

Original.

ZEKE DYER, AND ONE OF HIS YARNS.

A SHORT, BUT VERITABLE HISTORY.

BY MRS. SEBA SMITH.

EZEKIEL DYER, or, as he was always familiarly called, Old Zeke, was a genuine sailor of the old school, delighting in long yarns, big quids of tobacco, and a glass of grog; not that Zeke was ever known to be "the worse for liquor;" no, no, he was a staunch advocate for temperance, in his own way, namely—that every man should take "jeest as much, and no more, than he can well bare; for you see," he would say, giving his duck, pantaloons an expressive hitch, and rolling his huge quid to a lodgement between his gums and cheek, that it might be no impediment to his tongue, "you see, some kind o' craft is built shoal, and carries little or nothing in the shape of cargo or ballast, while another 'll be deeper made, and carries a nation sight more: now, 'twould be redikilous to put as much cargo into the shoal concern, as into the deeper—jeest so it is with a man's head: you'll see one that's clear'n upshot by one glass, and another that 'll keep stiff and above board with well nigh on to a quart." Here he gave his mug a complacent sip, and a wink to the by-standers, as much as to say, "you can make the application to suit yourselves."

I remember Old Zeke, when I was a child, as always being seated on a rude bench near to the "Ferry House," in a little village that bore the euphonious name of Perpooduck. Always in passing back and forth, I as much expected to see Old Zeke on the bench under the sign-post, as to see the sign. It would have been no less strange if Zeke had failed to regard us school children with a most comical cast of the mouth, intended for a smile, in which the under lip did service in the shape of a dam to hold back the supply of tobacco, and a most peculiar twinkle of his small red eye, intended as approval. I know I am describing a somewhat unattractive sort of personage, and yet Old Zeke was a universal favorite. Apparently the idlest man, in an idle and decoying village, he was, in fact, the busiest man there. Never were such long yarns as Old Zeke told! Lucky for him, that his lot fell where the people had little to do but listen. Then, not a mischievous boy in the full tide of successful experiment in his mad pranks, but would drop his head and desist, did the eye of Old Zeke fall upon him. The disobedient were subdued, and reformed, by the admonitions of the old man. A group of boys were always collected about him to listen to his stories; but, did a neighboring door open, and the shrill, prolonged scream of a matron, summon one of them home, Zeke would stop his narration, fix his eye upon the boy, and wait 'till he moved to go; often adding—"That's right, Bill," or Jack, as the case might be, "always mind your mother; a mother's curse, or a mother's sigh, is heavy lading, and always sure to carry down the ship!" then, perhaps, he would leave the tale unfinished to relate one more to the point.

Perpooduck stands directly opposite the flourishing little city of P., with its white houses, and many churches, its bustling quays and quiet streets, its hospitality and exclusiveness, its handsome women and talented men, and many more things, as the advertisements say, too numerous to mention. Well, Perpooduck, that is, eight or ten houses, the Ferry House, a fish-house, a decayed wharf, one shop, and a meeting-house, most forlornly perched upon the top of a bleak wasted hill, about a mile from the worshippers, and a school house, which almost indecorously turns its back upon the opposite city, as if in contempt of its churches, school-houses, and indeed every thing appertaining thereto. Well, to start again, all this at one time was the great place, "the town;" it was first settled, the shipping was built there, sailed from there, and the fashionables lived there. But all this was years and years ago, for even the people of Perpooduck, unpromising as they might seem to be to make such an immense discovery, actually did perceive, after the rising and falling of the tide twice in every twenty-four hours, for about seventy years, that the water upon the opposite side was really more bold, and better adapted to the purposes of commerce, than that upon which they lived, where the flats, for something like a half a mile, are full of "honey-pots" and little breathing-holes for clams. Well, no sooner were these great discoveries made, than the fate of Perpooduck was sealed. From being "the town," she became only a miserable appendage to her more flourishing neighbor. Every thing went to decay. People looked askance at those who crossed the ferry, to know if they really were "Pooduckers," for thus was the term corrupted, or whether they were attached to the Fort, a military station at the entrance of the harbor. It was a sad time for the Pooducker's, for thus we may as well designate them.

This was the state of affairs at the time of our history, for history it is. Old Zeke had belonged to the place in its palmier days, when he had been mate to "as neat a ship as ever carried sail;" but times were changed, and Zeke changed with them. The shipping declined; one after another decaying from age, or perishing at sea, and Zeke, who never thought of sailing in a ship belonging to the obnoxious side of the harbor, was finally thrown out of employment, and became a village idler; tolerated by the matrons, a crony with the men, and the favorite of all the little lovers of sea-stories, and eaters of ginger-bread and candy.

