

THE PAUL PRY.

"I HOPE I DON'T INTRUDE."

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LOITERINGS OF ARTHUR O'LEARY

FRAGMENT V.—MR. O'KELLY'S TALE.—PART I.

"I can tell you but little about my family," said my host, stretching his legs to the fire, crossing his arms easily before him. "My grand-father was in the Austrian service, and killed in some old battle with the Turks. My father Peter O'Kelly, was shot in a duel by an attorney from Youghal. Something about nailing his ear to the pump, I've heard tell a process, or something of the kind. No matter—the thief had pluck in him; and when Peter—my father that was—told him he'd make a gentleman of him and fight him, if he'd give up the bill of costs; why the temptation was too strong to resist—he pitched the papers into the fire—went out the same morning, and faith he put in his bullet as fair as if he was used to the performance. I was only a child then, ten or eleven years old, and so I remember nothing of the particulars; but I was packed off the next day to an old aunt's, a sister of my father's, who resided in the town of Tralee.

"Well, to be sure, it was a great change for me, young as I was, from Castle O'Kelly to Aunt Judy's. At home there was a stable full of horses, a big house, generally full of company, and the company as full of fun; we had a pack of harriers, went out twice or thrice a week, plenty of snipe shooting, and a beautiful race-course was made round the lawn: and though I wasn't quite of an age to join in their pleasures myself, I had a lively taste for them all, and relish-

ed the free-and-easy style of my father's house, without any unhappy forebodings that the amusements there practised would end in leaving me a beggar.

"Now my Aunt Judy lived in what might be called a state of painfully-ellegant poverty. Her habitation was somewhat more capacious than a house in a toy-shop, but then it had all the attributes of a house. There was a hall door, and two windows, and a chimney, and a brass knocker, I believe and a scraper; and within there was three little rooms, about the dimensions of a mail-coach each. I think I see the little parlour before me now this minute; there was a miniature of my father in a red coat over the chimney, and two screens painted by my aunt landscapes, I am told, they were once; but time and damp had made them look something like the moon seen through a bit of smoked glass; and there were fire irons as bright as day, for they never performed any other duty than standing on guard beside the grate, a kind of royal beef-eaters, kept for show; and there was a little table covered with shells and minerals, bits of coral, conches, and cheap curiosities of that nature, and over them again was a stuffed macaw. Oh, dear! I see it all before me, and the little tea-service, that if the beverage was vitriol, a cup full couldn't have harmed you. There were four chairs, human ingenuity couldn't smuggle in a fifth. There was one for Father Donnellan, another for Mrs. Brown, the post mistress, another for the barrack master, Captain Dwyer the fourth for my aunt herself, but then no more

were wanted. Nothing but real gentility, the 'ould Irish blood,' would be received by Miss Judy; and if the post mistress wasn't fourteenth cousin to somebody who was aunt to Phelim O'Brien, who was hanged for some human practice towards the English in former times, the devil a cup of bohea she'd have tasted there. The priest was 'ex officio' but Captain Dwyre was a gentleman born and bred. His great grand-father had an estate; the last three generations had lived on the very reputation of its once being in the family: 'they weren't upstarts, no sorrow bit of it;' 'when they had it they spent it,' and so on, were the current expressions concerning them. Faith I will say that in my time in Ireland—I don't know how it may be now—the aroma of a good property stood to the descendants long after the substance had left them; and if they only stuck fast to the place where the family had once been great, it took at least a couple of generations before they need think of looking out for a livelihood.

"Aunt Judy's revenue was something like eighty pounds a year, but in Tralee she was not measured by the income tax. 'Wasn't she own sister to Peter O'Kelly of the castle; didn't Brien O'Kelly call at the house when he was canvassing for the member, and leave his card;' and wasn't the card displayed on the little mahogany table every evening, and wiped and put by every morning for fifteen years; and sure the O'Kelly's had their own burial ground, the 'O'Kelly's pound,' as it were called being a square spot enclosed with a wall, and employed for all