wrop up," as his mother said, in the child, and declared twenty times a day, with a new oath each time, that it was a pippin sure enough. Then, a knife thrust in a drunken scuffle sent Gil wherever he was to go; but he had named the baby. The old woman, mourning like a she-wolf, tended the child grimly because Gil had liked it; called it, for the same reason, by the name-that-was-no-name which he had given it. It was all simple enough, you see, had Pippin but known.

"That's mighty queer!" the brown man ruminated. "I don't know as ever I heard of any one without two names to him, and yet it sounds all right, too. Pippin! Well – well, son, I will say you look it. And now, here we are at the Poor Farm, and I'm goin' in here in my reg'lar way."

"Poor Farm! is this a Poor Farm?"

Ever since it came in sight, Pippin had been looking with a lover's eye at the broad low house of mellow brick, standing back from the road under its giant elms, its neat garden skirts gathered round it, its prim, trim gravel path leading to its white steps and green fan-lighted door.

"This a Poor Farm!" he repeated.

"Sure! Jacob Bailey's idea of one, and I wish there was more like it."

"Jacob Bailey!" cried Pippin. "Why, green grass! Why – why, ain't this great? He's a gentleman I'm acquainted with; he asked me to come and see him, and I promised I would. Well, if this ain't a leadin', I never see one. Mr. Parks, I'm pleased enough at meetin' up with you, just your own self; but add on your bringin' me here – why, I don't know how to thank you, sir!"

"Nothin' at all! nothin' at all!" said Calvin Parks. "I'm just as pleased myself. Think of your knowin' Jacob! Well! well! He's pure fruit and cane sugar, Jacob is, not a mite of glucose in his make-up. Here he comes this minute!"

Such a welcome as they had! Good Mr. Bailey, coming out to welcome his old friend, was quite overcome with pleasure and amazement at finding his new one, too. He had been telling the woman about him ever since that day, he assured Pippin. Only this morning he had said he wished that young feller would turn up, and she had said she wished to goodness he would for there was nothing in the house that would cut except Aunt Mandy's

tongue.

"One of the inmates!" he explained. "Poor old lady! M' wife was a mite worked up, and she *is* cuterin', times when her rheumatism ketches her. Come in! Come in, the two of ye! Make ye welcome, Pippin, to Cyrus Poor Farm!"

He led them through the neat vestibule, through – with a glance of pride – the chilly splendor of the parlor, with its embossed plush rockers and lace curtains, into the kitchen.

"We'll find the woman here!" he said. "Kitchen's home, I always say."

It was a large, brick-paved room, with four broad windows facing south and east. Most of one side was taken up by a black cavern of a fireplace, which sheltered grimly the shining trimness of a modern cookstove. There was plenty of room for the settles on either side, and warm though the day was, two or three old people were sitting there, rubbing their chilly knees and warming their poor old hands. They looked up, and their faces sharpened into lively curiosity at sight of the visitors; but the girl who sat at the window never glanced at them, only crooned to the cat in her lap. The blind man in the corner, weaving willow baskets, listened, and his face lightened at the sound of the brown man's voice.

"Howdy, folks!" he said. "Well, I am a stranger, as you were saying. Say we have a pep'mint all round, what? Or a marshmallow? Uncle Ammi, I've got a treat for you, come all the way from Cyrus!"

While he gossiped cheerily with the old people, a sweet-faced woman came from an inner room and was introduced by Jacob Bailey as "m' wife."

"This is the young man I was tellin' you about, Lucy!" he said. "Cur'us he should happen along to-day, what say?"

"That's right! Only I should call it providential myself, Jacob. Be seated, won't you, Mr. – now Jacob told me your name! – Pippin – to be sure! Be seated, Mr. Pippin. We'll be having supper soon, and you'll set right down with us, I hope."

"Thank you, ma'am! If there was some knives I could be sharpenin', to earn my supper, sort of, I should be tickled to death to stay. Or if there's anything else you'd rather – what I aim at is to please, you see. Them scissors the young lady has in her lap don't appear to be what I'd call real sharp, now."

Mrs. Bailey laid her hand gently on the girl's fair head.

"Flora May can't have sharp scissors!" she said. "She's good as gold, but she's a little wantin', and she might cut off her lovely hair, mightn't you, Flora?"

