

## LITTLE FAITH.

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

(From Sunday at Home.)

## CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

Then she looked out of the window. John Robinson's stall was not more than thirty yards away. She could see him quite well, surrounded, as he was, by flaring naphtha lights; but he could not see her at all in the darkness and shadow of the church porch.

This was just what little Faith wanted. She stood there for a long time watching him. He looked very sad, she thought, and very tired. Nobody seemed to be buying anything, and she longed to run across the road, and spend her penny at the stall. If only she could be somebody else, for just one moment, and run across and buy a penny toy, that he might have one more penny to take home to Mrs. Gubbins!

What would Mrs. Gubbins say if he brought her nothing home to-night?

Well, there would be one mouth the less to feed; that was a comfort; she could not blame him any more for giving the children's bread to her.

How anxiously Faith watched for customers to the stall; and how glad she was when at last an old man stopped and bought one of the best sixpenny pipes!

But her father did not seem half as glad as she thought he would have been. He put the money in his pocket, but he did not look a bit pleased. He did not seem to be thinking much about it. All the time the old man was there, all the time he was showing off his wares, all the time he was waiting for purchasers, he was gazing up and down the street, first this way and then that way, as if he were looking for some one.

"Can he be looking for me?" said Faith to herself. "Oh, I hope he doesn't miss me so much. Praps I oughtn't never to have run away, but ought to have stopped with him and cheered him up. But I did it all for him. Mrs. Gubbins goes on at him so about me! Oh, dear, oh, dear; I hope he isn't very unhappy!"

There was a low stone seat on each side of the church porch, and Faith sat down on this, and hid her face in her hands and cried. She was very tired and disheartened. Once she thought she would go out, and go back to her father; but then she did not dare to go back to Mrs. Gubbins' again, till she had found a situation for herself. No, she could not do that.

But night was coming on, and where should she sleep? She would be very frightened indeed, if she had to be out alone in the street all night!

What could she do? Should she

pray again? She thought she would. Perhaps, if she asked the Lord Jesus again to help her, He would hear her. She could not understand why He had not heard her before. It was very strange! But she would try once more. She would tell Him how tired and lonely she was, and how much she was afraid of being out in the street all night. Perhaps, when He saw how very unhappy she was, He would tell her where to go.

Faith was just going to kneel down, when she heard the sound of singing inside the church. She put her ear to the door and listened.

Faith thought she had never heard such a beautiful tune. She opened the door just a little crack, that she might, if possible, hear the words, and then she peeped in.

To her astonishment she could not see any one in the church. One or two of the gas-lamps were lighted, and she could see the great stone pillars, and the high

that part of the church open, and an old man looked out, to see who was walking about in the church. He caught sight of Faith, and came towards her. She felt very much inclined to run away; she was afraid he would be angry with her for coming into the church.

But the old man did not look cross or vexed, but smiled at her as he came up, so Faith settled not to run away.

When the old man was close to her, he asked her, in a whisper, what she wanted.

"Please, sir," said Faith, "I wanted to hear 'em sing; they was a singing so beautifully when I was outside there; but I couldn't find nobody!"

"They're all in the vestry," said the old verger; "it's prayer-meeting night. It's always prayer-meeting of a Saturday night. You'll have to sit very still if I let you come in."

"Will they let me in?" said Faith, in a faltering voice; "won't they be cross if I go?"



"PLEASE, SIR, I WANTED TO HEAR 'EM SING."

arches, and long aisles of the old church, but she could not see a single man or woman or child. There were a great many pews, but they were all empty; and there was a high pulpit, but there was no one standing in it. She opened the door a little wider and went in. There did not seem to be any one in the old church but herself.

Where could the singing have come from?

Faith walked a few steps farther into the church, and then she stopped again. She felt rather afraid at the sound of her feet upon the stone pavement.

The singing had stopped, but presently she heard the voice of some one reading aloud. The voice seemed to come from the other side of the church. After waiting for some minutes, Faith walked on tip-toe in that direction. She wanted very much to know from whence the sound came.

Presently, she saw a door in

"Oh, no," said the man; "not if I takes you, bairn, and if you're a good girl. Come along, you can sit on the seat by me." So he gave Faith his hand, and took her into the vestry.

The vestry was nearly full. There were about thirty people present, sitting in rows, and the minister was standing in front of them, reading a chapter out of the Bible. Then they knelt down and prayed.

Little Faith was very tired and sleepy. She sat in the corner by the old verger, and he kept nodding kindly to her, but the warmth and comfort of the room, after her bad night, and after the cold and fatigue of the day made her eyes very heavy.

Presently as the minister was reading again she fell asleep.

She had not been asleep more than a minute or two when she was wakened up suddenly by hearing her own name. She had been dreaming of Mother Mary, and thought she was sitting be-

side Mother Mary's bed, as she had done for so many days and nights before she died, and then she thought some one asked her a question, and this question awoke her:

"Little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

She started up and opened her eyes, but Mother Mary was not there! Faith found herself in the vestry, on the seat beside the old man, and he looked very surprised to see her jump up so suddenly.

And yet she felt quite sure that she had really heard a voice asking her that question; yes, and she felt quite sure that it was the same voice was reading now! It was the minister who had said:

"Little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

How could he know about her? Who could have told him that her name was little Faith? How did he know that she had been praying and had not got an answer to her prayer, and was beginning to doubt?

Jesus must have told him; she felt sure of that; nobody else knew.

The minister did not say anything more about her. She listened very attentively now, but he did not mention her name again. He was reading about a ship, and the wind ceasing, and the ship getting to land.

It was very strange that he should have stopped in the middle to speak to her!

But little Faith felt she had got a message from Heaven. Jesus must have told him to ask her that question; He was very sorry she had doubted Him, and had told the minister to tell her so.

Faith said to herself that she would never doubt any more. She was quite sure now that she would have an answer to her prayer, very soon indeed. Her Friend had heard her after all, and was going to help her. She felt quite glad and happy, and as if a great weight had been taken off her heart.

## CHAPTER IV.—A HAPPY SUNDAY.

The prayer was over, the blessing was given, and the people rose to go.

But little Faith still sat on. The old verger came up to her, and told her kindly that it was all done now, and she had better be thinking of going home, as it was getting late, and he was going to lock the church up.

"Please, sir," said little Faith, "do you think the minister would let me speak to him?"

"Aye, to be sure," said the old man; "wait a minute and I'll ask him."

The minister was talking to an old lady who had stopped behind the rest to tell him of some one who was ill, and wanted to see him. As soon as she had done speaking the verger went up to