

The OVERTON CLAIM.

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Through minutes that seemed hours she crept painfully along, her hands scratched and bleeding, her bare head catching ever and anon some vagrant twig, some down dropping bough.

Slowly, blindly, she followed it. She had no idea whence it came, whither it ran, by what feet it was made.

Up hill, down dale, it ran, now crossed by other and fainter tracks, now cutting sharp through a disused cartway.

Miles and miles the girl tramped through the waning day. More than one ruffed grouse flew up from the thicket as she came too near.

Sunset came on, full of red, stormy light. At the very last a bloody rim rested upon the hill crests.

Bats came out and circled low above her head. She listened hopefully, but in vain, for the whippoorwill, whose crying means no rain.

hearing the old woman was dying, she had come as a last kindness to one who had been her grandfather's slave.

As if obedient to her thought, the boy came to her elbow and whispered: 'Miss Dare, I know de box dat key fits.

Following him in silence, Dare saw him fling up the lid of a huge coffer that



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set against the wall, saw him delve deep in its heterogeneous depths and bring up a small pine box, most incongruously fastened with a wrought brass lock.

As she thrust it within her bosom a confused noise of hoofs and trampling feet came from the outer dusk.

CHAPTER XXI. 'My girl, we can show them the Overtons know how to die.'

Dare had indeed found her grandfather with the mob, found him bound and helpless, yet sitting upright and fearless upon his horse as though for the chase.

'I cannot go much farther in this darkness. Maybe I had better stay here until morning.'

Suddenly she started to her feet. A wild droning chant was borne upward to her ear, the sound of many strong voices pitched in a minor key.

'We can die,' Dare echoed, 'but we shall die innocent. We have never harmed, but always helped as far as lay in our power, these lawless men. What charge can they bring against us?'

'That we are Overtons,' the old man said bitterly. 'Overtons,' he repeated, 'the rightful owners of this which other men wish to sell and buy. At sundown as I sat in my study these fellows came upon me, demanding that I give up my rights.

'Granny Jincey, do you know me?' Dare asked, taking the withered clammy fingers within her own.

The old woman stirred uneasily. Her lips moved, but no word came, and still the lids lay heavily over her eyes.

'The young voice pierced through the gathering mists of death. Jincey's eyes flow wide; her hands clinched; she sat convulsively upright, crying aloud: 'Mistis! Miss Alice! Jincey never meant to hurt you!'

'She takes yo' fer her mistis, yo' great grandmother. Yo' ar lik' her,' the old man said in Dare's ear.

'Yes, yes,' panted the old woman. 'Give it to her. Papers—in chest—at de bottom,' falling back at the last word with the death rattle in her throat.

'I tell ye, both must die, or we'll swing for it,' said the man Dare had recognized. 'I tell ye, ye might 'a' knocked me down with a feather when I seen that thar gal in ole Jincey's cabin as she spoke up so. Why, this is Mr. Hensley! I'd rather take er year's whippin' an' ter tetch her rough, but what's er man ter do? She knowed me. I tell ye thar ain't no safe way but de bloody one.'

'An I tell you, yo fool,' said a deeper voice, 'if harm comes to her, ter so much as a hair of her head, we'll all have our trouble for our pains. The fel-

ler dat's got most er de money we re so anxious he should spend here is plumb crazy about her. The man dat touches her is as sure ter swing fer it as de spendin of a million dollars can make him. I know, fer H—, yo' know who, told me dat was in de game. Ef he don't git her, most lik' he'll quit de country. I say de thing ter do is keep 'em here, keep 'em comfortable, treat 'em lik' fightin cocks, but keep 'em close till they're willin ter agree ter hold their tongues.'

'That'd be enabout always. Man, yo' don't know them Overtons. Bad as I hate 'em fer their high headed, high handed ways, I know they're game, ain't afeared o' man ner devil and wouldn't budge a hair from what they said was right fer all dis world, with de next thrown in. Talk about makin terms! Put it ter vote, Isay. Fix er hat, somebody. All in favor of makin a sure thing o' dis job put crossmarks on their tickets. Dem ergin it, leave 'em white.'

'A little time, and 30 men came past the hat, over which hung their solitary lantern, each dropping from his hand a fluttering slip whose import was life or death.'

