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## Entry Nr. 166 Chloe Russell

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“THE COMPLETE FORTUNE TELLER, &C

ALTHOUGH great powers of prediction are ascribed to me, I am no more than a poor unfortunate Female African, whom fate early doomed to a state of wretched slavery. As some particulars of my captivity, and cruel treatment, while a slave, may be entertaining to the public, I shall to this work briefly subjoin them. I am a native of Africa, of the Fuller nation, and was born about the year 1745, about three hundred miles south west of Sierre Loen. Although I was but nine years old, I remember perfectly well the fatal day, when I was seized by the white men, and dragged from my parents and country. Of the Baccaranas, or white men, we had been taught to form most dreadful ideas-although shaped like ourselves, we did not conceive them human, but ranked them among the most ravenous beasts of the woods, which were always seeking an opportunity to seize and drag some of us to their dens, where we were torn in pieces to feed their young. As this was at that time the opinion of the Africans, as no whites dare then attempt a residence among them, the Baccaranas were considered the most dangerous beasts of the forests. Lions, Tygers, Leopards, &c. we did not half so much fear as the Baccaranas, who by throwing fire at a great distance, and with a dreadful noise, would slay a dozen at once. It was early one

morning, when my mother sent me and an older brother, a short distance from the house, to gather coconuts, when three Baccaranas who lay concealed in the bushes, sprung therefrom

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and seized us-our cries brought our mother within view of us, but when she saw the Baccaranas, with a dreadful [unintelligible word] she fled with the greatest precipitancy-one of them pursued her but did not overtake her, and we never saw her, nor she her children afterward. We were both bound with ropes, with which two of the white men dragged us off, while the third forced us along with a whip, which cut our naked bodies at every blow-the woods resounded with our shrieks and lamentations, but they availed us nothing-we were dragged over hills, and through briars and bushes, for more than twenty miles, when we came within sight of the ship. We were conveyed on board, and as I had never before seen a vessel, I conceived this to be the Baccaranas den, where I every moment was in expectation of being sacrificed by them? I found here a great number of about my age, but of different tribes, and who appeared to be in the same situation of myself, and to have imbibed similar ideas, that they were to serve for food for the Baccaranas! We were permitted to walk about the deck, but as more were continually arriving, the men I perceived were put down a great hole in the vessel, with irons upon their feet and hands. My fears and surprize was more than ever excited the next day, in beholding the Baccaranas get their vessel under way-I now supposed their ship a monstrous bird, and the sails to be its wings. In a few hours we were conveyed beyond sight of our native land. Ten days after my unfortunate countrymen made a desperate attempt to overpower the Baccaranas-the first notice I had of their intentions, was their bursting from the hold with their irons in their hands, with which they began to knock down the Baccaranas, whereupon I and the other young slaves were ordered down the after hold-that was a dreadful screeching and roaring of guns and clashing of swords, for half an hour, when all was still-we were now permitted to come upon deck to witness the dreadful havoc that had been made-it was a dreadful sight!-there lay dead and piled in a heap twenty or thirty of my poor countrymen, and nearby on a sail lay four of the Baccaranas dead!-my countrymen I then supposed had been slain for food for the whites, and was much surprized when I saw them thrown overboard. In a few weeks after we were landed in Virginia, where we were sold at public auction-I was purchased by Mr. George Russel, a Planter, near Petersburg-who was the purchaser of my brother I

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knew not, as I never saw him afterward. My master proved a kind and humane man, and was very good to his slaves, of which he had nearly 300 -- but it was not my good fortune to have long so kind a master, he died in about a year from the time I became his property.-I now fell to the lot of his oldest son, who proved as tyranical as his father was humane-we were compelled to go half fed and cloathed, and had a double portion of work allotted us. For the smallest offence we were most unmercifully whipped and tortured. I was only whipped by a fellow slave, by order of my cruel master, until there was not a piece of skin left on my back or shoulders of the wedth of my hand-my crime was that of accidentally breaking a stone jug! For complaining once to my master of being unwell, and unable to perform my daily task, I received a blow upon my

