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October 19th 1877

THE
LIFE,
PROPHECIES
AND
DEATH
OF
THE FAMOUS
Mother Shipton.

Being not only a true account of her strange Birth and most important passages of her life ; but also all her Prophecies, now newly collected and historically explained, from the time of her birth in the reign of King Henry the Seventh until the present. Containing the most important passages of state during the reigns of these Kings and Queens of England, following :

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| | | Edward the Sixth. | { | King Charles the First. |
| | | Queen Mary. | { | King Charles the Second. |
| | | Queen Elizabeth. | { | |

Strangely preserved amongst other writings belonging to an old Monastery in Yorkshire, and now published for the information of posterity.



PRESENTED FOR THE
SCHMULOWITZ COLLECTION

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P R O P H E C I E S
AND
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W. B. D.

ROBERTS

1850

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London

THE

LIFE AND PROPHECIES

OF

MOTHER SHIPTON.

IN the second year of the reign of Henry VII, which was the year 1486, there lived a woman called Agatha Shipton, at a place called Knaresborough, in Yorkshire. She came of poor parentage, who died and left her, at the age of 15, destitute. After their decease she still lived in the old house; but being now deprived of those helps she formerly enjoyed, she was obliged to seek relief from the parish; which she did, but with so much regret and grief, that she seemed in her begging rather to command alms, than in an humble manner to desire it.

The Devil looked on her poverty to be great. He told her that he could pierce through the earth, and ransack its treasures and bring what precious things I please from thence to bestow on those that serve me. I know all rare arts and sciences, and can teach them to whom I please. I can disturb the elements, stir up thunders and lightnings, destroy

the best of things which were created for the use of man, and can appear in what shape or form I please. It will take too long to describe my power, or tell you what I can do; but I will only tell thee what thou shalt do. That being done, I will give thee power to raise hail, tempests, with lightning and thunder; the winds shall be at thy command, and shall bear thee whither thou art willing to go, though ever so far off, and shall bring thee back again when thou hast a mind to return. The hidden treasures of the earth shall be at thy disposal and pleasure, and nothing shall be wanting to complete thy happiness here. Thou shalt, moreover, heal or kill whom thou pleaseth; destroy or preserve either man or beast; know what is past, and assuredly tell what is to come. Here note by the way, the Devil is a liar from the beginning, and will promise more by ten millions than he knows he is capable of performing, to the intent that he may ensnare and damn a soul.

This so ravished Agatha, that she fell to the ground in a profound and deep trance. One of her neighbours coming in at this time, wondered to see Agatha laying on the floor motionless; however, out of pity, she endeavoured to awaken Agatha; but using what means she could, it all signified nothing; she shook and pinched her, yet still she lay insensible. This woman being strangely amazed, ran out amongst the rest of the neighbours, crying out that poor Agatha Shipton was suddenly struck dead, and desired them to go into the house with her, and be eye-witnesses of the truth; whereupon several went and found what this woman said to be seemingly true; but one wiser than the rest, stooped down, and perceiving that she breathed, said, "Friends, ye are all mistaken, Agatha is not dead, but in a trance, or else she is bewitched;" she had scarcely uttered these words, before Agatha began to stir, and soon after raising herself on her legs, cried out in a very distracted tone, "What do you here, vile wretches? cannot I enjoy my pleasures, but ye must be eaves-dropping? get ye gone, ye have nothing to do here;" and hereupon she fell a dancing, which they wondered at, because they could hear no music. At length, Agatha turned about, and seeing they were not gone, said, "If ye are resolved thus to disturb me, and will not go, I will make ye."

This wonderful and unexpected exploit was instantly noised

all about the country, which occasioned a great resort of people to the place where Agatha lived ; which so perplexed her by their undesired visits, that she resolved within herself to be revenged on some of them ; one had a horse that died suddenly, and being opened, there was found in his stomach fish-hooks and hair, instead of hay and oats ; another going to sit down at table with persons of good quality, at dinner-time, and thinking himself very spruce and fine, had in an instant his ruff pulled of his neck, and the seat of an house of office clapt on in its place : he that sat next to him breaking out in a great laughter at the sight thereof, was served a little better, for his hat was invisibly conveyed away, and the pan of a close stool, which stood in the next room, put on instead thereof ; a modest young gentlewoman, who did sit at the table at that time, and was come on no other errand but to see this young witch which was so much talked of, looking on these two worthy spectacles of laughter, endeavoured all she could to refrain laughing, but could not for above a quarter of an hour : this made them all laugh so extremely, that the master of the house was alarmed, and being desirous to share with his guests in their mirth, came running upstairs as fast as his legs could carry him ; when 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. Whilst they were gazing one on another, more than half-distracted, they were reduced to the same condition they were in before ; after which there followed a noise, as if a hundred persons were laughing together, but nothing at all was seen.