'Mr. Somebody didn't think what his letter was ter be used fer when he writ it,' Hensley said, with a grim smile, as the ballots fell in.

'Reckon it wouldn't 'a' bothered him much if he had,' his opponent remarked. The teller raised a hand, saying laconically:

'Ye better be fixin. Thar's 20 crosses.'

'We'll draw lots who's ter do de job. De rest kin go erway,' Hensley said, speaking thickly in spite of his sense of necessity. 'Twon't take but two—one erpicee, ye know.' Inside Major Overton talked in low tones to Dare.

'It was a miracle, your escape, and to think you are thus brought back,' he said, breathing hard.

'There is fate in it, I am sure,' Dare answered. 'Do you know, grandfather, I believe Jincey had made the path I found tramping to this place. What motive could possibly have brought her so often over such a weary way?'

'Maybe we will know soon. Jincey was a mystery always. We are at the gate of mysteries. I wonder why they are so slow?'

Dare pressed his hand hard and said in his ear: 'Hush! I hear hard breathing. Some one else is in the room.'

'If it is the scoundrel who lured you here, let me throttle him before I die, and death will lose half its sting,' the old man cried aloud.

Instantly a light flashed out, the light of a dark lantern in Royal Cleve's hands. Weary with his fruitless search for Dare, he had come back and at last dropped into sleep so sound that he awakened from it. He walked directly over to Major Overton, saying as he held out a revolver:

'I deserve that you should shoot me, sir. But pray postpone it until I have paid my respects to those scoundrels outside.'

'You do well to turn against them, sir, after inciting them to their present course,' Major Overton said, with curling lip. 'By contrast with yourself they are almost respectable. They have at least the palliation of ignorance and necessity.'

Cleve fell back in amazement. 'Can you think, believe,' he asked, 'that I had any hand in, any knowledge of, this outrage?'

'Why not? You are guilty of worse,' the other said, with a deep frown. Dare laid a hand on her grandfather's arm and said, half timidly:

'I think, sir, Mr. Cleve is innocent of this. I know, too, he will save us from all harm if only we do not trust his help aside.'

'Whether you will or no,' Cleve said, striding to the door. 'Open, open,' he shouted. 'Open, you villains, or the last one of you shall hang.'

There was a noise of unbarring, a rush and intrambling of many feet, a volley of shots and shouts and curses, but no foot came inside. Royal Cleve had barred the way, and as they recoiled from his rapid fire swung the door to, calling huskily:

'The bar, the bar! Keep them back! They shall not touch.'

Quick as thought Dare sprang to his side, shot the inner bar in place and called aloud:

'Help, grandfather, he is falling!'

'He is—dead—almost,' Cleve said, reaching for her hand. By the lantern's glimmer Major Overton saw that blood was pouring from his breast. Outside a babel of rude speech, more than one deep groan, undevoted the wild roar of a swiftly coming storm.

'Listen! I hear horses galloping. You are saved,' Cleve said as Dare bent above him, trying to stanch the blood. He went on huskily, 'Throw—the light on—her face. I have not much longer to see it. Let me—see it plain.'



'Throw the light on her face. Let me see it plain.'

'Don't talk,' Dare said, pressing her hand hard against the welling blood. Slowly, painfully, Cleve laid her fingers upon his mouth and panted rather than spoke the one word 'Forgive!'

'I do forgive you fully, freely, as I hope God will forgive me at the last day,' Dare said; then, answering the appeal of his eyes, put her mouth to his in a tender kiss.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BARBARA NOT A MYTH

PROOF THAT WHITTIER'S HEROINE WAS A REAL WOMAN.

Was Born at Lancaster, Pa., in 1770 and Her Ancestors Played a Prominent Part in the History of the Infant Republic.

Dame Fritchie's Deed. Over Barbara Fritchie's grave. Flag of freedom and union wave! Peace and order and beauty draw Round thy symbol of light and law; And ever the stars above look down. On thy stars above in Frederick town.

Of late there has been much discussion concerning the old dame whom Whittier has immortalized as flaunting the flag of freedom in the face of Stonewall Jackson's ragged brigade. Arguments have been advanced tending to prove, as do all cut and dried allusions, that no such woman ever existed, much less having performed such a ridiculous feat as described by the Quaker poet. Such statements are idle, and are not worth the time spent in their consideration. In the face of the indubitable proof that she had been almost a life-long resident of Frederick town, only those who are actuated by jealousy, or who know nothing of the matter, attempt to deny her. As to the incident described in Whittier's lines,



BARBARA FRITCHIE'S HOME, FREDERICK, MD.

