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Up the Rhine

Hood, Thomas

London, 1840

To Rebecca Page, at the Woodlands, near Becknam, Kent

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TO REBECCA PAGE, AT THE WOODLANDS, NEAR
BECKNAM, KENT.

DEAR BECKY,—This is to say we ar all safe and well, tho' its a wunder, for forrin traveling is like a deceatful luvver, witch don't improve on acquaintance. Wat haven't I gone thro since my last faver! Fust morbust by bad Dutch warter, and then frited to deth at Nim Again with a false alarm of the French, besides a dredful could ketchd, by leavin my warm bed, and no time to clap on a varsal thing, xcept my best cap. Well, I've give three warnins, and the next, as master says, will be for good, even if I have to advertize for a plaice, but ketch me sayin no objexshuns to go abroad. Not but Missis have had her own trials, but that's between our too selves, for she wouldn't like it to git about that she have had a pitcht battel with a dwarf for a glass of gin. Then there's the batterd brass pale, and the Holland—only think, Becky, of the bewtiful Dutch linnin being confisticated by the Custom-house Cæsars! It was took up for dutis at the Garman outskirts. But, as I tould the officers, the King of Garmany ortn't to think only of the dutis dew to himself, but of his dutis towards his nabers. The Prushian customs is very bad customs, that's certin. Every thing that's xported into the country must pay by wait, witch naterally falls

most heaviest on the lightest pussers. There's dress. Rich folks can go in spider nets and gossamers, and fine gorses, but pore people must ware thick stuffs and gingums, and all sorts of coarse and doreable texters, and so the hard workin class cum to be more taxt than the upper orders, with their flimsy habbits. The same with other yuseful artikels. Wat's a silvur tooth pick in wait compared with a kitching poker, or a filligre goold watch to an 8 day clock? Howsumever, the Dutch linnin was confiscated in spite of my teeth, for Master chose to giv up the pint, and he deserves to go without a Shurt for his panes.

Amung other discomfits, theres no beds in the vessles up the Rind. So, for too hole days, we have been damp shifted, as they call it, without taking off our close, and, as you may suppose, I am tired of steeming. Our present stop is at Colon. They say its a verry old citty, and bilt by the Romans, and sure enuff roman noses didn't easily turn up. The natives must have verry strong oilfactories, that's certin. O, Becky, sich sniffs and guffs, in spite of my stuft hed! This mornin it rained cats and dogs, but the heaviest showrs cant pourify the place. It's enuff to fumigate a pleg. Won thing is the bad smells obleege strangers to buy the O de Colon, and praps the stenchis is encouraged on that account. The wust is, wen you want a bottel of the rite sort, theres so menny Farinacious impostors, and Johns and Marias, you don't know witch is him or her.

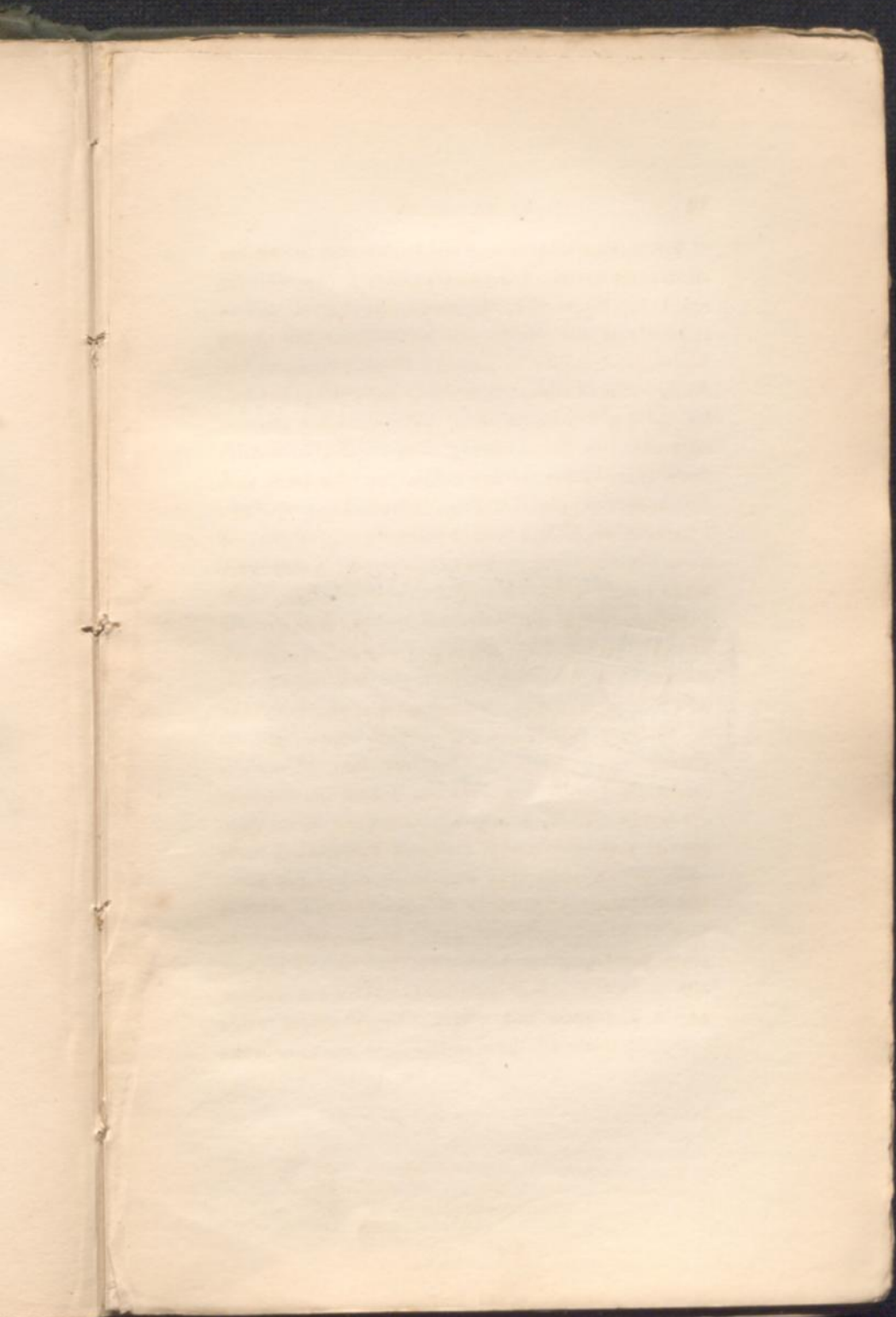
Colon is full of Sites. The principle is the Cathedrul,