The girl raised a sweet, vacant face. "I might cut off my lovely hair!" she repeated in a musical singsong. "My lovely, lovely hair! My – " The quiet hand touched her again, and she was silent.

"After supper we'll have some singin'!" she said. "Flora May admires to sing."

"Does she?" Pippin looked earnestly at the young face, pure and perfect in form and tint. "It's like a lamp when you've blown it out!" he thought.

Now Mrs. Bailey brought an apronful of knives and scissors. Pippin retreated to the yard where he had left his wheel, and was soon grinding and singing away, oblivious of all else save flying wheel and shining steel. Glancing up after a while, he saw all the inhabitants of the Poor Farm gathered in the doorway, listening, he paid little heed; folks always listened. That was the way the Lord had given him, to pay folks for bein' so pleasant to him as they always was. He was real thankful.

"Look at the aidge on this knife, will you? Hardly you can't tell which is it, and which is air; see?"

He broke out into a wild, sweet air:

"Oh! carry me 'long!  
Dar's no more trouble for me.  
I's gwine away to a better land,  
Where all de niggers am free.  
Long, long hab I worked,  
I'b handled many a hoe;  
I'll turn my eye before I die,  
And see de sugar cane grow."

Something moved near him. He glanced down and saw the girl Flora May. She had crept nearer and nearer, till now she was almost at his feet. She sat, or rather crouched, on the ground, graceful as a creature of the woods, her blue print gown taking the lovely lines of her figure, her masses of fair hair, neatly braided, wound round and round her head. Such a pretty head!

Just a little too small, poor Flora May! not for grace, but for other things. Looking at her, Pippin saw, and wondered to see, the face which he had likened to a dead lamp, now full of light, the pale cheeks glowing, the red lips parted, the blue eyes shining.

Yet somehow – what was the matter? They did not shine as other eyes shone; those brown ones, for instance, of the brown man towering in the doorway, or the twinkling gray eyes of Jacob Bailey.

"The lamp's burnin'," said Pippin, "but yet it's went wrong, some ways, but even so – green grass! she's a pictur!"

Coming to the end of his song, he smiled and nodded at the upturned face.

"Sing more for Flora May!" cried the girl. "Sing more!"

"Sure!" said Pippin. "Wait till I get a start on this aidge, Miss Flora May – Now! Here's what'll please you, I expect:

"Joseph was an old man,  
An old man was he;  
He married sweet Mary,  
The Queen of Galilee.

"As they went a-walking  
In the garden so gay,  
Maid Mary spied cherries  
Hanging over yon tree.

"Mary said to cherry tree,

'Bow down to my knee,  
That I may pluck cherries  
By one, two, and three.'

A long way back to the cellar, and Granny Faa crooning over her black pot – in her best mood, be sure, or she would not be singing the Cherry Tree Carol. A far longer way back to an English lane in early summer, the gypsy tilt halted under a laden cherry tree, the gypsy mother singing to her little maid as she dangled the cherries over her head. A long, long road to go, and yet as yesterday, as a watch in the night.

"O eat your cherries, Mary,  
O eat your cherries now,  
O eat your cherries, Mary,  
That grow upon the bough." —

"Now, Mr. Pippin," called Mrs. Bailey from the doorway, "it's plain to be seen there'll be no supper in this house till you give over singin'. I'm full loath to ask you to stop, but my cakes have to be eat hot, or they're no good."

# CHAPTER V

## CYRUS POOR FARM

ANOTHER lifelong possession for Pippin was that first supper at Cyrus Poor Farm. "I never forget a good meal!" he was wont to say. "It's one of the gifts, or so I count it; we've no call to forget 'em, just because we've eat 'em up. I think about 'em oftentimes, travelin', and enjoy 'em over again."

The long table was set in the wide doorway of the shed, "for coolth," Mrs. Bailey said. All around were piles of fragrant wood, birch and oak, with here and there a precious little store of apple wood, fruit of Jacob's thrifty pruning and thinning. The table itself, in the full light of the westering sun, glowed with many colors: rosy pink of boiled ham, dull brown of baked potatoes, rich russet of doughnuts, all set off by the vivid red of the Turkey cotton tablecloth.

