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Up the Rhine

Hood, Thomas

London, 1840

To Rebecca Page

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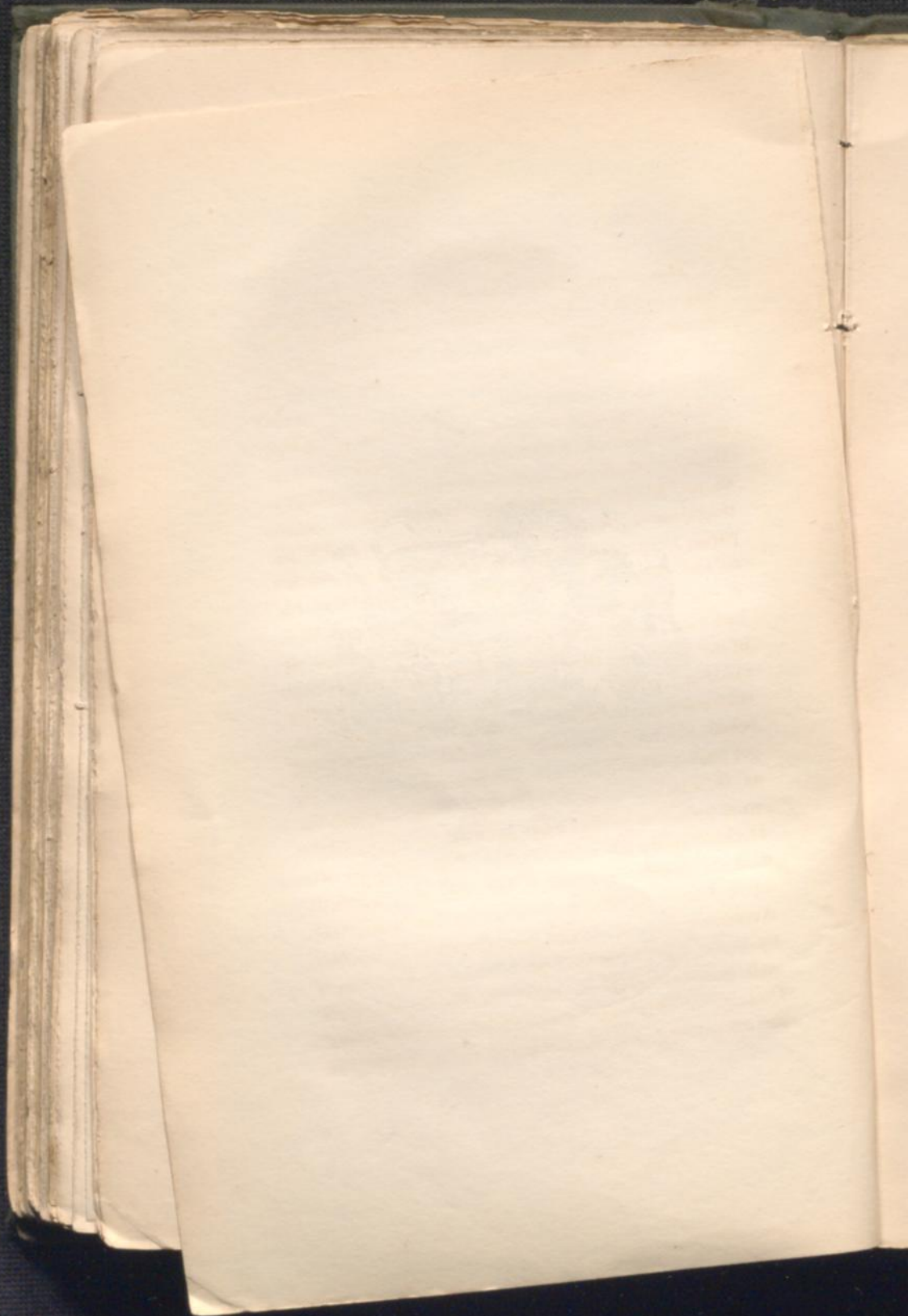
TO REBECCA PAGE.

DEAR BECKY,—Missis being gone off to bed betimes, I take the oportunity to set up to rite to you how we get on. At this present we are at Bon, an old town with very good prospex, but dredful uproarus by reason of its Collidge, and so menny Schollards, witch as I've experenst at Oxfud, always make more desturbans and hubbub then the ignorent and unlearned. To be sure wen the Germin ones are not making a noys, they sing bewtiful, witch is sum amends. Its been like a voele consort all the evening in the streets. But then such figgers! It seems every won's studdy by dressing up and transmogrifying, to make himself as partickler as he can. Sum have square beards, sum have triangle ones, sum have two mustaches, and sum contrive to have three, by sticking another on their chins. Thinks I, wen the hollydis cum, it must be a wise Father as nose his hone son!

But its the same in Garmany with the brute beas-tasses witch are no more left to natur then the human creturs. I mean the canine specious. One fine day, all at once, as if by command of the Lord Mare, lo and behold there was every Dog little or big, as had any hare, long or short on the scruff of his neck, metti-morfust into a Lion!



"ALL IN ONE DAY."