It is agreed that it is a myth. The bulk of the evidence proves that the Confederate troops did not march near her house on that momentous day of Sept. 13, 1862. However, she was goodly dame, loyal to the backbone, to claim relationship with whom would be an honor.

The house inhabited by Barbara Fritchie at Frederick was a story and a half cottage of brick and stone, with high gables and dormer windows, devoid of external show or decoration. It stood on Patrick street, a short distance from Carroll's Creek, over which ran an ancient wooden bridge. On one side of this bridge there was a flight of stone steps, which led to a large, square spring, from which the Fritchie family obtained its supply of water for drinking and all household purposes. There were two iron dippers fastened by chains to one side of the rocky wall, and here the thirsty wayfarers stopped to drink and gossip.

When the Confederate army, under General Lee, evacuated Frederick, closely followed by the Union troops under Gen. McClellan, Barbara Fritchie kept a small silken flag flying from the dormer window of her house. It was an old revolutionary flag handed down to her from her ancestors and deeply prized through many memories. When the Union soldiers entered the town later she took it down, and as the troops marched by she stood in her doorway, proudly waving it above her head.

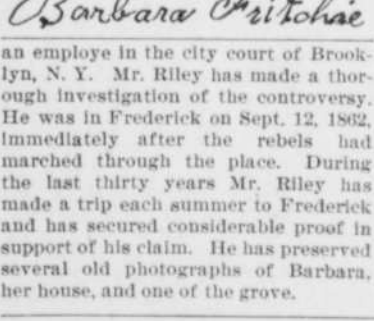
Barbara Fritchie died in December, 1872, at the age of 96, and her remains now rest in the cemetery of the Reformed Church on Bentz street, opposite Third, in the western portion of the town. There, when strangers go to see the mound, the stars and stripes are always floating, and there one cannot help remembering the closing lines of Whittier's poem:

And even the stars above look down On thy stars above in Frederick town!

Above the grave of Barbara Fritchie two flags of freedom and union forever wave. Winter and summer, rain and sun, the stripes and stars float

face being but a reflection of her strong and steadfast will. Of humor there was much in her composition, and when a girl she was known as one fond of wholesome pleasures of all kinds.

The pictures shown were drawn from old photographs now in the possession of William H. Riley, an old soldier, and



Barbara Fritchie

an employe in the city court of Brooklyn, N. Y. Mr. Riley has made a thorough investigation of the controversy. He was in Frederick on Sept. 12, 1862, immediately after the rebels had marched through the place. During the last thirty years Mr. Riley has made a trip each summer to Frederick and has secured considerable proof in support of his claim. He has preserved several old photographs of Barbara, her house, and one of the grove.



CHECK DRAWN TO THE ORDER OF BARBARA FRITCHIE.

Mr. Shearman, one of Penn Yan's substantial citizens, and for many years a trustee of the insane asylum at Willard, N. Y., has a check drawn in Barbara Fritchie's favor and endorsed by her. Since the check has been in his possession Mr. Shearman has received many communications from people who would like to get possession of it, but he prizes it too highly to think of parting with it. He lately received a letter from George W. Oakley, commander of the Barbara Fritchie Post, No. 11, G. A. R., of Brooklyn, asking him upon what terms he would dispose of it. The letter stated that the post was named after the heroine whose name adorned the check, and that it was in possession of a photograph and a crayon portrait of her and would like to add the check to the valued collection. But the present owner cannot be induced to part with the check with the autograph at any price.

Barbara Fritchie, or Hauer before

her marriage, was born in Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 3, 1770. Her ancestors had played a prominent part in the early history of the infant republic, and every drop of blood in her body came from the founders and preservers of the republic. When but a child she removed with her parents to Frederick, Md., and there she lived until her death.

When 30 years old Barbara Hauer became Barbara Fritchie, the wife of



BARBARA FRITCHIE'S GRAVE.