These persons fearing something worse might befall them if they staid any longer, made all the haste they could to be gone. Agatha knowing their intent, resolved to take her farewell of them by serving them one trick more, which was this : As they were about to mount on horseback, they were pelted with rotten apples, and stuffed that smelt worse that can be imagined. As they rode through the town, such as thought they rode singly, were all observed to have behind them, each man, a deformed old woman ; and as their faces differed all one from another, so did their habits, which were all tattered and ragged, and patched with a hundred colours. Fear, shame and the hooting of the people, made them put spurs to their horses, neither did they forbear the whip, nor

anything that might add speed to their horse's heels, so that it may be said they rather flew than rode.

Coming home, they declared what wonderful things they had seen performed, though by a young one, yet as they believed, the greatest witch in the world. This news being so generally spread, came at length to the ears of the justices, who now thought it high time to question and bring to examination a person that was so much talked of, and might if let alone, do a great deal of mischief. Accordingly two stout fellows were dispatched for her: they soon found her, and, nothing daunted by her witcheries, they resolutely carried her before the justices, where being brought, she, not a jot daunted, told him that she had more authority than he, and that notwithstanding his power, she could command one that could over-rule him, that she was a princess, and could have at her beck a thousand spirits of the air, and as many of the earth and water; that she could raise a tempest presently that should overturn his house about his ears, "and that you may know that it lies not in your power to detain me, three words will procure my liberty:" hereupon she said, "Updraxi, call Stygician Helluex!" She had scarce uttered the last word, before there came in a horrid winged dragon, which immediately took her up, and carried her away from the amazed justice and the attendants about him, half dead with fear.

This so affrighted all that heard of it, that none would undertake to meddle with her more, so that she had a considerable time of respite. But she now began to be more admired than before. The people could not tell what to think. While people were generally passing their verdict on Agatha she was once more taken and brought before a justice. The justice gave no credit to what she said, as looking on her as an ignorant seduced woman; and so asked her what bail she could produce, intending to defer the business till she was delivered. In this very nick of time, two gentlemen, as they appeared by their habits, voluntarily proffered themselves, but as soon as accepted for bail, vanished; however, Agatha had permission to go home.

The usual time of forty weeks being expired, her mother, after many strange and horrible torments, which she underwent during that time, was at last delivered of her who is now called Mother Shipton, which proved the con-

clusion of her miserable life. But her entry into the world was such a terror to all that beheld her, that several credible persons then present have several times confessed that they never beheld the like: such strange and horrible noises, that the persons concerned about her, could scarcely find so much courage in themselves as to continue in the place where she was; much less when they beheld the strange and unparalleled physiognomy of the child, which was so mishapen, that it is altogether impossible to express it fully in words, or the most ingenious to limn her in colours, though many persons of eminent qualifications in that art have often attempted it, but without success; therefore according to the best observations of her, take this true, though not full, account of her features and body. She was of an indifferent height, but very morose and big-boned; her head very long, with very great goggling, but sharp and fiery eyes; her nose of an incredible and unproportionable length, having in it many crooks and turnings, adorned with many strange pimples of divers colours, as red and blue mixed, which, like vapours of brimstone, gave such a lustre to the affrighted spectators in the dead time of the night, that one of them confessed several times, that her nurse needed no other light to assist her in the performance of her duty; her cheeks were of a black swarthy complexion, much like a mixture of the black and yellow jaundice, wrinkled, shrivelled, and very hollow; insomuch that as the ribs of her body, so the impression of her teeth was easily to be discerned through both sides of her face, answering one side to the other, like the notches in a valley, excepting only two of them, which stood quite out of her mouth in imitation of the tusks of a wild boar, or tooth of an elephant, a thing so strange in an infant that no age can parallel; her chin was of the same complexion as her face, turning up towards to her mouth; and shrieks being heard from an unknown cause, as if there had been more than an ordinary correspondence between her teeth and it. Her neck was so strangely distorted that her right shoulder was forced to be a supporter to her head, it being propped up by the help of her chin, so that the right side of her body stood lower than her left, like the reeling of a ship that sails with a side wind; again, her left side was quite turned the contrary way, as if her body had been screwed together piece after piece, and not rightly placed;

her left shoulder hanging just perpendicular to the bottom of the back. Her legs were very crooked and misshapen; the toes of her feet looking towards her left side, so that it was very hard for any person (could she have stood up) to guess which road she intended to steer her course, because she never could look that way she resolved to go.

