

"It must have been some of the Wortham men," said Margaret hastily, from her pillow. "I was whistling, and had the dog you know, so they must have mistaken me for the keeper."

That was all any one could get out of Margaret; she could not tell what the figure or figures were like; she was taken by surprise, he said, and she would like them to be shot in a plantation on a dim night, and then see if they could tell who it was that fired the gun: she did not know any of the Wortham men by sight, and she was quite positive that she should not know this man again, unless they were put back in exactly the same relative positions.

"It is true enough," said Sir Robert, smiling at the facetiousness of this last remark. "One man is just like another at such a time; but *Rollo will know him again*."

Margaret looked up uneasily from her bed,

"No he won't," she said; "Rollo barks at everybody."

"We shall see," said her father quietly; "I am determined that *this* time the fellows shall not get off."

And he walked away, looking very fierce indeed; whilst the patient turned uneasily, and restlessly gave a deep sigh.

Great consternation spread through the village next morning, when it was known that Miss Margaret had been shot at by one of the poachers, and that she was lying very ill with her arm broken.

The nurse-girl who came to see after the Styles's cottage, brought the news to the sick woman.

"Miss Margaret! shot!" she exclaimed in the greatest distress, "oh dear, 'tis all my fault, 'twas all along o' her seein' o' me!" and she began to cry piteously.

"What's the matter?" asked her husband, coming in at the back door with a pail of water.

"Oh, James!" exclaimed the poor woman, "here's one of them bad poachers bin and shot Miss Margaret!"

"Shot—who?" he shouted, with a horror-struck face, and dropping the pail of water.

"Now, look at you, Mr. Styles!" ejaculated the aggrieved housegirl, angrily, "who's to clean that up?"

"Clean it up yourself!" he said with an oath, and turned again to his wife. "How could she, Miss Margaret, get into the plantation that time o' night?"

"What time o'night," asked Mrs. Styles innocently. "I didn't know what time 'twas done; why Jem," she went on crying, "she came down to me, and was sitting along o' me till ten o'clock last night; but she had her dog, she said, and wouldn't take no hurt; and now she's shot! oh, deary, deary me!"

"Sitting with you!" said Jem Styles in a low voice.

"Yes, you came in almost d'rectly she was gone," replied his wife, "but you went to bed so quick, and spoke so short to me, that I never told you she had been here."

"Miss Margaret!" was all he said. "Oh Lord! Miss Margaret! of all folks!"

Mrs. Styles had never seen her husband affected so deeply before; he turned and went out of the room, shaking like an aspen-leaf, leaving his wife still sobbing, and the angry waiting-girl, muttering to herself over the extra work of "clearing up after them there careless men folks, a drop-pin' and a spillin' water in this here owdacious manner!"

Sir Robert Granton left no stone unturned, to try and find the miscreant who had wounded his daughter, but all attempts were unavailing. One man in Wortham, a notorious character, was suspected, and Rollo barked furiously at him when taken to see him, but it was proved on closer examination being made, that the man was some miles away at the time, in quite another place, so that suspicion was unfounded.

(To be Continued.)