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The Strange and Wonderful HISTORY
OF
Mother Shipton,
Plainly setting forth
Her prodigious Birth, Life, Death, and Burial.
With an exact Collection of all her famous
PROPHECYS
More Compleat than ever yet before published. And large Explanations, shewing how they have all along been fulfilled to this very YEAR.
Licensed according to Order.

Printed for W. H. and sold by J. Conyers in Fetterlane. 1686.
[Only Two Hundred and Fifty Copies Printed]

For Edwin Pearson,

(Late of 64, St. Martin's Lane,)

36, ST. MARTIN'S COURT, CHARING CROSS, LONDON, W.C.

January 1870.

[The quaint old Wood Engravings which illustrate this Reprint are not mere Facsimiles, but are printed from the Original Wood Blocks (used in various early editions of this celebrated book upwards of 200 years ago) now in the possession of the Publisher.]
The History of Mother Shipton.

CHAP. I.

Of Mother Shiptons strange Parentage, and the place of her Birth.

MOTHER SHIPTON (as all Histories agree) was a Yorkshire woman; but the particular place is very much disputed, because several Towns have pretended to the honour of her Birth; But the most credible and received opinion ascribes it to Nascborough, near the dropping well in the County aforesaid; concerning her Pedigree or Parentage there are likewise very various reports; Some say that her Father was a Necromancer, and that skill in the black Art thereby became intail'd upon her by inheritance; but the com-
mon story (which therefore I shall follow, yet without forcing the Reader to believe it whether he will or no) is, That she never had any Father of humane Race, or mortal Wight, but was begot (as the great Welch Prophet Merlin was of old) by the Phantasm of Apollo, or some wanton Airial Demon, in manner following.

Her Mother (whom some Records call Agatha, and others Emmatha) being left an Orphan about the Age of sixteen, very poor, and much troubled with that grievous, but common disease, called by some idleness, and by others Sloth; as she was once upon a time sitting, bemoning her self on a shady bank by the Highway side, this spirit appear'd to her in the shape of a very handsom young man, and smiling on her, Pretty Maid (quoth he) why dost thou sit so sad? Thou art not old enough to have thy Head pestered with the cares of the World; prithee tell me the business, and doubt not but I will help thee out of all thy troubles. The Maid (for Maids there were in those days at her age), casting up her eyes, and not suspecting a devil hid in so comely a countenance, related to him her wants, and that she knew not how to live; pish!
pish! said he, that's nothing, be but ruled by me, and thou shalt never lack; she hearing him promise so fairly, told him she would; and thereupon to draw her in by degrees to destruction he first tempted her to Fornication, and prevailed so far as to gain her, but his Touches, (as she afterwards confessed to the Midwife) were as cold as Ice or Snow; From this time forward she was commonly once a day visited by her Hellish Gallant, and never wanted money, For still as she swept her house she should find some odd pieces, as Ninepences, Quarters of thirteen pence half-pennies, and the like, sufficient to supply all her occasions.

C H A P. 2.

How Mother Shiptons Mother proved with child how she fitted the severe justice, and what hap-pned at Her delivery.

The neighbours observing Agatha without any employ to live so handsomely, wondered exceedingly how she came by it, but were more surpris'd shortly afterward, when they perceiv'd her to be with child, which she could not
not long hide, for before her delivery, she was as big as if she had gone with half a dozen children at once; whereupon she was carried before a Justice, who chid and threatned her for her Incontinency, but he was soon silenced, (for his Wife and all his Family being present) Agatha said to him aloud, Mr. Justice, Gravely you talk now, and yet the truth is, your worship is not altogether free, for here stands two of your Servant wenches, that are both at this time with child by you, pointing to them severally with her finger; at which both himself and the two Girls were so blank, That his wife plainly saw what she said was true, and therefore fell upon two poor Harlots like a fury, so all Mr. Justice & the Constable could do was not enough to keep the peace, and the whole Family was in such confusion, that Agatha for that time was dismist; and soon after was brought to bed in the Month of July, in the 4. year of the Reign of King Henry the 7th, which was in the year of our Lord 1488. Her travel was very grievous, and a most terrible clap of Thunder hapned just as she was delivered of this
strange Birth, which afterward was so famous by the name of Mother *Shipton*. Nor could the Tempest affright the Women more than the prodigious Physiognomy of the Child; the Body was long, but very big-bon'd, great Gogling eyes, very sharp and fiery, a Nose of unproportionable length, having in it many crooks and turnings, adorned with great Pimples, which like vapors of brimstone gave such a lustre in the night, that her Nurse needed no other Candle to dress her by; and besides this uncouth shape, it was observ'd, that as soon as she was born, she fell a laughing and grinning after a jeering manner, and immediately the Tempest ceased.

