

What Patsey Did.

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Any boy or girl who reads this and who may now chance to live in the upper part of New York Island would find it hard to realize that all the western section of the city beyond Fifty-ninth street in 1851 was quite out of town, and that the further you walked the sweeter and greener it grew, for the houses you came to had beautiful grounds about them and many had been laid out by skillful English landscape gardeners a hundred years before. The little village of Manhattanville crossed the Bloomingdale turnpike at One hundred and twenty-fifth street and linked it to Carmansville. It consisted of a few straggling houses, two or three general shops, a blacksmith's shed, three churches, a post office and a railway station. All about it were plateaux of green table-land, little brooks running through fields and cool springs hiding in rocky hollows. Manhattanville lay at the foot of an old fort that Washington built during the Revolutionary days and the Bloomingdale boys, in 1851, used to have glorious sham battles up there with the "Manhattan villains," as they were pleased to term the village boys. And from points in this village one caught glorious views of the Hudson river and the wooded shores on the Jersey side.

Into this region of pure air and country sights and sounds came Grannie Doonan with her son Larry and his little child; and, because the contractor (the doctor's brother) found them to be such respectable folks, he sold them a house with an acre of ground about it, on time.

This house had once been the porter's lodge to a very grand mansion that stood on a hill overlooking the river. "Bellemont" was the name of the place and it had been owned from father to son by a family whose surname was Aymar. They were originally Huguenots, and tradition had it that they fled from France on the

night of the massacre of St. Bartholomew and after various restings in foreign lands found their way to America. Away up on the banks of the Hudson, in the midst of the forest primeval, Pierre Aymar had purchased many acres for a few gold coins, and on a commanding site had erected a mansion as nearly like the dear old chateau of his childhood as could be built in the new world. It was a square house seventy feet broad by seventy feet deep. The wide hall that ran through the center was the loveliest place in the world to sit in in summer; and on winter nights generations of little Aymars had played at games there, and youths and maidens had danced many a measure to the strains of the harpsichord in the drawing room.

During the Revolution the master of this house had joined the Continental army and fought gallantly to the end of the war. Strangely enough the British never molested Bellemont. It is said that the reason for this was that one of Clinton's staff was in love with a Fannie Aymar, who was a sad coquette and only led her Redcoat on, to give him his conge when the war was over, when she married a certain Herman Van-Renssalaer of the upper Hudson.

After the Revolution the history of this family was a mingling of sunshine and shadow, a story now of success, again of failure, until the broad acres had dwindled into a few. The household of Bellemont in the spring of 1851 consisted of "Gentleman Aymar," (as he was called,) his little new-born granddaughter, "Clare," and three colored servants. Little Clare's father, (Gentleman Aymar's only child) was an officer in the United States army and he was with his regiment at a post somewhere beyond the Rocky mountains.

The house that Larry Doonan had bought was just at the foot of a beautiful broad avenue that led up to the Aymar mansion, and it was not many years before Clare Aymar and Pat-

sey Doonan were good friends. When Clare Aymar was a tiny girl Grannie Doonan fell in love with her, for a fancied resemblance she thought the child bore to the young lady she had served across the sea, and from thenceforth she was the child's most willing slave. Grannie had a mind stored with hosts of charming tales and legends and in her clean sitting room on winter days, with Miss Clare enstalled in the seat of honor and Patsey on a low stool at her feet Grannie would recount "The adventures av the little rid hin" and other kindred tales to the children of her affection; or when summer days were long she would take her knitting and go with them to the old elm that shaded the grave of a little Clare Aymar whom the children were pleased to believe enjoyed their making a play ground of her resting place. A gray stone at the mound's head told in few quaintly lettered words that the little Clare had been "a good and duteous child," and they knew she had been "beauteous" as well, for her portrait in the library (done by Copley) told that. Like the present Clare she had been motherless and so she had lived a lonely life; the story is, that they found her one day lying as they supposed asleep, her hands full of flowers beside a sapling elm her small hands had planted; but little Clare never woke again and they buried her in the quaint old garden, and there she lies unto this day. But the children's dearest play ground was the attic holding such a wealth of past and gone imperishable plunder of every sort, kind and description. It would take pages and chapters to tell of all the games and merry-makings they had in that long, low room under the eaves while "Mammie Dinah," the faithful black nurse, sat by the dormer window with her open bible on her knee, generally fast asleep, though she would have been very indignant if anybody had accused her of such a thing.

It was in the garret that Captain Aymar found the children one stormy wintry afternoon when he chanced to be at home on a furlough. They were seated together on an hairy sole leather trunk, talking of the war-