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Up the Rhine

Hood, Thomas

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Extracts from a letter to Gerard Brooke, Esq.

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EXTRACTS

FROM A LETTER TO GERARD BROOKE, ESQ.

THIS is simply to announce my safe return to the banks of the Rhine. The rest of the family party met me at Mayence, and we returned together to Coblenz, quite enchanted with the scenery of one of the finest portions of the renowned river. The alleged reason for my recal was the lateness of the season; but I rather suspect my worthy Uncle is impatient to relate his observations and adventures to his old friends Bagshaw and the Doctor,—as my Aunt is eager to impart her wanderings to Miss Wilmot. Like other travellers, they are longing to publish—and no doubt will talk quartos and folios when they return to Woodlands.

The changes I found in the family on my return, were almost as strange as those which so astonished Rip Van Winkle on awaking from his supernatural sleep. He was literally a new man. His warnings had had warning, and gone off for good: and he has now no more idea of dying than a man of twice his age:—a paradox in sound, but a philosophical truth. My Aunt, instead of perpetually reminding us that she is a disconsolate widow, has almost forgotten it herself: and it is only on a dull and very wet day that we hear of “poor George.” Even Martha is altered for the

better, for she is reconciled to her mistress, to herself, and to her old religion. The truth is, that her zeal in the new one was so hot, that, like a fire with the blower on, it soon burnt itself out. Her mistress says, the re-conversion was much hastened by a very long procession, on a very warm day, which Martha accompanied, and returned dusty, dry, famished, and foot-sore, and rather sorry, no doubt, that she had ever given up her seat under the Reverend Mr. Groger.

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You will be glad to hear that poor Markham has so won my Uncle's esteem, that the latter promises, between himself and Bagster, to take his affairs in hand and set them to rights. Markham, of course, is delighted; and the change in his own prospects makes him take much pleasanter views both of men and things.

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In short, Gerard, if you or any of your friends ever suffer from hypochondriasis, weak nerves—melancholy—morbid sensibility—or mere ennui—let me advise you and them, as you value your lives, health, and spirits—your bodies and your minds—to do as we have done, and go UP THE RHINE.

THE END.