**CHAP. 3.**

*By what Name Mother Shipton was Christned, and how her Mother went into a Monastery.*

The Child being thus brought into the *World*, under such *strange circumstances* was (though not without some opposition) *ordered* at last by the Abbot of *Beverly* to be christned, which was *performed* by the name of *Ursula*,
Ursula Soothtell; For the later was her Mothers, and consequently her Maiden surname; and as for Shipston, it was the name of her Husband, whom she afterwards married, as will appear in the sequel of this History, and in this particular most of the Authors I’ve read have been foully mistaken; but to proceed, when she was about two years old, her Mother coming to be sensible of her evil, in holding a correspondency with a wicked spirit, aplying her self to several Religious men of great note in those times, by whose grave Advice she grew truly penitent, and (according to the fashion of that Ages devotion) put her self into a neighboring Monastery, having first put out her Child with a piece of money to a Friend, and so spent the Remainder of her days in the famous Covent of the order of St. Bridget, neer Nottingham, in prayers & tears, & other Acts of Pennance, to expiate the wickedness of her youth; But wonderful it is to relate the troubles that befel the Nurse she was put to, for her father, the foul Fiend, is reported several times to have visited her, particularly one day the Nurse having been abroad, when she returned she
she found her door open, whereupon fearing she was robb'd, she call'd three or four neighbors and their Wives to go into the house with her, but before they got well into the Entry, they heard a strange noise, as if there had been a thousand Cats in consort, which so dismaid them, that they all ran towards the door endeavouring to get out agen, but in vain for every one of them had got Yokes on their Necks, that they could not possibly return, but soon after the Yokes fell off, and then a Coulstaff was laid on 2 of the mens shoulders, upon which an old Woman presented her self stark naked, sometimes hanging by the heels sometimes by the toes, anon by the middle, with divers other postures, while the women having all their Coats turned over their ears, exposed their shame to publique view, and so continued till a Fryer accidentally came to the house, and then they were suddenly released; but still the child having been taken out of the cradle, could not be found, till at last one of the company looking by chance up the chimney, saw it stark naked sitting a straddle upon the Iron to which the Pot-hooks was fastned, whence they
they took it down without the least hurt, and so far from being frightened, that it seemed by its monstrous smiles to be very well pleased at these pleasant Exploits.

C H A P. 4.

Several other merry pranks plaid by Mother Shipton, in Revenge to such as abused her.

As our Ursula grew up to riper years, she was often affronted by reason of her deformity, but she never fail'd to be revenged on those that did it; as one day all the cheif of the Parish being together, at a merry meeting, she coming thither occasionally on an Errand, some of them abused her by calling her the Devils Bastard, and Hag-face, and the like, whereupon she went away grumbling, but so ordered affairs, that when they was set down to Dinner, one of the principal Yeomen, that thought himself spruce and fine, had in an instant his Ruff (which in those days they wore) pull'd off, and the Seat of an house of Office clapt in its place; he that sate next him bursting out into a laughter at the sight hereof, was
was served little better, for his Hat was invisibly convey'd away, and the Pan of a Close-stool which stood in the next Room, put on instead thereof. Besides this, a modest young Gentlewoman that sate at the Table at the same time, looking at these two worthy spectacles of mirth, endeavour'd all she could to Restrain laughing, but could not, and withal continued breaking of wind backward for above a quarter of an hour together, like so many broad sides in a Sea-fight, which made all the company laugh so extreamly, that the Master of the house (being the chief Inn in the town) was alarm'd below therewith, and desirous to share with his Guests in their mirth, came running up Stairs as fast as his Legs would carry him, but being about to enter the door, he could not, and no wonder, since the oldest Man living never saw a larger pair of horns than he had on his head; But whilst they were gazing on one another, as more than half distracted, they were all reduc'd to the same condition they were in at first, after which followed a noise, as if more than a hundred persons were laughing together, but nothing was seen.
C H A P. V.

*How Ursula married a young man named Toby Shipton, and strangely discovered a Theif.*

Our *Ursula* was now arrived at the four and twentieth year of her Age, and though she was none of the prettiest Maids in the Town, as you may remember by her description, yet she long'd for an husband as much as the best of them, & at last obtained her desire. For whether she used any Love-powder or charms to enamour him, or whether the hopes of getting some money which she was *reported* to have, though no body could tell how she should come by it, caused him to court her (as some men there are that would not only marry the Devils daughter, but his dam too for mony) I cannot certainly inform the Reader, but a Sweet-heart she had named *Toby Shipton* by Trade a *Carpenter*, to whom she was shortly after *married*, and very comfortably they lived together, but never had any children.