Pippin drew a long breath as he surveyed his plate, heaped with the solids of this repast, the lighter eatables ranged round it in nappies shaped like a bird's bath. "Lord, *make* me thankful!" he ejaculated. "If I wasn't thankful, Mr. Bailey, sir, I'd ask you to take me by the scruff and heave me out, I would so!"

"Well, son, well!" responded Jacob comfortably. "We aim to set a good table, m' wife an' I; glad it suits you. You see," he added, "we have advantages over many other institutions.

Some of our inmates is payin' boarders, sir, payin' boarders, and behooves us set palatable food before 'em. Why, some of us pays as high as two dollars a week, don't we?" He smiled round the table. Pippin flung a quick glance, saw two sharp noses proudly lifted, two pairs of eyes gleaming with satisfaction, while the serene dignity of the blind man's countenance proclaimed him third of the paying boarders.

"I've allers paid where I boarded!" said Miss Lucilla Pudgkins.

"I would scorn to do otherwise!" said Aunt Mandy Whetstone.

"And others that doesn't pay in money pays in help!" Jacob Bailey went on calmly; "so you see we're all comfortable! A little more of the ham, Pippin? Pass your plate!"

"I don't know," said Pippin, complying, "I don't really know as I ever eat a ham to compare to this, Mr. Bailey. It's – it's *rich*, that's what it is!"

A new voice spoke from the bottom of the table, that of a fat old man with a game leg. "I claim," he said huskily, as if there were crumbs in his throat, "that it's the second best ham I've ever ate here."

"The *third* best!" said the blind man calmly. "The fire got low on me one night, and the smoke was checked. We had a ham last year and one five years ago that was some better than this."

"Green grass!" ejaculated Pippin in amazement. "Do you mean to tell me – "

"We're right proud of Mr. Brand here to the Farm!" said Mrs. Bailey gently. "Wantin' his sight has give him wonderful powers

of smell and taste – and touch, too. He has smoked our hams and bacon for twenty years, haven't you, Mr. Brand?"

"I have, ma'am!" said the blind man proudly.

"We make good profit out'n 'em," said Jacob. "Far and near, folks wants our hog p'dooce. Mr. Brand is money in the bank for the Farm and for himself, too."

As they left the table, a little cold hand was slipped into Pippin's.

"Sing!" said the girl. "Please sing for Flora May!"

"Why, sure!" Pippin was beginning; but Jacob Bailey broke in kindly but firmly:

"Not the minute he's finished his supper, he can't sing, Flora May!" he said. "Beside, I promised old Mr. Blossom to fetch Pippin in to see him."

"Old Mr. *who*?" cried Pippin.

"He said you'd know the name," chuckled Jacob. "This way, Pippin! He's pretty feeble, the old man is. Keeps his bed mostly, now."

For one moment Pippin hung back. Another! First Nipper, and now – Old Man Blossom, too! Old boozier, old snipe! Was he goin' to meet up with these folks right along, think? Wouldn't he ever get rid of 'em?

"Shut up! If the Lord can stand 'em, I expect you can!" and Pippin followed Mr. Bailey into a clean bare little room, where, propped on pillows, lay a clean old man. He looked eagerly up as Jacob entered. "You got him with you?" he asked querulously.

"You got Pippin? I heard his voice – "

"You did, Daddy Blossom!" Pippin advanced and took the hand that was plucking nervously at the coverlet. "You heard Pippin, and now you see him! Well! well! And who ever thought of meetin' up with you here, Daddy? And sick, too! but if I had to *be* sick, I wouldn't ask no pleasanter place – " He turned to smile at Jacob Bailey, but Jacob had disappeared, and the door was closing softly.

"Pardoned out!" whispered the old man in his weak fretful voice. "Pardoned out, 'count of age and sickness. I ain't a well man, Pippin; my vitals is all perished; but that ain't what I want to say. I want you to help me! Say you'll help me, Pippin! I was always friends with you over There – " he nodded vaguely – "and now I'm old and sick, you'll help me, won't you?"

"Sure!" Pippin drew a stool beside the bed and sat down. "Put a name to it, Old Man! What can I do for you?"

"Find my little gal, Pippin, my Mary: you rec'lect her? Sure you do! She used to bring me candy, and poke it in betwixt the bars with her little hand – flowers too, she'd bring: sure you rec'lect little Mary, Pippin?"