and by rites theres a Crane pearcht on the tiptop, like the Storks in Holland ; but I was out of luck, or he was off a feeding, for he wasnt there. So we went into the Interium witch was performing Hi Mass, that's to say, me and one of the hottel waiters, who is playing the civel, and I can onely say its enuff to turn one's hed. Wat with the lofty pillers, and the picters, and the gelding and the calving, I felt perfectly dizzy, but wen the sunshin came rainbowin thro the panted glass winders, and the orgin played up, and the Quire of singers with their hevinly vices, and the Priest was insensed with the perfumery, down I went, willy nilly, on both nees, and was amost controverted into a Cathlick afore I knowed were I was ! Luckly, I rekollected Transmigration, witch I cant nor wont believe in, and that jumpt me up agin on my legs. Next, we see a prodigus chest, all of sollid Goold, and when you look through a little grating, you see the empty skulls of the wise kings. They're as brown as mogany, with crowns on, and their christian names ritten in rubbies, if so be it ant red glass. For they do say, wen the Munks run away from the French, they took the goold chest, and the three wonderful wise heds, along with them, and sackreligiously pickt out the best part of the volubles and jowls. As another peace of profannity, the hart of Mary de Medicine is left under a grave stone, in the church pavement—but where the rest of her body have been boddy snatcht to noboddy nose.

The next site was certinly an uncommon one,—a church chock full of the relicks of morality. I over heard Mr. Frank say, its praps the chastist stile of arkitekteter in the world. Howsomever, its full of the Skellitons of Saint Ursulus and Elevin Thowsand Old Maids. Their bones are stuck in the sealing, and into the walls, and under the flore, and into glass cases,—its nuthin but bones, bones, bones. But no wunder there was so menny spinsters afore time, considering that now-a-days they're tied down to won chance, namely, a Cathlick sweat-hart. Wat do you think, Becky, of three hunderd yung wimmin, onely the tother day, binding their selves, by a solum act and deed, in black and wite, never to marry any yung man as is Reformed? Theres a pretty way to cause everlastin seperations, instead of mattermony, between the male and female sects! And as for the marrid alreddy, theyre to take an affidavid that every Babby they have shall be brought up a Pappist! Wat can cum of such a derangement but unlegitimit constructions and domestic squablings. If anny thing can interdeuce discomfiture betwixt man and wife, its religus biggamy—I shuld have said Biggotry, but they boath sound the same. For my own parts, insted of objectin to a Cathlic, I should feel my Christian deuty to embrace him, as praps the happy Instrument, under Grace, of making him a convict. But enuff of Saint Ursulus and her Elevin Thowsend Old Maids. Onely among other curosicities, there was the identicle stone jarr as held the



FOUR-IN-HAND.



warter as was turned into wine at the marridge in Gallilee—an odd thing, thinks I, to show up a Weddin Relict along with so menny marters to Single blessidness. But arter all, the real mirakle, praps, is to see so menny single peple in a mob.

Next to fine sites, Colon swarms with raggid miserable objects, but I'm sorry I can't stop to shock you with them, being wanted to pack up. You know what that is with a figitty Missis, who is never happy except she's corded up over night, and on a Porter's back in the morning. To-morrow youl find us on the map of Coblense. I did hope we had dun with steeming, and were to go Dilligently by land; but after seeing the Male cum in, Master declined. Sure enuff, the coach is divided into three cages, and catch me travelin, says he, in a wild Beast carrivan. Besides, says he, if the leaders chuse to be misleaders, we ar shure to be over a precipus, for its a deal esier, says he, for the horsis to pull us down, then for the Postylion to pull 'em up. But sich is forrin traveling—as regards sarvants—if you an't drowneded, yure broken neckt, without any advantage to yureself. But I've fully maid up my mind, that the fust axident shall be a thurrow split and a rupter, and a break off of evry thing between me and Missis. Lord nose I'm willin to live and die for her, but not to have a put out sholder or a fractious leg.

Give my love to Cook, and to Peggy, and to John Futman, not forgettin Mister Butler up at the Hall,—and tell them my Hart is in its old place, in spite of

a change of situation. With the same sentiment towards yureself, I remane, dear Becky, yure loving Frend,

MARTHA PENNY.

Poscrip.—Don't go to suppose any think partickler betwixt me and the Vally de Sham de place. To be shure, he did try to talk luv nonsinse in broken English, and asked me how I shud like a Germin man. Man means husband in their languidge. But as I tould him there was two grate objectshuns. Praps yure a Lutherin, says he. No, says I, I'm a Cristian, but it an't that—my scrupples is irreligious. What's them, says he. Why, then, says I, its backer and garlick. And it ant pleasant to have a sweathart as can't come nigh won without yure being fumigatid. So my gentilman took miff—but wheres the trew luv if a lover won't give up a nasty puffy habbit?



TOM PIPES.



" I DO BESPECH YOU PLAY UPON THIS PIPE."