It hapned about a Month after her *marriage* one of her Neighbours leaving her door care-lesly
lesly open, lost a new Smock and Petticoat, stoln away while she was telling a Gossips tale of an hour long at next door, whither she went to fetch fire; which misfortune much troubling her, she made her moan to our Mother Shipton, who did not go about like our little silly Conjurers with their Schemes and Figures to give a blind description of she knew not whom, but roundly told her such a Woman by name had stoln the things, adding, that she would make her restore them with a shame to her, and so indeed she did; For the next Market day before all the people this woman could not avoid putting on the smock over her other clothes, and the Petticoat in her hand, & so marched through the crowd into the Market-cross, where the other was by Mother Shiptons directions to Receive them, dancing all the way and singing these words,

_I stole my Neighbours Smock and Coat,
I am a Theif, and here I show't._

And so when she came to the owner, pull'd off the Smock and gave her Her own with a Reverend courtesie, and so departed. Chap
By these and several the like Exploits, Mother Shipton had got a name far and near for a cunning woman, or a woman of the foresight, so that her words began to be counted Oracles, nor did she meddle only with private persons, but was advised with concerned people of the greatest quality; among which number at that time was Cardinal Woolsey, when it was reported, that he intended to live at York, she publickly said, He should never come thither which coming to his ear, and being much offended, he caused three Lords to go to her, who came disguised to Ring-house near York, where leaving their men, they took a Guide and came to Mother Shiptons, where knocking at her door, she cryed out within, Come in Mr. Beasly, (their Guide) and those noble Lords with you. Which much surprized them that she should know them, for when they came in, she called each of them by their name and treated them with Ale and Cakes, whereupon
upon said one of the Lords, *If you knew our Errand, you would not make so much of us,* you said the Cardinal should never see York. *No,* said she, *I said he might see York, but never come at it;* Well, saies the Lord, *When he does come thou shalt be burnt.* Then taking off her Linen Kercheif from her head, saies she, *If this burn, then I may burn,* and immediately flung it into the fire before them, but it would not burn, so that after it had lain in the flames a quarter of an hour, she took it out again not so much as singed, Hereupon one of the Lords askt her what she thought of him, *My Lord,* said she, *the time is coming when your Grace will be as low as I am, and that is a low one indeed.* Which proved true, for shortly after he was beheaded.

Nor was her speech of the Cardinal less verified, for he coming to Cawood, went to the top of the Tower, and askt where York was, which being shewn him, he inquired how far it was thither, *For (qd. he) there Was a Witch said, I should never see York.* Nay, says one present, *your Eminence is misinform’d, she said you should see it, but not come at it.* Then he vow’d to burn her
her when he came there, which was but eight Miles distant, but behold, immediately he was sent for back by the King, and dyed of a violent looseness at Leicester.

C H A P. 7.

Some other Prophecies of Mother Shiptons, relating to these times.

At divers other times, when Persons of Quality came to visit her, she delivered the several Prophecies following, that is to say 1 Prophecy.

Before Owse-bridge and Trinity-Church meet, they shall build in the day, and it shall fall in the night, until they get the highest stone of Trinity-Church the lowest stone of Owse-bridge.

Explanation.

This came to pass: for Trinity Steeple in York was blown down with a Tempest, and Owse-bridge broken down with a Flood, and what they did in the day-time in repairing the Bridge, fell down in the night, till at last they laid the highest Stone of the Steeple for the Foundation of the Bridge.

2. Prophecy.

The North shall Rue it wondrous sore,
But the South shall Rue it for evermore.

3. Pro-
3. Prophecy.

You shall have a year of Pining Hunger, & shall not know of the War over-night, yet shall you have it in the Morning, and when it happens, it shall last three years, then will come a woman with one Eye, and she shall tread in many mens blood up to the knee.

4. Prophecy.

Then may a man take House or Bower, Land or Tower for one and twenty years; but afterwards shall be a white Harvest of Corn gotten in by Women, Then shall it be, that one Woman shall say to another, Mother! I have seen a man to day.

5. Prophecy.

A time shall happen, when a Ship shall come sailing up the Thames, till it come against London, and the Master of the Ship shall weep, and the Mariners of the Ship shall ask him, Why he weeps, since he hath made so good a Voyage? And he shall say, Ah! what a goodly City this was, none in the World comparable to it, and now there is scarce left an house, that can let us have drink for our Money.

Explanation.

These last words were sadly verified after the dreadful Fire of London, 1666. when there was not an House left all along Thames-side, from the Tower to the Temple; As for the words before, they being darkly delivered,
are not like to be understood, till time, that both discovers and absconds all things, shall bring the matters signified to light.

C H A P. 8.

Her Prophecies in Verse to the Abbot of Beverly.