Pippin did not, but there was no need of saying so.

"What about her, Old Man?"

"I want her! I ain't a well man, nor yet I ain't goin' to be well, and I want my little gal; I want you to find her, Pippin, and bring her to me."

"Sure!" said Pippin comfortably. "Where would I be likely – "

"I don't know!" cried the old man wildly. "That – " he gave a brief and vivid sketch of his wife's character – a wholly inaccurate sketch – "never would tell me where she sent her. She died herself, and a good job, too, and she sent word to me that Mary was well and doin' well, but now she'd got shet of me she was goin' to keep her shet. Now what a way that was to talk to a father! If little Mary knowed where I was, she'd come like a shot, but she don't know, nor I don't know – You find her, Pippin! You rec'let the little gal: you'll find her, won't you?"

"Sure!" said Pippin. For some moments he sat absently, running his fingers through his brown curls. Taking out the little file, he considered it unseeingly, tried to whistle a tune on it, and failing, returned it to its hiding place. Then, waking from his reverie, he put the old man through a sharp examination. The answers were feeble and uncertain, but he learned something. Eighteen year old, or mighty nigh it. Yes, red hair, or – naw! it might be darker by now, like her ma's was; color of – there! 'member old Mis' Jennings that lived just over the way from There? Well, sir, she had a heifer, kind o' red brown, like a hoss chestnut when you break it open; and her skin the white of one, too, kind o' soft and creamy; and her eyes like her'n too (the heifer's, Old Man Blossom meant), big and soft and blue with a kind of brown in 'em too – there! he'd know her, Pippin would, by the dimple right corner of her little mouth. Cur'us thing that was. When she wasn't more than a baby, 'bout two year old, he gave her a little sunshade – she see her Ma's and hollered for it,

and he said she should have one of her own; pink it was, and she carried it like the Lady of the Land, sir. But bimeby she tumbles down, and the p'int of it went right through her cheek. That's right; instead of a scar, it made a dimple, paint him sky blue striped if it didn't. Prettiest little gal – hair would curl round your finger like 'twas a stick —

The whisper broke into crying, and Pippin had to soothe him and sing "The Factor's Lady, or the Turkish Garland," all through to restore tranquillity. But when Pippin rose to go, the old man clutched him with trembling fingers.

"Whisper!" he said. "Whisper, Pippin! The way you go to work – the way I'd go to work if I wasn't perished in my vitals" – he consigned his vitals to a warm region – "is, take Brand along!"

"Brand?" repeated Pippin.

"The blind man! he has eyes in his fingers. He can – he can tell the way the wind blew yesterday by feelin' of it to-day. If I'd had Brand I'd never been nabbed, and I'd be rollin' in gold to-day, and goin' in my automobile to find my little gal. But you get Brand along, Pippin! talk him round first, he's never been in the sportin' line, but – "

"Hold on! hold on!" Pippin loosed the clutching hands gently, and laid the poor old sinner, still gasping and whispering back on the pillow. "Old Man, you're makin' one big mistake. I'm not in the line any more; I guess not!" He threw back his head and laughed joyously. "You didn't know I found the Lord, did you? Well, I have, and there's no more sport in mine. But – I'll tell you!

I'm runnin' a wheel at present, knife-grindin', you know. Why – I've got Nipper's wheel! Nipper was a pal of yours, wasn't he?"

"Nipper's wheel? Where's Nipper? Is he here?"

"He's dead, and before he went he gave me his wheel. It's a real handy – what now?"

He paused, for the old man, after staring at him a moment, broke into a fit of cackling, wheezing laughter.

"Nipper's wheel!" he gasped. "He's got Nipper's wheel, and he's found the Lord, and he isn't in the line no more! Gorry to hemlock, this is rich! You took me in complete, Pippin, you did so! Go on! You're all right!"

He grew purple in the face, and his eyes rolled. Pippin stepped to the door.

"Mr. or Mrs. Bailey!" he called quietly. "Mr. Blossom is having a fit!"

Mrs. Bailey, hastening in, surveyed the situation with practised eyes; lifted the patient, thumped his back gently, administered remedies, enjoined silence.

"You've ben talkin' too much, Mr. Blossom; it always brings on a spasm, and you hadn't ought to. Now lay down and take a nap, that's a good soul."