After she had remained under the care of the nurse for the space of a moon or thereabouts, she was put out to nurse at the charge of the parish to a poor woman hard by in the town, where she continued for the space of half a year, or thereabouts, the house not being in any way disturbed at all; till at last her nurse having been abroad with the chief of the parishioners, either to procure something of their charity for her subsistence, and the maintenance of her family, or else to fetch her money from the overseers of the poor, for nursing the child; and returning home to her house, she found her door wide open; at which she, much amazed and affrighted, ran to her next neighbour, and acquainted her she was quite undone, for her house was broken open and robbed. The man immediately rose from his dinner, accompanied by his wife and another labouring man. Approaching the door, they endeavoured to enter, but before they could all get in, a very strange noise was heard in the next room to them, as if it had been a concert of cats; which so affrighted them that they all ran towards the door, endeavouring to get out again, but in vain, for at their approach there was great long yokes put about their necks, in the form of a cross, or turnstile, so that they could not possibly return; and while they were thus striving and crying out for help, their yokes at last fell off, and a staff was laid upon the men's shoulders; upon which an old woman presented herself naked, sometimes hanging by the heels, and sometimes by the toes. These sports continued for the space of about half an-hour, so that the poor men were never more tired nor less pleased at anything than in being constrained to humour this piece of hellish activity.

After they had got a discharge from this their new employment, the house being now quiet, and they a little recovered their senses, missing the women, they ran further into the house, where they found them in a room in which stood a pair of yarwingles, made in the form of a cross. The two women and two men were forced to take the four

ends thereof in their hands, and so dance round about one after the other, until they were almost tired to death, carrying upon their shoulders an imp in the likeness of a monkey or an ape, which hung close upon them, and when ever they slacked their pace, these spirits pricked them forward, continuing this for a considerable time, till at length they vanished quite out of sight, leaving these poor wretches no less weary than astonished, and who, perceiving themselves at liberty, ran to several of the neighbourhood, acquainting them with what had happened, and causing great amazement amongst them; and immediately the whole town was in an uproar. The minister and several of the most eminent of the inhabitants consulted together upon the occasion what to do in the business, some of them threatening the informers, others thinking they were distracted, but at last they resolved to go to the house: yet when they came near there arose a dispute who should first enter, which at last was agreed upon; and the parson (with his congregation attending him in the rear,) entered the door quivering and shaking; whereupon there was suddenly a noise like the treading of people on stones, though the house had no other than an earthen floor; and very sweet musical harmony of several notes was heard, and all presently vanished again. The minister and inhabitants entered, and searching the house, missed the child; one of them looking up the chimney, saw the cradle wonderfully hanging up three yards high without any support; this was as strangely conveyed down again. They encouraged the nurse, left her in the house, (though affrighted,) and departed.

Mother Shipton's nurse was, after this, sometimes in great perplexity, not knowing what was become of her for days together; but when she was in her greatest scare after her, she saw her often times drop suddenly through the roof of the house. Going out, upon her return, she many times found her child stretched out to a prodigious length, taller than the tallest living, and at other times as much shortened. The poor woman's work for the major part, was only to rectify what these spirits disordered about her house. The chairs and stools would frequently march upstairs and down, and they usually played at bowls with the trenchers and dishes; sometimes at dinner the meat would be removed before she could touch a bit; which things, as they much

troubled the nurse, so they gave much satisfaction to Mother Shipton, as it appeared by her monstrous smiles. Now and then to pacify her nurse, when she saw her much vexed, she would say, "Be contented; there is nothing here will harm you."

To be short, the nurse was so continually terrified by these apparitions, that she resolved to complain to the parish; and having made known the truth of what had passed, in commiseration of the almost distracted woman, they removed Mother Shipton to another place, where she was put to school, being of an age fit for it.

By this time Mother Shipton was grown a lusty girl, and as she was left to the care of the parish, so the parish took care that she should have the common sort of learning, that is to say, reading and writing, bestowed upon her. Coming to school, her mistress began to instruct her, as other children, beginning with three or four letters at first, but, to the amazement and astonishment of her mistress, she exactly pronounced every letter in the alphabet without teaching; her mistress then showed her a primer, which she read at first sight as any in the school, and so on with every book that was shown her.

As this produced wonder in her school-mistress, so it caused hatred and envy in her comrades; some flouted her for her monstrous long nose, others endeavoured to beat her and all strove to harm her; but she valued them not, revenging herself on every one of them that intended her harm. Some were pinched, and yet no hand seen that did it: others struck speechless when they were about to say their lessons, not being able to utter a word; none escaped from being served one scurvy trick or other. This so enraged the parents of these children looking on Mother Shipton the sole cause hereof, that she was discharged the school, and so left to the wide world. The singularities of Mother Shipton now began to be talked of everywhere; she was often seen when alone, to laugh heartily; at other times to talk by herself; uttering very strange riddles, which occasioned some of the more sober sort to converse with her, receiving such strange things from her, as required a long study to find out the meaning.

Never a day passed, wherein she related not something very remarkable, and that required the most serious consi-

deration. And now it was that people flocked to her far and near (her fame was so great), to be resolved of their doubts, all returning wonderfully satisfied in the explanations she gave to their questions.