This arternoon we made a carridge incursion to a place called the Krook's Burge. After passing seven crosses, before hand, you cum to a very holy Church on the top of a hill, with the identicle flite of stares as led up to Ponshus Pilot's seat, and the drops of blud that fell from our Savior. As such its the hite of wickedness to walk up them xcept on your nees. And oh Becky what do think—I wouldn't have had it happen to me, for pounds upon pounds, but Missis was so thoughtless as stand upon the top stare, whereby the parish clark called out quite horrifide, witch scard her so, she scuttled a full half-way down. Howsumever, it was husht up, and she got over it—but if so be it had been *my* case, I think my feet would often fly in my face. Besides, I have sinse heard a story that made my verry blud run could. One day an English lady stood on purpus on the top stare to show her un-beleaf. But a judgment fell upon her. Afore she could get back to Bon, her feet begun to ake and swell as big as elifants, and partickly the soles as had sinned the wust turned cole black and begun to mortify. All the Dockters in the place couldn't stop it, and she must have died in tormints here and hereafter wen sumbody advized to go up the holy stares on her bendid nees. Accordingly witch she did, and no sooner got to the tip-top wen lo and behold her feet in a moment was as well and as sound as ever! In course she turnd Cathlick direckly, and in the gratefulness of her hart she offered up too littel moddles of feet in ivory, with

the toe nails of goold. Thats wat I call a mirakel, tho sum pepel may chuse to dout. But as a party you dont know says, what's faith? As for beleavin whats only plain and probberble, and nateral, says he, its no beleaf at all. But wen you beleave in things totally unpossible and unconsistent and uncomprensible, and direct contrary to natur, that is real true down-rite faith, and to be sure so it is.

— And now, Becky, it must never go furder, but be kep a religus secret betwixt our two selves, but ever sinse Colon Cathedrul I have been dredful unsettled in my mind with spirituou pints. It seemed as if I had a call to turn into a Roman. Besides the voice in my hone inward parts, I've been prodigusly urged and advized by the Party you don't know to becum a prostelyte, and decant all my errors, and throw meself into the buzzum of Rome. Cander compels to say, its a verry cumfittable religun, and then such splendid Churchis and alters and grand cerimonis, and such a bewtiful musicle service, and so many mirakles and wunderful reliets besides, plain Church of England going, partickly in the country parts, do look pore and mean and pokey after it, thats the truth. To be sure theres transmigration, but even that I mite get over in time, for we can beleave any thing if we really wish to. Its a grate temptation, and provided I felt quite certin of bettering meself, I would convert meself at once. But Lord nose, praps its all the wurk of Satan at bottom awanting me to deny my Catkism and throw off the Minister I've set

under so menny years. Oh, Becky, its terribel hard wurk to argufy yureself out of yure own persuasion! You may supose with such contrary scrupples and inward feelings pulling two ways at once, wat trubbles and tribbleation I go thro! The wust is my low fits and cryings cant be hid from Missis, who have questiond me very closely, but if she once thoght I was agoing to turn and alter my religun, it wood soon be, Martha, sute yureself, witch to be throne out of place in a forrin land would be very awkwurd; and as such praps would be most advizable to put off my beleaving in any thing at all, till our return to Kent. Besides, Becky, you may feel inclind, on propper talking to, to give up yure own convixions too, and in that case we can both embrace the Pope at the same time. As yet no sole suspex xcept Mr. Frank, who ketched me crossing meself by way of practis before the glass. Goodness nose what he ment, but ho, ho, Martha, says he, so you've got into the clutchis of the Proper Gander.

Besides the holy stares, theres another mirakel in the Volt under the Krooks burge Church, namely, abuv a skore of ded Munks, sum of them as old as fore hundred sentries, yet perfickly fresh and sweet. They say its the sanktimoniousness of the place that has preserved them so long, witch is like enuff. But oh, Becky, its an awful site, and will set me dreeming of Ghostesses and Could Munks for a munth to cum. Our next stop was at Poplar's Dorf, where there is a Brittish Museum

full of all sorts of curiosities, such as oars from the Minors, wooden timber trees made of coal, and particularly some petrified frogs, which I was told had been pelted till they turned into stone. The poor frogs do get sadly pelted that's certain.

After the museum we drove home, and a rare fright and narrow escape we had by the way as you may judge. It was getting rather duskish, when all of a sudden out jumped a very ill-looking young man from behind a tree, and began running behind the carriage. He was dressed exactly like a Bandit, such as you see in a play at Drewry Lane or Common Garden; but besides, I overheard young Master say he supposed he was one of Shiller's gang of Robbers. A pretty hearing for us females! Howsoever as Missis didn't screech no more did I—but you may be sure I set and quacked all the way, till we got safe into Bon.