arm, which broke it short above the elbow! Hot rice was once strewed on my naked body, for suffering some to burn that I was boiling! At another time I was deprived of food for five days, for accidentally spilling a little rice on the ground! Such cruel treatment at length drove me to the resolution of destroying myself.-I fixed upon a day on which to carry my resolve into effect-but the night previous, I dreamed that I saw my father, who told me that he had just come from the world of spirits, where there was nothing but joy and happiness-he informed me that he was killed by the fire of the Baccaranas, twenty moons after I was captured by them, in attempting to rescue my mother, whom they had taken-he said that he had been made acquainted with my resolve to destroy myself, and had come to persuade me not to do it, as it would soon be well with me, and I should be free from my master. This singular dream made such a deep impression upon my mind, as to deter me from committing suicide the succeeding day, but as many months passed with seeing any chance of gaining my liberty, I began again to premeditate the destruction of my life, and again fixed upon a day- when the spirit of my father again appeared to me the night previous, accompanied by another bright spirit, clad in purple, who touching me with something it carried in his hand, thus addressed me-"young woman, stay thy hand and raise it not against thy own life, for thy afflictions shall shortly cease-thy unjust punishments has enkindled the wrath of the Most High, who has commissioned me to unrivet the chains, and to vest the [thee] with power to foretell remarkable events, and prophecy things that shall surely come to pass, whereby thou shalt soon gain thy freedom, and be ranked among the most extraordinary of thy fellow-creatures-whatsoever thou shalt hereafter

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dream, that mind ye and prophecy, and it shall come to pass. I also vest thee with power to interpret dreams of others, and by signs, moles and tokens, to foretell the most remarkable events of their lives!"-upon saying this the bright spirit vanished-upon which the spirit of my father said to me-"my daughter be comforted, for the spirits of thy mother and brother dwell with me!" and also vanished. I awoke as from a trance, and more than ever did this remarkable vision make an impression upon my mind. This was two years previous to the American Revolution, of which remarkable event I dreamed, and predicted as I was ordered, and it came to pass exactly as I prophecied, although I was at first laughed at-many other great events I likewise predicted, which came also to pass-great numbers began now to flock for information, what would betide them through life, where to find lost property, &c. which I always told them so correctly, that they at length gave me the name of the 'OLD WITCH!' or 'BLACK INTERPRETER!' One day a Planter, who lived in Winchester, came therefrom to see me, and who informed me that an unmarried uncle of his, who had dwelt many years with him, and who had been dead about two years, during his residence with him, somewhere upon his plantation buried all his property, which was in specie, to the amount of 50 or 60,000 dollars-and that although he had employed several men ever since to search for it, they had never been enabled to discover the place- that if I would inform him where the hidden treasure might be found, he would purchase my freedom, and present me with 500 dollars. I informed him that I should probably be enabled to give him an answer the next morning-in hopes that it would be revealed to me in a dream, which it accordingly was.-The next morning I informed the Planter, that if he returned home, and

removed a piece of wall, he would find buried nearly opposite a rice stack, the property in gold and silver, about five feet from the surface of the ground. The Planter accordingly returned home and searched agreeable to my directions, and found the money as I had told him-nor did he fail to keep his promise, for the next week he came down and paid my master 400 dollars for my freedom, and presented me with 500 dollars more-thus was I fairly rid of one of the most tyrannical masters on earth! With my money I purchased a small house, and devoted my whole time to interpreting of dreams, and predicting the most remarkable events in the course of such persons lives as applied to me; -although I charged but a trifling fee, yet so numerous have been

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my customers, that in the course of ten years, I accumulated property to the amount of 3000 dollars almost every cent of which I expended to purchasing the freedom of several of my unfortunate fellow- creatures, who were slaves to my late tyrannical master. Having now arrived at an age when I am in momentary expectation of being called hence, I have been induced to acquaint the public with some particulars of my life, and how I first became vested with power to interpret dreams, &c. and to furnish them with necessary directions, how by signs, tokens, moles, dreams, &c. they may them- selves determine the most remarkable events that should attend them through life.“

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