And now Mother Shipton beginning to grow famous in the world for her notable judgment in things to come, there resorted to her house a number of people, of all sorts, both old and young, rich and poor, especially young maidens, who have always a great desire to know when they shall be married, as also, what manner of husbands they shall have; to which she gave such satisfactory answers, both for the person and time, that no sooner could a young maid get into her teens, but she would presently trot to Mother Shipton's to be resolved of her doubt. Now though she was not mercenary herself but refused great gifts when proffered unto her, yet did she keep a young wench, who rather than fail, if they forgot to open their purse to her, would remember to open her mouth to them, and tell them that neither Dame Shipton nor she could be maintained with thanks, but that the belly required meat to feed it; and that it was money that made the mare to go. One day, there came a certain young heir thither, whose father was sick, to be resolved by her whether he should live or die; but Mother Shipton could by no means be wrought upon to tell him anything; whereupon he proffered the maid great store of money, if she could by any means persuade the dame to fulfil his request; the wench, greedy of money, promised him fair; and that if he would come the next morning, he would be certain to be resolved; in the mean time, she importuned her dame with the most cunning rhetoric that she could invent; but she was deaf to all entreaties, and would by no means be induced thereto, whereupon the wench resolved with herself, rather than lose the money, to give him an answer of her own invention; which the next morning she performed in these words:—

“The grave provided hath a room:
Prepare for death, thy hour is come.”

The young gentleman having received this answer, went away very joyful, hoping presently to reap the golden crop which his father had sown, and to be in an instant possessed of all his vast estate; but the sequel proved quite contrary; for by that time he came home, great hopes of amendment appeared in his father, who each day grew better and better,

so that in a short time he became perfectly well. This unexpected recovery of the old man struck such a damp into our young heir, that he presently took to his bed, fell extremely sick, and in a short time grew so ill that all the symptoms of a dying man appeared in him: the old man having no more children, was very desirous of his life, and to know whether he should recover, he sent to Mother Ship-ton, who knowing by her art what her maid had done, severely chid her for the same, threatening to turn her out of her service. In the meantime the messenger was come to her house, who, having delivered his errand was returned back with this answer:—

“For other’s deaths who do gape out,
Their own, unlook’d for, comes about.”

The old man having received this answer, was much troubled, thinking his own death predicted thereby, not imagining what his son had done; but he was soon quieted of that suspicion, for within two days the young man died; when a servant (who knew the circumstance) informed him of the truth of the whole matter.

At divers other times, when persons of quality came to visit her, she delivered the following prophecies:—

“Before the Ouse Bridge and Trinity Church meets, they shall build it in the day and it shall fall in the night, until they get the highest stone of Trinity Church the lowest stone of Ouse Bridge.”

This came to pass; for Trinity steeple in York was blown down with a tempest, and Ouse Bridge broken down with a flood, and what they did in the daytime 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.

“A time shall happen when a ship shall come sailing up the Thames, till it comes against London, and the master of the ship will ask the captain why he weeps, since he had made so good a voyage. And he will say, and what a good city this was, none in the world comparable to it, and now there’s scarce a house left that can let us drink for our money.”

These last words were sadly verified after the dreadful fire of London in 1666, when there was not a house left along the Thames side from the Tower to the Temple.

About this time, some differences arising betwixt King Henry VIII. and the French King, great preparations for war were made in England, and drums beating in every county to summon voluntary valour to express itself in defence of their king and country. Many heroic spirits who made honour their aim, not dreading dangers, now came forward, and indeed, so many appeared under Mars' banner, that he who was furnished with limbs and an estate, and declined the service, was called a coward. There was then living in the North a young heir, who was newly come to his estate ; one whose tongue was all fire, and his heart all ice ; who would kill thousands with his words, but durst not venture to do anything in deeds ; this gallant being by some of his equals pricked on to make his appearance in the field of Mars, and not to lie sleeping at home when fame summoned him forth to action, knew not what to do in this case ; loth was he to lose his loved life ; and yet the aspersion of a coward, though to a coward himself, is of all things most odious ; he therefore promised that none should be more willing than he, to spend his blood in the quarrel of that country from whence he received his dearest life ; but yet he resolved within himself not to set one step forward in that path of danger till he had first consulted with Mother Shipton, concerning what success he should have in this journey ; if it was bad, he resolved by a feigned sickness to evade it, thinking it no good policy for a man to part away with that life in an instant, which with great cost and care, had been many years in bringing up.

Hereupon he hastens to our Northern Prophetess, acquainted her with his condition, and very earnestly desired of her (or she to whom nothing was hid) that she would unfold to him whether good or bad fortune should be his attendant in this his expedition. Mother Shipton, though she perceived his sheepish courage to be very unanswerable to that of a soldier, yet foreknowing what would come to pass, returned him the following answer ; which, without more ado, fully satisfied him to proceed, and perform what he had promised.