Often might the old man be seen about the old fish-house, helping to turn the fish upon the flakes where they dried in the sun, or standing about the neglected ship-yard, where he had seen many a good ship upon the stocks, in days gone by. At such times, his rugged and good-natured face assumed a comical expression of sentiment as he looked round where the grass was springing amid chips of timber, and the rust lay heavily upon corroding bolts and chains. The sight was sure to lead him into a numeration of all the vessels he had there seen launched, their names, owners, and whole history, down to the final catastrophe of storm and

wreck. Happy the child who caught him in these moods, for Old Zeke would be sure to relate tales of peril and "hair-breadth escapes," well worth the hearing.

At one time there was an impulse given to business even in Pooduck, and a brig was actually reared upon the stocks. Great was the excitement every where in the village, but greatest of all, in the person of Old Zeke. It would seem as if the fire of his youth were renewed. He blew the smoke from his pipe with a brisker air, jerked his pantaloons twice as often, and even set his old tarpawling jauntingly upon his head. He would sit for hours upon a stick of timber, listening to the click-a-click of the workmen, as if the sound were the best of music, and so in fact it was to the old man, reviving the days of youth, and relieving the monotony of age.

It was a great day when the "Brig Lydia" was launched—great was the throng of people, and great the exultation of the Pooduckers. Old Zeke shook his head when she stuck in her course to the sea; but when she reached it, his hurrah, thrice repeated, was loud and long. Then came the rigging. Zeke was as much on the alert, as if the property had been his own, splicing ropes, uncoiling cables, and always joining the workmen in every song, whether in tune or out, for it would be a severe day when a sailor could not make his own tune. Well, the brig was rigged and went to sea, and Old Zeke again renewed his rounds, from the ferry-house to the fish-house, and thence to the ship-yard, where he would stand looking off upon the water with a sad and half vacant look. Then was the time for a story, and though Old Zeke would call us all sorts of land-lubber names when we gathered about him, yet there was always a twinkle of the eye, that showed it pleased him.

I must tell one of Old Zeke's last stories, because it was the one that made the deepest impression upon my mind; first premising, that Zeke was a firm believer in omens and presentiments, in mermaids and ghosts. As to that, so were most of his hearers, very few indeed of us having become so unfortunately wise as to lose the zest of a wild story by any unreasonable doubts as to its verity. So, then, we were all able to listen with staring eyes, "goose flesh," and hair crawling upon our heads.

OLD ZEKE'S YARN.

I was mate in the trim ship Morgianna, Richard Lee, commander. The Morgianna, was as nice a craft as ever dipped the water, but a doomed ship from the very first. She was owned by old —, as big a rascal as ever escaped the halter. He cheated the workmen out of nigh about half their wages by his parlaying blarney, and that too, after keeping them on half allowance of grog. No good would come of it, and so in truth she stuck when going off the stocks, which was saying as plain as dumb thing could say, that she had not a long cruise to run. I was right loth to go in her, any way, but Richard Lee was to be Captain, and no sailor could refuse to sail under him. He was as true as steel, nobody ever knew him to flinch, let the case be what it

might; and then, he carried an eye, that took the soul out of the toughest seaman, that ever opened a pair of clam-shells.

"Do sailors always have to open clams?" said Tommy D., who was on a visit from the country. We all laughed, and Zeke chuckled him under the chin, and said—"Yes, when he opens his lips. But, as I was saying, Cap'n Lee had a terrible eye, full and black as a squall; but then he had a true sailor heart, did'er climb into the ship through the cabin winders, but come regully up from the fore-castle.

Well, we'd been cruising about the West Ingy Islands, exchanging freight and-so-forth, and on our return voyage, somewhere in latitude—"Oh, never mind the latitude, nor longitude neither," cried a dozen little shrill, sharp, eager voices, all in one breath. Well, well, we was somewhere in the Gulf-Stream. It was my watch on deck, and a pale young man, that went out for his health, because he writ poetry, and sot up nights making faces at the moon, came and stuck himself down astern of me. I didn't like it jest right, for I was thinkin of Sakey Bacon, and a nice gal she was. Howsomever, I tried to look civil, and said nothing. He had sat there about a half an hour, when I, tipping an eye all around the horizon, to keep a look-out for squalls, that are always keepin the deuce to pay in them seas, I see a brik light off to the nor-east.

"What's the kick up off there," says I, spoin it to be some craft a-fire. With that the young man ran down, and up comes Cap'n Lee, his great eyes lookin as if they was 'nt never made to shut, no how."

"What have we here?" says he, seizing the speaking-trumpet and puttin it to his mouth, as if he feared nobody; for the thing was bearing down upon us, before a light wind, and we could see her spars, and sails, and her light rigging in the midst of the flame. Soon as she came in speakin distance, Cap'n Lee hailed her.

"Ship-a-hoy, Mr. Beezlehub; where are you from, where bound, and what's your cargo?"

