

LITTLE FAITH.

BY MRS. WALTON, AUTHOR OF
"CHRISTIE'S OLD ORGAN."

(From Sunday at Home.)

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

Little Faith was about to shut the door behind her and venture out into the darkness, when she heard a footstep coming down the street. It came nearer and nearer. It was a man's footstep, and he was stumbling along, as if he were drunk. Then he began to scream and to shout, and Faith drew back into the house, and shut the door before he came up. She dared not venture into the darkness alone. She had heard that bad people were about at night; what if she should meet any of them?

No, she dare not go till the morning; she would sit on the stairs till it was light.

So she crept back again, and sat on the lowest step, and leaned her head on her hands. The wind blew through the draughty old house, and underneath the badly-fitting door, and made her shiver as she sat there. She was very cold, and very sad, and very tired.

But little Faith had a Friend. Yes, lonely and desolate as she was, she had still a Friend to whom she could turn. He had been her Friend for a long time now, and as she sat there, alone in the darkness, she whispered softly to herself some words which Mother Mary, as she always called Mrs. Robinson, had taught her:

"What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit!
Oh, what needless pain we bear!
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness,—
Take it to the Lord in prayer."

"Yes," she said, when she had finished the hymn, "I've never told Him nothing about it: what-ever will He think of me?"

So she knelt down on the step and said in a whisper, "Oh, God, I want to tell you, please, all about it. Mrs. Gubbins says I'm a-taking the bread out of the bairns' mouths, so please I'm a-going away, and will you help me to find somebody as wants a little servant; and will you please take care of Tommy, and Fanny, and the baby, and don't let Mrs. Gubbins slap 'em; for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

Then Faith got up, and felt much happier. She knew her Friend would help her. She had carried it all to the Lord in prayer, and now she must not fret about it any more. "That was what Mother Mary used to say," said

Faith to herself, "She told me I was to take all my troubles to the Lord, and then leave 'em with Him, and not bother about 'em no more. She said it was a sin and a shame to doubt Him, and to think he wouldn't give us aught, if we asked Him, and it was good for us."

So little Faith tried to forget her sorrow, and, by-and-by she fell asleep.

How long she slept she did not know, but when she awoke the grey morning light was creeping under the door, and peeping through the keyhole, and making the dirty, dusty walls of the old staircase visible once more.

Faith started up and opened the door, and then went out into the rain and mud.

It was still quite early, and she had gone down several streets, and felt as if she were a long way



INDIAN MENDING A CANOE.

from home before the church clock struck five. The streets were almost empty; no one passed her except a solitary policeman, or a doctor returning from a patient who had sent for him in the night, or a workman whose work lay a great distance from his home.

But presently, as time went on, and it got near six o'clock, the streets were nearly filled with working-men, in their white jackets, hurrying along to their work.

Then shutters began to be opened, and fires to be lighted, and smoke to come out of the chimneys.

Still Faith walked on. She wanted to get to quite a different part of that large town, where nobody knew her, and where she would never meet Mrs. Gubbins. She was very faint and hungry, for she had no supper the night before. She had one penny in her pocket, which Mother Mary had given her long ago, and which she had kept for her sake. Faith had almost thought of giving it to her father, as she called John Robinson, the night before, when he was so unhappy about having taken so little money. But it would not have made much

difference, and she was glad now that she had kept it, for it would buy her some breakfast. And then she must begin to look for a place where she could be little servant.

But first, she must make herself tidy; no one would take an untidy little girl, she thought. For this purpose, she went down an alley, where was a pump in the middle of the square, and washed her hands and her face. Then she took a comb from her pocket, which had belonged to the stall, but which her father had given her the day before, because it was broken and could not be sold. With this she combed her hair and plaited it neatly up again. Mary Robinson had taught her to be very clean and tidy, and her little frock though it was full of patches and darns, had not a single hole in it. Since Mother

Mary had died, Faith had mended it for herself. She looked a very clean, tidy child when she came out of the alley and set out in search of a shop at which to spend her penny.

She found a baker's shop at last, but it was not open; the baker and his family had overslept themselves. Faith



THE LAUNCH.

was thinking of going on to look for another shop. But she turned so faint and sick that she was obliged to sit down on the baker's step; she felt she could walk no further until she had had something to eat.

At last the door was opened and a boy came out and took down the shutters. Then Faith walked into the shop.

"Well, what's wanted?" said the baker's daughter, as Faith held out the penny.

"Please," said Faith, in a faint voice, "I want the biggest cake you've got for a halfpenny."

"You look half-hungred," said the girl, as she handed her a tea-cake, "sit you down on that chair and eat it. Mother, come you here!" she called in a louder voice.

A fat, rosy, good-tempered-looking woman answered the call.

"She wanted the biggest cake

we've got for a halfpenny," said the girl. "Look at her; she's nigh hungred!"

"Where are you off to?" said the baker's wife to Faith, as she sat eating her cake.

"Please, ma'am," said little Faith, "I'm looking for a place. I'm going to be a little servant somewhere; do you know of anybody as wants a little girl?"

"Why, now," said the woman to her daughter; "doesn't Miss Benson want one?"

"Ay," said the girl, "so they say; but maybe, she wouldn't take such as her."

"There's no harm in asking her, anyhow," said the baker's wife; "take the child across to her, Maggie."

So Faith followed Maggie across the road, but before she went, the good baker's wife gave her two more large tea-cakes, and gave her the halfpenny back again, which her daughter had taken for the cake.

"Jesus made her do that, I'm sure," said Faith to herself.

Miss Benson was not up, and they had to wait for some time to see her, and then when she did come down, she seemed quite angry with Faith for coming, and with the baker's daughter for having brought her.

"Want a servant! Yes, she *did* want a servant, but a proper, respectable sort of servant, not a little, weakly, sickly child. She should have thought they would have known that, without needing to be told," and, so saying, she showed them out.

The baker's daughter took a kind leave of the child, but said she was afraid she did not know of any one else.

So little Faith went on alone, very sorrowfully.

CHAPTER III.—FAITH'S SEARCH.

Up and down the streets, up and down the streets, hour after hour, little Faith wandered, first asking at one shop, and then at another. Sometimes she would venture to stop the passers by and enquire of them. She would choose some one whose face looked kind and motherly, and put the same question again and again: "Could you tell me of any one as wants a little servant, please?"

But she got nothing but discouragement the whole day long. One told her that she was too small; another that she was too delicate; another brought tears to her eyes by telling her to go home to her mother; one or two laughed at her, and not a few were angry with her. And so the day wore away.

It was getting near evening, and was beginning to grow dark. Faith had asked her question hopefully and eagerly in the morning; but now she asked it in quite a different voice and as if she hardly expected an encouraging answer. She was very tired,