“ When the English Lion shall set his paw on the Gallic shore, then shall the Lilies begin to drop for fear : There shall be much weeping and wailing amongst the ladies of this country : because the princely Eagle shall join with the

lion, to tread down all that shall oppose them ; and though many sagittaries shall appear in defence of the Lilies, yet shall they not prevail ; because the dull animal of the North shall be put to confusion ; and though it be against his will, yet shall cause great shame unto them. Now shall the mitred Peacock first begin to plume whose train shall make a great show in the world for a time, but shall afterwards vanish away, and his honour come to nothing ; which shall take its end at Kingston."

Explanation of the Prophecy.

By the "English Lion" was meant the King of England ; and by setting his "Paw on the Gallic shore," the landing of his army in France : by the "Lily beginning to drop for fear," was signified the great trouble and perplexity of the French ; the Lilies being the arms of France : the "Weeping and wailing amongst the ladies of that country," denotes the miseries and destruction incident to war ; by the "Princely Eagle joining with the Lion, and treading down all that shall oppose them," is meant the German Emperor (whose arms were the Eagle) who joined in amity with King Henry, and served him in his wars ; by the "Sagittaries that appeared in defence of the Lilies." were meant the French cavalry, the chief strength of France, consisting of horsemen who appeared like sagittaries, that is to say half men and half horses : and whereas it was said "Yet they should not prevail," it fell out so accordingly ; for notwithstanding all the opposition of the French armies, King Henry proceeded on vigorously, conquering and taking several towns of importance. But to come to that which most nearly concerns the matter, viz., the success of our young heir in his expedition, which was hinted forth unto him into these words : "Because the dull animal of the North shall put them to confusion, and though it be against his will, yet shall cause great shame unto them ;" by the dull animal of the North was meant this fresh water soldier, who, according to the Prophecy, put the Frenchman to confusion and great shame ; for passing the seas with King Henry, being mounted on a stately horse, as both armies confronted each other, he being at the head of the battle, just before the charge, somebody striking his horse, he carried him upon the enemy with such

violence, as put their front into some disorder, which being perceived by our men, they presently so seconded him, that the French ran away, leaving the English a glorious victory purchased with little cost.

By this means was Mother Shipton's Predictions fulfilled, to the disgrace of the French, and great praise to the young gallant; for the rest of the prophecy the interpretation runs thus:—

By the "Mitred Peacock," was intended Cardinal Wolsey, signified by that bird, because of his great pride, who being but a poor butcher's son of Ipswich, in Suffolk, grew to such height, that he thought himself superior to the chief nobles of the land, living in such splendour as not to be paralleled; according to the prophecy, "Whose train shall make a great show in the world;" and whereas it is said, "The Peacock should then begin to plume," so it was, that when King Henry had taken the city of Tournay in France, he made Wolsey Bishop thereof, who soon after rose to the highest degree of honour a subject could be capable of, which afterwards (as the Prophecy says) "vanished away, and his great honour come to nothing." And lastly, whereas it is said, he should "Have his end at Kingston." The Cardinal being told of this prophecy, would never pass through the town of Kingston, though lying directly in the road from his own house to the court, but afterwards being arrested for high treason, by the Earl of Northumberland and Sir Anthony Kingstone, the Lieutenant of the Tower, sent unto him, his very name (remembering the prophecy) struck such a terror to his heart that he soon after expired.

Mother Shipton had now got a name far and near for a cunning woman, or a woman of foresight, that her words were counted oracles, nor did she meddle only by private persons, but was advised with by people of the greatest quality. Among which number at that time was Cardinal Wolsey; when it was reported that he intended to live at York, she publicly said, "He should never come thither," which coming to his ears, and being offended, he caused three Lords to go to her, who came disguised to Dringhouses, near York, where leaving their men, they took a guide to Mother Shipton's, and knocking at the door she called from within, "Come in, Mr. Besley (the guide) and these noble Lords with you," which surprised them, that she could know

them; for when they came in she called each of them by their names, and treated them with ale and cakes; whereupon 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," said the Lords, "when he does come thou shalt be burnt." Then taking off her linen handkerchief from her head, said, "If that burns;" and immediately flung it into the fire, but it did not burn; and after it had laid in the flames a quarter of an hour she took it out again not so much as singed. One of Lords then asked her, "What she thought of him." "My Lord, the time will come when your Lordship will be as low as I am, and that is low indeed," which proved true, for shortly after he was beheaded.

Nor was her speech of the Cardinal less verified; for coming to Cawood, he went to the top of the tower, and asked where York was, which being shown him, he enquired how far it was thither. For, quoth he, "There was a witch said, I should never see York." "Nay," said one present, "your eminence is misinformed! she said you should see it but never come at it." Then he vowed to burn her when he came there, which was but eight miles distant; but behold, he was immediately sent for back by the king, and never returned.