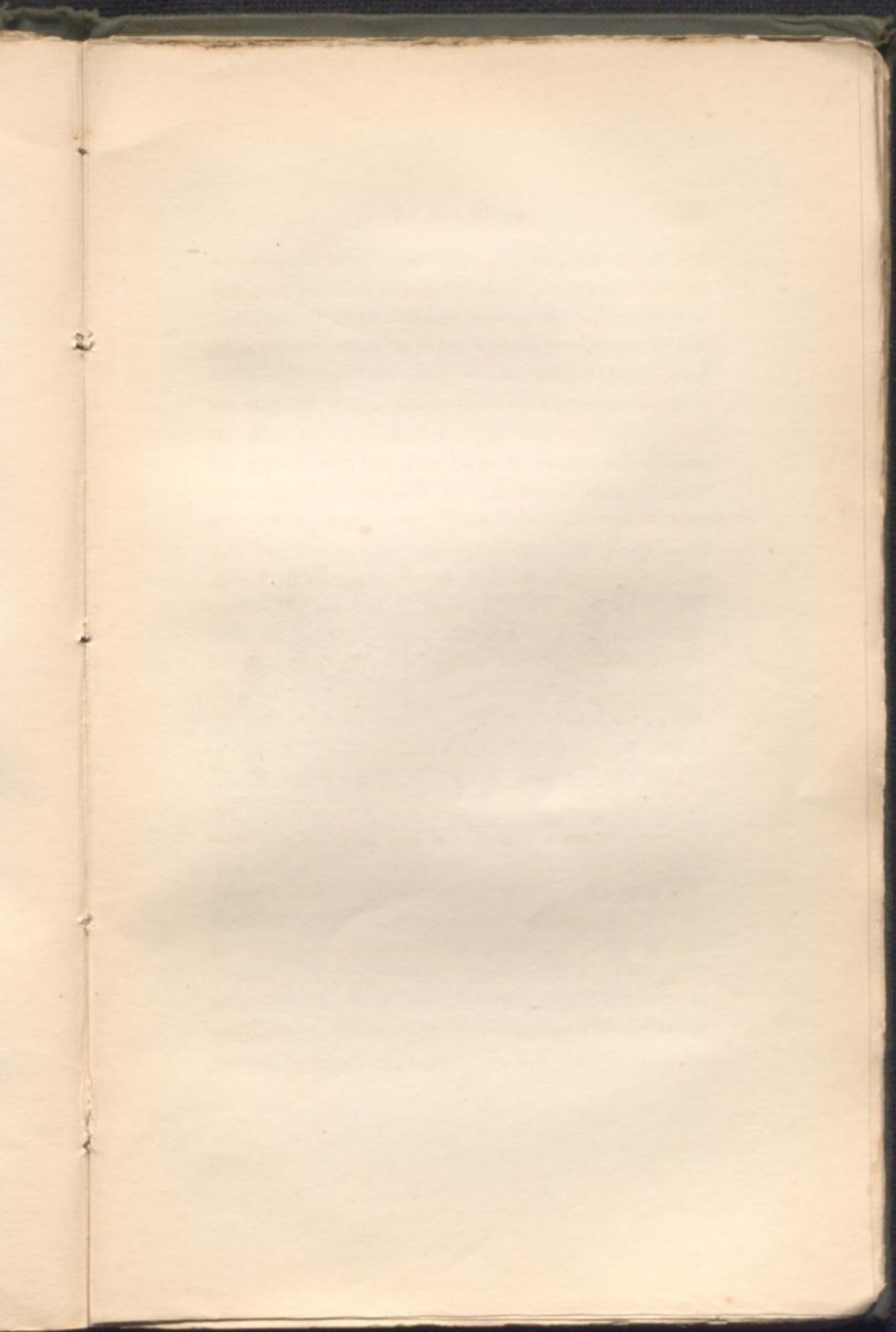
The family is all in their ordinary way. Master as usual talks of dying without going off—but human nature will cling to this world like a pudden when you haven't buttered the dish. If any thing Missis takes on rather less than she used to about her poor dear late: and as for Mr. Frank, he's so hearty he's quite a pieter. Wishing you the same, and with love to all enquiring friends, I remain, dear Becky, your loving friend till death,

MARTHA PENNY.

P.S.—The fair sects have a hard place in Germany. I forgot to say in our incursion we saw plenty of wimmin,



"AND BEAUTY DRAWS US BY A SINGLE HAIR."



a toilin and moilin at mens labers in the roads and fields. But thats not the wust, theyre made beasts of. Wat do you think, Becky, of a grate hulkin feller, a lolluping and smoking in his boat on the Rind, with his pore Wife a pullyhawling him along by a rope, like a towin horse on the banks of the Tems!

TO GERARD BROOKE, ESQ.

MY DEAR GERARD,—After the postscript of my last letter, you will not be surprised to hear, that a longer stay at Bonn was strongly objected to by my Uncle, who, having “not many days to live,” sets a peculiar value on his nights. Like myself, he had been annoyed by the nocturnal rattling and singing,—and indeed he declared in the morning that he would as lief reside “next door to Vauxhall.”

The arrival of the first steam-boat was therefore the signal for our departure; and bidding adieu to Bonn with an emphatic “*Peace be with you,*” we embarked in the Prince William. It had brought a tolerable assortment of tourists from Cologne, and amongst the rest our old acquaintance the Red-faced man. For some reason he fought particularly shy of my Unele,—but with myself he was as communicative and complaining as usual. He gave me to understand that he