Obeying a glance of her kind gray eyes, Pippin slipped out, leaving the old man still gasping and gurgling. Many more of them kind, Pippin reflected, would carry the old geezer off, sure thing. He was on the blink, no two ways to that. "Loony too! Hear him laffin' fit to bust when I told him Nipper was dead!"

Now what do you know about that? That's loony, you see, that is! Behooves me find that little gal pooty quick if I'm goin' to find her. And how – in – Moses' meal-chist – am I goin' to find her?"

Pondering deeply, he went back into the kitchen. The table had been cleared and covered with its decent between-meals cloth of red and white check; beside it, facing the door, sat Miss Amanda Whetstone and Miss Lucilla Pudgkins, diligently mending stockings. These ladies, as has been seen, were paying boarders, and "demeaned themselves accordin'," as they would have said. They helped Mrs. Bailey in housework, mending, etc., but always with a touch of condescension and the understanding that it was "to accommodate." In person they were well contrasted. Miss Whetstone was a thin active little woman, with eyes like black glass and thin lips puckered in a sub-acid smile. She was always neat as wax, in dresses of black and white striped print, the lines so near together that they seemed to waver constantly. ("Throw her away!" Flora May often besought her "Uncle Bailey." "Please throw her away! She dazzles!") But every one knew Aunt Mandy had a black silk in her trunk, and a tatting collar that the minister's wife might have been glad to possess.

Miss Lucilla Pudgkins was billowy in figure and was addicted to purple print, with a string tied round the middle to show that she knew where the waist line ought to be. Her face might have been made by a clever boy out of a large red apple; and if Aunt Mandy's eyes were like glass, Miss Lucilla's were like china, two blue china buttons plumped into the red, on either

side of the queerest button of a nose that ever was seen, Pippin thought. She wore a rather pathetic "front," which was seldom quite straight; in fact, she was a pathetic figure altogether, poor Miss Lucilla, but she did not know it, so all was well. She never forgot that at sixteen she had been Queen of the May at a Sunday school festival, and her trunk still held, under the scanty stock of petticoats and aprons, the white muslin frock of her great day. Miss Lucilla was a little greedy, and somewhat foolish, though not so foolish as Aunt Mandy thought her; the attitude of the two towards each other was usually an armed truce, except on occasions of general conflict, when they never failed to combine against the common enemy – usually Mr. Wisk, the fat man, who was greedy too.

The two ladies looked up eagerly as Pippin entered. How was Mr. Blossom? Miss Whetstone asked. He sounded something awful. Was it the death spasm, did Mr. Pippin think? They had been expecting it any day, and wishing his folks would come. Wasn't it awful?

"He's all right!" Pippin reassured her. "Choked up a bit, but Mis' Bailey knows how to handle him. He'll rest easy now, poor old skeezicks. How long has he ben this way, ladies?"

"Sit down, do, Mr. Pippin!" Miss Whetstone hastened to make room for him beside her. "That cheer is comfortable; set right down, now do so! He has been having those spasms ever since he come, a month and more ago, but none so bad as this. Be you kin to him?"

"Me? Not much!" Pippin shook his head vigorously.

"I only asked because one likes to know, you know, about the folks one has to associate with. Of course you can keep yourself to yourself, and oftentimes so do, but any one ought to be sociable when they can, I claim."

"Sure thing!" murmured Pippin absently, his eyes glancing over the speaker's head to where Flora May sat rocking in her corner, her hands folded in her lap, her eyes fixed on him with a curious intentness. She seemed to be calling him, he thought, though she made no sound. He nodded, with a friendly glance which said "Presently!" Impossible to go at this moment, for Miss Whetstone evidently had more to say. She was bridling, and making little clucking noises in her throat, expressive (to herself, at least), of delicacy of feeling. Now speech came, precluded by a genteel titter, and accompanied by a glance round the room, which took in the blind man quietly whittling splints in his own special corner, and Flora May, rocking by the window, the latter with a compassionate depreciatory shrug of Miss Whetstone's shoulders.