Mother Shipton's prediction coming thus effectually to pass, spread her fame far wider than it was; insomuch that many who before looked upon her as a crack-brained woman, now began to admire her, and to esteem her words as oracles. And as the nature of English people is rather to desire to know what is to come, than to seek to rectify ought that is done amiss; so the greatest part of her visitants came only to be acquainted with what she knew would come to pass; of which number was the Abbot of Beverley, who, fearing the downfall of religious houses, and a change of religion then professed, putting on counterfeit-clothes, came to Mother Shipton's, and knocking at the door, she being within, called to him, and said "Come in, Mr. Abbot, for you are not so much disguised, but the fox may be seen through the sheep's skin; come, take a stool and sit down, for you shall not go away unsatisfied of what you desire," and thereupon she began to utter forth her

Prophecies in this sort:—

“When the cow doth wive the bull,
 Then, Oh! priest, beware thy scull!
 And when the lower shrubs do fall,
 The great trees quickly follow shall.
 The mitred Peacock’s lofty pride
 Shall to his master be a guide.
 And one great Court to pass shall bring
 What was ne’er done by any king.
 The poor shall grieve to see that day,
 And who did feast, must fast and pray.
 Fate so decreed their overthrow,
 Riches brought pride, and pride brought woe.”

These Prophecies were thus explained: by the “Cow,” was meant King Henry, by reason of the Earldom of Richmond, which was his inheritance; and the “Bull” betokened Anne Boleyn, whom the king took to wife in the room of Queen Catherine; her father gave the black bull’s head in his cognizance; and when the king had married Queen Anne, then was fulfilled the second line of the Prophecy, viz., “Then, Oh priest, beware thy scull!” for what a number of priests, religious and secular, lost their heads, for offending against the laws made to bring this matter to pass.

Cardinal Wolsey (who was intended by the “mitred Peacock”) in the height of his pride and vastness of his undertakings, intending to erect two colleges, one at Ipswich, where he was born, the other Oxford, where he was bred; and finding himself unable to endow them at his own charge, he obtained license of Pope Clement VII. to suppress forty small monasteries in England, and to lay their old lands to his new foundations, which was done accordingly, and the poor people that lived in them turned out of doors. Many of the clergy were very much against this action of Wolsey’s, especially John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, alleging for the same an apologue of Æsop, that “the iron head of the axe craved a handle of the wood of oaks, only to cut off the boughs of the trees: but when it was a complete axe it felled down all the wood;” applying it, that the suppressing of these smaller houses would prove destructive to all the rest, which came to pass accordingly; for King Henry, seeing the Cardinal’s power to extend so far as to suppress these lower shrubs, he thought his prerogative might stretch so far as to fell down the great trees; and soon after

dissolved the priory of Christ Church, near Aldgate, in London (now known by the name of Duke's Place), the richest in lands and ornaments of all the priories in London or Middlesex; which was a forerunner of the dissolution of all the rest; and that not long after came to pass.

By the "Great Court," is meant the Parliament, the supremest court of England; who, in the twenty-seventh year of King Henry's reign, to support the King's states, and supply his wants, conferred on the crown all religious houses which were not able clearly to expend above two hundred pounds a year; the great ones not long after following the same fortune of the smaller, which was not done (though attempted) by any king before.

By the dissolution of these houses, many thousands were driven to seek their fortunes in the wide world, and became utterly exposed to want, when monkish profession was without possession: many a young nun proved an old beggar, and many forced to fast for want of victuals, who formerly had it provided for them to their hands.

The great riches and pride of the monks and friars, was, no doubt, the main cause of their overthrow; for whatsoever was the pretence, questionless profit was the rope which pulled these religious houses down.

All those things coming to pass before the Abbot died, caused him to have a great esteem of Mather Shipton, and to value her Prophecies more than ordinary conjectures; though, at first, he could not tell what to make of her ambiguous lines, which, like the oracles delivered at Delphos, rather brought one into a labyrinth of confused conjectures than satisfied the expectation, until by the clue of time, the riddles were manifest; and that which at first seemed so hard, now appeared to the understanding as easy; however, he at present kindly thanked Mother Shipton, and liberally rewarded her maid, much admiring that she should be so clear sighted as to see through his counterfeit dress; resolving afterwards to be more informed by her concerning future events, he at that time took his solemn leave of her, and returned home.

Not long had the Abbot been at home, but his abbey was visited by some instrument employed by the Lord Cromwell for that purpose. He who knew what was intended by this compliment thought it not safe to strive against the stream,

and therefore quietly surrendered his monastery into the King's hands. And now perceiving Mother Shipton's Prophecies plainly fulfilled in the downfall of those houses which were judged to be impregnable against all the assaults of malice and time, considering the strange revolutions of so short a space, he was very desirous to be more fully informed of the future. In this resolution he repairs again to Mother Shipton, whom he now accosts more familiarly than he did before, making himself plainly known unto her; telling her that as what she had formerly spoken he had found to be true in the event, so his judgment persuaded him she was not ignorant of those things which were for the future to ensue; and therefore desired that she would not be nice in imparting her fore-knowledge to him; for which great favour, though it were more than his deserts could command, yet should there never in him be wanting a grateful tongue to acknowledge, and a grateful heart to be thankful unto her, for so great a favour.