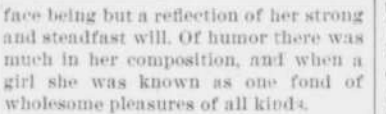
John Casper Fritchie. The wedding took place on May 6, 1806. No children came to her, but her strong motherly love found occupation in the care and training of several nephews and nieces. While of aspect stern and cold, it is said that she was a gentlewoman of fine sensibilities and tender heart, her

war fever, and enlisted in a Brooklyn regiment, the Fourteenth, I believe. It was on Sept. 12, 1862, a Sunday morning, when his regiment marched through the streets of the town. It was just after the rebels had occupied the place, and there was considerable rejoicing at the coming of the Yankees. The inhabitants were, in the main, Union sympathizers. Flags hung from the windows, the houses were gay with bunting, and the streets presented a holiday appearance. The townspeople cheered the boys as they marched, and the women waved their handkerchiefs. It was a brave day. The soldiers marched over the old wooden bridge and down Patrick street, passing the Barbara Fritchie house. From the dormer window floating the Union flag, as it had done since the opening of the war, a niece of old Barbara, a pretty Southern girl of 18 years, as the Fourteenth Brooklyn passed the house the young fellow I spoke of caught her eye and bowed. The girl blushed and went into the house. This was about 6 o'clock in the morning. At 5 in the afternoon the troops were hotly engaged at South Mountain, and three days later they were struggling at Antietam. A year from that time the Fourteenth Brooklyn again marched through the streets of Frederick on their way to Gettysburg. Curiously enough, young Miss Dollie was standing in the doorway of Barbara Fritchie's house on Patrick street. The young soldier recognized her and saluted. The troops camped in the town for two days and I made his acquaintance. That friendship lasts to this day. He asked me about the young lady in the doorway. I introduced him to Miss Dollie, and it was a case of love at first sight. After a day of wooing he had to leave with his regiment. At Gettysburg he was wounded and was brought back to this town. He was taken to Barbara's house, and Dollie Jeffrey nursed him back to health. She had a long siege of it, but after recovering from his wounds he was taken with typhoid fever. While on his bed he and Dollie were married. Unable to do any more fighting, he was appointed chief clerk of the United States general hospital, which position he held to the close of the war. They lived in the town until Barbara's death, when they moved North. Twice a year he sends me new flags to me, that they may be placed on Barbara Fritchie's gravestone following out the lines of Whittier. With his wife and children he visits here every summer. They are the only ones who take any interest in the old woman. They cut the grass and get flowers on the grave.'

A MARVELLOUS CLOCK.

Tiny Human Skeletons Sound the Passing Hours.

Probably the most wonderful piece of mechanism ever seen or dreamed of is the property of an inland Indian prince. It was the work of the vast skilled artisans of the east, and is only white man, probably, who ever set eyes upon it was the English ambassador who went to the palace of a nabob as bearer of messages from



THE MARVELOUS CLOCK.

English government, and returning the coast, told of the marvel he had witnessed.

The dial of this clock was outlined in gold upon a carved slab of some peculiar marble, and beneath it was suspended, between two uprights, a silver gong. Then a broad, flat surface of marble spread out before that dial from end to end with miniature human skeletons, and here and there silver hammers, with little round heads for heads. The bones seemed to be entirely disconnected, and looked like so much rubbish remnants of a tiny dead.

The clock stood in the dining room where the ceremonious meal was being served, and as 1 o'clock drew near the prince called the visitor's attention to a rustling among the dry bones. With a faint clatter they began to rise and come together, a skull set itself upon the shoulder structure, and by the mass of dry bones one tiny skeleton rose complete, with a little hammer clutched in his bony fingers. He stood beside the shining gong until a minute hand pointed precisely to the hour. Then, with a quick swing, he drove the hammer against the silver surface, and a silver note, fine and thread, burst forth and echoed in soft cadences among the distant bars of the place. Before its whistles ceased in the stillness the little skeleton had, like the ghost of John Jay, Christopher Benjamin Bins, and down again, and the scattered bones lay motionless once more upon the marble plain.

Pleasures of the Seashore. She—I have often wondered what wild waves are saying.

He—Judging from their roar I should say they were joining the general against the high prices at this season's Philadelphia North American.

An Untucky Number. Mr. Johnson—Is yo' 'superintendent Miss Mandy—Oh, I don't want to know what makes yo' fin'k dat?

Mr. Johnson—I see yo' wearin' number 13 shoes?—New York Herald.