

The ventriloquist, thinking that the joke had been carried far enough, explained how he had played upon their credulity. They listened to him at first with curiosity; but when he had finished, the old people shook their heads with an air of unbelief.

"This is good to tell children," murmured an old grandmother, "but people of experience are not to be imposed upon. It is not the first time that animals have been known to speak, as is related in the Bible of Balaam and his ass. Besides, the almanac predicted this event, and announced that, about the middle of August, three days earlier or later than this, there would take place something remarkable in the world."

The ventriloquist insisted, and sought to prove what he advanced, but his listeners withdrew with distrust, persuaded that he wished to deceive them.



VOYAGE OF AN ELEPHANT FROM INDIA.



N one of my voyages, it was my good-fortune to have as a shipmate one of the great ones of the East—a personage of vast weight in his *own* country, and still more run after and admired on his arrival in *this*. Though he came on board with but one attendant, and with no luggage but a single trunk, he trod the deck with as firm a step and as lordly a mien as if he had been one of the magnates of the ship, as well as of the land. The captain himself was fain to keep at a respectful distance from his passenger. He was silent and reserved in his demeanor; and the only person whom he honored with exclusive friendship and attention, was a little whey-faced, under-sized, dirty fellow, who acted as butcher on board. Be not surprised at this singular preference, gentle reader; the passenger with a single trunk was the same elephant which now exhibits its lordly form in the Regent Park Zoological Gardens; and it was but natural that he should feel particularly attached to the man whose constant care it was to administer to his wants, and to study to gratify his peculiar tastes.

In all large East India ships there is a space between the booms,