"We aim to be as select here as circumstances allow," said the lady. "Of course it is a town institution, I am well aware of that; but Cyrus is a select neighborhood, and there's no one feels any call to take boarders *except* Mr. Bailey. You can see for yourself how it is, Mr. Pippin. The house is large and his own family small. He is well connected, Jacob is; his mother was own cousin to mine, and so – we thought, me and Miss Pudgkins, we'd like you

to understand just how we come to be here. Not but what we could of went anywhere we pleased, if we *had* pleased!"

Pippin was aware of a certain wistfulness in the two pairs of eyes fixed on him. Now wouldn't that give you a pain? Poor old ladies!

"I bet you could, ma'am!" he responded heartily. "I expect you could pass all your time visitin' round, and find your welcome runnin' ahead of you like a houn' dog. But if you searched the country over, I bet you wouldn't find as pleasant a place as this. You show your taste, is what I would say."

The wistful eyes brightened as they exchanged glances. There was a point to make with this young man; it had to be made with every newcomer. People *must* know that they were here for convenience' sake, and that alone!

"I knew he would understand!" cried Miss Pudgkins. "He has that way. I see it first thing. And bein' as it is, Mr. Pippin, we try to keep up the *tone*, you see. Now Mr. Blossom – you say he's no kin to you? Well, to speak my mind – and Miss Whetstone holds with me – Mr. Blossom is *not* just the kind Cyrus folks is accustomed to. Has he – has he led a good life, are you aware?"

Pippin smiled at her. "Well, no, lady, he ain't; not exactly to call it *good*, you know; not what *you* would call good, though there never was as much harm in the Old Man as in lots of others. But anyway," he added, "he's on the blink now, you see, liable to croak 'most any day, I should judge, so it don't so much matter, does it?"

"Liable to – I beg your pardon?"

"I beg yours. No expression to use to ladies. Pass away is what I would say. I expect his trick is about up, what say? Dandy place to pass away in, too, when your time's come. Excuse me, ladies, I see Mr. Bailey – "

Pippin saw also his opportunity of escape, and with a little bow of apology, and appreciation, slipped out of the door, thinking to join his host who had just walked past it. But Jacob Bailey had already disappeared in the shed, and it was Flora May's turn. She had followed Pippin, and now stood before him, looking up at him with clear, lovely, empty eyes: empty, yet with that curious shining intentness he had noticed before.

"Sing now for Flora May!" said the girl.

"I will!" Pippin assured her. "Just the moment Mrs. Bailey gets through with Mr. Blossom, we'll have us a reg'lar singsong, we will so. Real fond of singin', ain't you, Miss Flora May? Say, that's a dandy necklace you have on! Them beads are carved elegant, they sure are."

Flora May lifted the beads and glanced carelessly at them. They were of some hard nut wood, each one adorned with flowers and fruit in delicate carving: a pretty ornament enough.

"Uncle Brand made them for me," she said. "Take them!" She had slipped the necklace off and was pressing it into Pippin's hand. He took it and examined it admiringly, then put it gently back over the girl's head.

"I thank you a thousand times!" he said. "I couldn't wear 'em

myself, not travelin' like I am, you see, and I like to see 'em round your neck, they look so pretty. It's young ladies ought to wear joolry, you know."

He smiled at her, but her eyes met his anxiously.

"You are not goin' away?" said the girl. "You are goin' to stay? I'll give you my eagle feathers if you will stay. I'm tired of the folks here."

"Now what a way that is to talk! You're just jokin' though, I see. It *would* be a joke if you was tired of Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, wouldn't it now?"

"I'll give you the white duck, if you'll stay!" she went on in her sweet monotonous voice, which yet was strangely eager. "Uncle Bailey gave it to me, it's mine. I'll give you everything I've got if you'll stay."

At this moment, to Pippin's infinite relief, Mr. Bailey emerged from the shed. He laid his hand on the girl's shoulder; instantly her whole form relaxed and she drooped into her customary attitude of listless indifference.

"Anything wrong, little gal?" asked Jacob Bailey, kindly. Flora May shook her head and turned away with a pettish movement of her shoulders.

"She was wantin' me to sing for her," said Pippin. "I will, too, Mr. Bailey, sir, soon as ever you and Mis' Bailey are ready. I don't mean to brag of my singin', don't you think that, but it's what has ben give me, and about all I have to give when folks is so dandy to me as what you folks have been here. So if agreeable, sir, say

the word and I'll tune up!"

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