"Mr. Abbott," said she, "leave off complimenting, as it is more fit for courtiers and lovers, and not agreeable to an old woman, who will neither flatter nor be flattered by any; and for what you came about, I shall not be squeamish to fulfil your request; let me therefore desire you to lend me your attention;" and thereupon (after some short pause) she thus began:

"A prince that never shall be born,
Shall make the shaven heads forlorn,
Then shall commons rise in arms,
And women's malice cause much harms."

These lines being prophecies of the actions in King Edward's reign, for the reader's benefit we will unfold the meaning of them by themselves, that we may not too much burthen his memory; but by variety add a pleasure to the reading of them.

By the "Prince that never shall be born," is meant King Edward VI. of whom all reports agree that he was not naturally delivered into the world, but that his mother's body was opened for his birth, that she died of the operation the fourth day following; and by "Shaved Heads" is understood the monks, friars, &c., who are said to become "forlorn," the Reformation beginning with the commencement of King Edward's reign.

King Edward set out certain injunctions for the reformation of religion: as the commissioners passed to divers places for the establishing of them, much scorn was passed upon them, and the farther they went from London, as the people were more uncivil, so did they the more rise into insolence and contempt; for in Cornwall, the commons flocked together, having killed one of the commissioners, and although justice was done upon the offenders (the principal of them being executed in several places,) yet could not their boldness be beaten down with that severity, but that the mischief spread farther. In Wiltshire and Somersetshire, where the people, supposing that a Commonwealth could not stand without commons, beat down enclosures, and laid fields and parks bare. The like commotions followed in Suffolk, Hampshire, Kent, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, and Rutlandshire, but the greatest of all was in Devonshire and Norfolk.

“ A virtuous lady then shall die,
 For being raised up too high;
 Her death shall cause another's joy,
 Who shall the kingdom much annoy.
 Mitres shall rise, mitres come down,
 And streams of blood shall Smithfield drown.
 England shall join in league with Spain,
 Which some to hinder strive in vain.
 The Lioness from life retires,
 And pontifical priest expires.”

The Lady Jane Grey, assuming the title of Queen upon her, for her offence lost her head. This Lady Jane was a woman of most rare and incomparable perfection; for besides her excellent beauty, she was the mirror of her time for religion and education, in the knowledge of the liberal sciences and skill in languages; and far exceeded all of her sex and years.

The death of the Lady Jane was supposed to be a rejoicing to Queen Mary, and who, by restoring Popery, and the persecutions that the professors of the Gospel suffered in her time, is said to bring the kingdom much annoy.

By the “ Mitres ” are meant the bishops, who in the change of religion found great change; very few keeping their seats wherein they had been seated by King Edward VI.

Great was the number of Martyrs burned in “ Smithfield ” in this Queen's reign, under the bloody hands of Bonner, Bishop of London, and Dr. Story, Dean of St. Paul's; the

first persecuting by wholesale, the second by retail; the names of all those who in this place thus testified their faith by the loss of their lives, would be too long here to recite; the chief of them were Mr. John Rogers, Mr. John Bradford, Mr. Robert Glover, &c.

Queen Mary intended to match herself with Philip, King of Spain, the news thereof being spread amongst the people, was by them ill-resented, as dreading to be under the yoke of a stranger; but all to no purpose for soon afterwards they were married, to the mortification of the English.

By the "Lioness" is meant Queen Mary, who having reigned five years and some odd months, died of a dropsy.

The "Pontifical Priest" signified Cardinal Pole, who expired within a few hours after the death of Queen Mary. This prelate was of princely extraction, his mother, Margaret, being daughter to George, Duke of Clarence; when he was young, he was brought up together with Queen Mary, and being a zealous Catholic, during King Edward's reign, suffered a voluntary exile for the same; when the marriage between Prince Philip and Queen Mary, was made up, he returned into England, and was made Archbishop of Canterbury, but was more moderate than some of his fellow bishops, having a favourable inclination towards the Protestants.

" The Lion fierce being dead and gone,
 A maiden Queen shall reign anon.
 The Papal power shall bear no sway,
 Rome's creed shall hence be swept away.
 The western monarch's wooden horses,
 Shall be destroyed by the Drake's forces.
 More wonders yet! a widowed Queen,
 In England shall be headless seen.
 The Harp shall give a better sound.
 An Earl without a head be found.
 Soon after shall the English Rose
 Unto a male her place dispose.

These lines being a prophecy of the most remarkable actions during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, are to be interpreted after this manner:

Queen Mary is here meant, not so much for the cruelty done by her, as by the bishops and priests under her; in respect to the blood that was shed, and the persecutions then suffered, she is here termed a fierce "Lion;" after whom is said, "A maiden Queen to reign anon," meant by Queen Elizabeth, one who was the mirror of her age and sex, who

for above forty years, managed the affairs of this kingdom; having, when she began, few friends that durst help, and leaving no foes when she died that could hurt her; acting her part so well whilst here she reigned, that history can scarce afford us one Prince to be matched to her fame in all considerable particulars.