My hair stood right on eend, and the strange sail came down upon us, and almost touched our stern. 'Twas an awful sight. I must say she'd a ben a nice model for a ship, barrin the pattern was made by old Nick himself; but every thing was so trim and easy, and she lay down to the water so handsome, that I was sure he must some time or other have been a sailor himself, to do the thing so handsomely. To be sure, where her hull touched the water, there was a terrible sizzlin. Well, down she came along side, and, sure enough, we could see Old Nick himself standing to the helm, like any Cap'n; and there, chained fast, with a red-hot chain, stood old —, the owner of the Morgianna. He gin us a terrible look as he went by, and lifted up both hands in a way that was piteous to behold. But I really believe his mouth was sewed up, or he would have spoke.

Cap'n Lee laid his hand, alem-like, upon my shoulder. "Zeke," says he, "I believe Satan has got his due," and he took out the log-book, and sat down the circumstance, and the latitude and longitude, day of the month,

week, and hour of the night. Well, we had a rough time of it after this, squalls and gales; was blown off two or three times. After a time, we got in, and the first news we heard was, that old — was dead. Cap'n Leo looked at me, and I looked at him. We found out jest the time the old sinner died, and sure enough, 'twas jest the same hour and minnit that we saw him off there, aboard that blazin craft, smokin with brimstone.

So much for the story of Old Zeke. The old man got up and walked away, for the recital had wrought powerfully upon his own imagination, and we children stood huddled together with pale faces; and little Tommy D., had grasped my arm so tightly, as to leave black and blue spots for a long time afterwards. The rest of the stories connected with the Morgianna, must be deferred to another time.

Original.

VOICES OF HOME.

BY MRS. M. ST. LEON LOUD.

Voices of home! ye are on the breeze,
Ye are sighing soft through the budding trees;
Spring has come with a gentle reign,
And ye are sounding o'er hill and plain.
From a far green valley, ye come, ye come!
Speak to the wanderer, voices of home!
Tell me of those I shall see no more,
Of all I loved in the days of yore.

List! from the bank where the violet lies,
Where the honey-bee for his treasure flies—

A voice of home!

"The bowers thou hast twined are green and fair,
Thickly the blossoms are clustering there,
Wilt thou not come!

Sweet is the air with the breath of Spring,
Birds are abroad on a glancing wing;
Each wild strain from their joyous throats,
Like a bursting chorus of welcome notes,
Recalls thee home!"

Voices of home! would ye bear me back
To the scenes of my childhood's sunny track?
Would ye win me away from my chosen lot,
To pleasures the gay world knoweth not?
Tell me, oh! tell me, of that loved hearth,
Where cluster the joys and hopes of earth.
Speak of the home I shall see no more,
And of all I loved in the days of yore.
Hark! from the stream as it murmurs by,
In the sunlight making glad melody—

A voice of old!

"Green is the bank where thy young feet strayed,
Cool is the air in the willow shade,

And waves of gold

Are flashing bright in the noontide ray,
And music sounds where the fountains play;
Come! for the flowers and young birds are there,
The clear stream flows and thy home is fair,
As in days of old."

Voices of home! do ye mock my prayer?
Do the feet of my kindred still linger there?
And she whose love like a holy star,
Hath shone on my path in the world afar—
Are the eyes still bright that upon me smiled,
And prayeth she still for her absent child?
Brothers and sisters! oh! where are they,
Have they pass'd like me from that home away?
Again! as the wind the green leaves stir'd,
The wail of a mournful voice was heard—

A household tone!

"I swept alone through the empty halls,
And waved the grass on the mouldering walls,
And the dark hearth-stone:

I moved the billow to mighty wrath,
As a tall ship sped on its ocean path;
And scattered the leaves from a pale white rose,
As I pass'd o'er the graves where the dead repose,
Alone! alone!

Voices of home! ye are gone! ye are gone!
Ye pass'd away in that last sad tone;
Call me no more for the home is dark,
Where I turn'd like a dove to its shelt'ring ark;
The flowers I nursed may in splendor vie,
With the rainbow hues of the Summer sky—
The joyful burst of the wild bird's song,
And the music of waters that glide along—
Though all that is glorious, all that is fair,
In the face of nature still dwelleth there,
It is home no more!

For the golden links of affection's chain,
By death's dark angel are broke in twain,
And the dream is o'er;
Voices of home! farewell, farewell!
Pass on in the midst of the loved to dwell;
A sweeter voice to my lonely heart,
Speaks of a home where kindred part,
No more, no more.

Original.

M A N .

FROM THE POLISH OF KROPIŃSKI.

BY W. G. HOWARD.

They reared him a monument gorgeous, sublime,
Which seemed to defy the convulsions of time;
And man thought that the terrible might of his hand,
The invasions of change and decay could withstand;
Then inflated with pride, he breached the vain cry,
Oh! how noble, how mighty, how CHAINLESS am I!

At this moment, the clouds gathered darkly on high,
And the red lightnings gleamed from the depths of the sky;

The live thunder uttered its deep startling sound,
The proud monument tottered and fell to the ground:
Then terror's black pinions o'ershadowed the man,
(While the blood through his system more speedily ran);
And extorted the bitter, the penitent cry,—
Oh! how little, how little, how LITTLE am I!