The Abbot of Beverly giving her a Visit one day, told her, That as he had found several things that she had formerly said to be exactly true, so he was perswaded she was not Ignorant in those which for the future were to En- sue, and therefore requested her to impart some of her fore-Knowledg to him, for which Favour (tho' more than his deserts could command, yet) shall he neither want a tongue to acknowledg nor a heart to endeavour a Requital for so great an Obligation. Mr. Abbot, says she, leave off complementing, I am an old Woman who will neither flatter nor be flatter'd by any, yet shall answer your Desires as far as I may. And thereupon did in mystick verses discover to him the greatest Accidents that have happen'd in En-
England, from that day to this, as in the following Explanations will appear.

Prophecy.
When the Cow doth ride the Bull,
Then Priest beware thy Skull.

Explanation.
By the Cow was meant H. 8. who gave the Cow in his Arms as Earl of Richmond, & the Bull betoken'd Madam Ann of Bulloigne, not only as the first syllable of her name, but because her Father gave the black Bulls Head in his Crest, and when the King marryed her immediately after hapned the dissolution of Monasteries, and restraints laid on the Priests.

Prophecy.
For a sweet pious Prince make Room,
And in each Kirk prepare a Broom.

Explanation.
This is meant of King Edward the sixth, in whose time the Protestant Religion was established, and the Popish Superstitions swept out of the Kirk, an old word used still in Scotland for the Kirk, an old word used still in Scotland for the Church.

Prophecy.
Alecto next assumes the Crown,
And streams of blood shall Smithfield drown
Explanation.
These lines decipher Q. Mary, called Alecto (a name of one of the Furies) for her cruelty to the Protestants, of whom great numbers were then burnt in Smithfield.

Prophecy.
A Maiden Queen full many a year
Shall Englands War-like Scepter bear.

Explanation.
Spoken of Q. Elizabeth, who Reigned extremely beloved by her Subjects, and dreaded by her Enemies above fourty years.

Prophecy.
The Western Monarchs Wooden Horses
Shall be destroyed by the Drakes Forces.

Explanation.
The King of Spain's mighty Navy in 88, destroyed by the English Fleet under Captain DRAKE.

Prophecy.
The Northern Lyon over Tweed,
The Maiden Queen shall next succeed,
And joyn in one two mighty States,
Then shall Janus shut his Gates.

Explanation.
Explanation.

This relates to King James, who having been many years King of Scotland, the Crown of England by Queen Elizabeth's Death fell to him, whereupon he came over Tweed to take up his Residence here, and so joyned the two Kingdoms under one Government; And as for Janus shutting his Gates, you must know, Janus was one of the Heathen gods, that had a Temple at Rome, the Gates of which were never shut but in times of Peace, alluding to which our Prophetess here declares the peaceful Reign of King James.

Prophecy.

Forth from the North shall mischief blow,
And English Hob shall add thereto;
Mars shall rage as he were wood,
And Earth shall drunken be with Blood.

Explanation.

This Relates to our late Lamentable Civil Wars.

Prophecy.

But tell's what's next, Oh cruel fate!
A King made Martyr at his gate.
Meaning the Execrable murther of that most
most excellent Prince Charles the First.
The just King dead, the Woolfe shall then
With Blood usurp the Lyons Den.
But death shall hurry him away,
Confusion shall a while bear sway,
Till fate to England shall restore
A King to Reign as heretofore;
Who mercy and justice likewise
Shall in his Empire exercise.
These Prephecies we have seen fulfilled
by Cromwels Usurpations, The Committee
of Safetys Confusions, and our Gracious So-
veraigns Miraculous Restauration.

Prophecy.
Triumphant death rides London through,
And men on tops of Houses go.

Explanation.
The first Line points out the great Sick-
ness in London, 1665. And the second, the
dreadful Fire the Year following.
Let this suffice, the night comes on,
You must depart, and I be gone,
Apollo does forbid my Rhimes,
For to unvail succeeding times.

Having
Having said this, Mother Shipton arose, and the admiring Abbot (who took all these Prophecies you must conceive, in writing) giving her many Thanks, returned home.

CHAP. 9.

Of Mother Shiptons Death, Burial, and Epitaph.

His famous Prophetess continued several years esteemed, as the Sybil or Oracle of these times. At last being threescore and thirteen years of Age, she found the time in the black Book of Destiny approaching, wherein she must give a final Adieu to this World, which she fore-told to a day to divers people, and at the hour predicted, having taken solemn leave of her Friends, laid her self down on her Bed and dyed, on whom a Poet of that Age bestowed this

EPITAPH.

Here lies She who never Ly'd,
Whose Skill so often hath been try'd;
Her Prophecies shall still survive,
And ever Keep her Name alive.

FINIS.
Printed for Edwin Pearson by J. Davy & Sons,