

Little Patience had been many times on the look-out, and at last her mother glanced at the clock and said, "Father should be here by this time. If we miss this next train, there will not be another for an hour and a half."

She knew that would take a large slice out of an autumn half-holiday, and she went herself to see if her husband were in sight. Within a few steps of the door she saw, not James, but the book-keeper from McKinley's mill.

"Good-day, Mrs. Kershaw," he said; "I have brought you a message from James."

"We've been looking for him this long while.

"I will tell you all about it; but we'd better go inside," said Mr. Wrigley.

They entered the cottage, and Mrs. Kershaw stood leaning on the back of a chair while the book-keeper told the rest. James was hurt by a falling shaft, and, with two others less injured, had been conveyed to the Infirmary.

The wife's face went white as ashes, and at first she stood motionless. But the sound of little footsteps was heard on the path, and the mother whispered, "We must not frighten Patience. She dotes on her father."

The book-keeper had children at home, so, to spare little Patience the sight of her mother's white face, he met her on the threshold, and, giving her some coppers, bade her fetch some sugar-candy from a little shop a few doors off.

By the time Patience returned her mother was able to speak to her quietly. "Father's engine has broken down," she said; "and we can't go to Dunham to-day, love."

The child knew that her parents never willingly disappointed her, and she made no murmur. Seeing traces of tears on her mother's face, she kissed it lovingly, and said, "Never mind, mother. I will be real Patience to-day, though I am a bit disappointed. We can go another Saturday, when father's engine is all right again."

It was hard work to bear up, knowing what she did; but the mother returned her child's kiss, and answered, "As father can't come home, I must go to him, and you must stay with Mrs. Cheetham till I come back. Mary Cheetham will play with you, and you shall make tea in the little cups that father bought you."

The little tea-service was the favourite toy—not in every-day use, but allowed as a reward on special occasions. So in the delight of using it the child was comforted for the loss of her holiday, and talked of the trip to Dunham as a pleasure in store for a future Saturday, when father could be home in time.

Meanwhile Mrs. Kershaw put on her bonnet, and with trembling steps and sinking heart set out to see her husband.

"They'll let me stay with James, won't they?" she asked.

"I cannot say that they will, for you know if every patient's friends were to stay, there would be too many."

"What shall I do?" she moaned out.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord; it is in time of trouble He is nearest," was the reply of her companion, an earnest Christian man, who felt deeply for his poor friends in this hour of trial.

"Sir, I do try. But oh, it is hard! I think there never was a better husband and father than James; and if we were to lose him it would take the light out of our lives."

[The result of the accident, and how Patience became her mother's little comforter, is beautifully told in a shilling book just published, entitled "Poor Patience," by Mrs. Ruth Lamb.]



"Let me have my little woman!"

Patience is just wild about it, for we were going to Dunham Park."

"I'm sorry the little woman will be disappointed; but we've had a misfortune at the mill."

"Another breakdown, I suppose, and James will have to work late to get things to rights. I hope the damage is not serious, Mr. Wrigley?"

"A couple of days' work will repair it; but——"

Lizzie detected a little change in the face, and guessed that there was more and worse news to tell.

"Is any one hurt? Is James safe?" she cried eagerly.