Soon after the Queen's coming to the Crown a Parliament began at Westminster, wherein the laws of King Henry VIII. against the see of "Rome" were renewed, and those of King Edward VI. in favour of the Protestants revived, and the laws by Queen Mary made against them repealed.

Uniformity of prayer and administration of sacrament were enacted, and the Queen acknowledged to be the only and supreme governor of her kingdom. The people in each place beating down superstitious pictures and images, which misguided zeal had set up.

By the "Western Monarch's wooden horses," is meant the King of Spain's great Armada, by them termed invincible though the success of it answered not the name; being by Sir Francis Drake and others, fought with and really vanquished; most of it sunk, and the rest destitute and scattered, being chased by our ships into the northern latitudes, and there left to be pursued by hunger and cold; a victory so remarkable, that time nor age will never wear the remembrance thereof away.

The "Widowed Queen" signifies the Queen of Scots, the mother of King James, who was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle, some say by the privy, others say to the great discontent of Queen Elizabeth; a lady of sharp wit, undaunted spirit, comely person, beautiful face, and majestic presence; a fluent orator, and an excellent poetess, as appears by several things of her writing now extant, she was beheaded the 8th day of February, 1587, and was first buried in the choir of Peterborough, and afterwards by her son, King James, solemnly removed from thence to Westminster, where, in the south side of the chapel of King Henry VII. he erected a stately monument to her memory.

The "Harp" signifies Ireland, as being the arms of that country, which Queen Elizabeth, by reducing to a better obedience, made it give a better sound, that is, made it more civilized and profitable to the Exchequer than it ever was before.

“An Earl without an head be found.” This was spoken of the Earl of Essex, one who was the favorite of the Queen and darling of the people, (two things which seldom come together), and yet could not both of them protect him from the scaffold, but thereon he lost his head.

By the “English Rose” is meant Queen Elizabeth, as we said before, by whose death the right and title to the crown came to James VI., King of Scotland, as lineally descended from Margaret, eldest daughter to King Henry VII., the issue male failing by the death of Queen Elizabeth; and here is to be remembered the policy of King Henry VII., who having two daughters, married the eldest of them to the King of Scotland, and the youngest to the King of France, that if his issue male should happen to fail (as it afterwards did) then Scotland might wait upon England as the greater kingdom, and not England upon France as the lesser. Besides, there was an old prophecy, which intimated King James coming to the English crown; for when King Edward I. harrassed Scotland, amongst other things he brought from thence their royal chair (still preserved at the Abbey in Westminster), upon which chair these verses were written:—

If Fates go right, where'er this chair is pight,
The regal race of Scots shall rule that place.

Which by the Coronation of King James there performed, made good the words of the prophecy.

“The Northern Lion over Tweed,
The maiden Queen shall then succeed,
And join in one, two mighty States,
Janus then shall shut his gates.
Hell's power, by a fatal blow,
Shall seek the land to overthrow,
Which by mistake shall be reverst,
And heads from shoulders be disperst.
The British Olive next shall twine,
In marriage with the German vine.”

Next follows the remarkable actions of King James's reign; predicted in the foregoing lines, which may be thus explained.

By the “Northern Lion” is meant King James, and by

the "Maiden Queen," Queen Elizabeth, whom King James, being King of Scotland, succeeded in the English crown, joining thereby the two nations of England and Scotland, which had often been attempted before.

The lines "Hell's power," &c., have reference to the Gunpowder Plot, which was planned to blow up the Parliament-house with gunpowder, king, princes, peers, bishops, judges, knights, and burgesses, being all designed to destruction. To bring this purpose about a vault was hired under the Parliament-house, wherein were stowed thirty-six barrels of powder, with several iron bars, to make the force of the fire more effectual, all which were covered with billets and coals. The fifth of November, the day of Parliament first sitting, was the time appointed to put this design into execution; but Providence had ordered it otherwise, that those who intended mischief should taste the effects of it. In the evening before, Lord Monteagle received a strange letter from an unknown hand, without date or name to it, and which, when it was opened, was even still sealed. The letter being communicated to the King, he commanded the rooms under the Parliament-house to be searched, where the mystery of iniquity was quickly discovered; some of the traitors were taken in London, others in the country. The hands of justice overtaking them, they became its examples, and tasted of that cup which they intended others should have drank of.

By the "British Olive" is meant the Lady Elizabeth, daughter to King James; and by the "German Vine" the most illustrious Prince Frederic, Count Palatine of the Rhine. This lady Elizabeth was enriched with all the endowments of both body and mind which make to the completing of a Princess; most dearly beloved of the English, as one that deserved well of all. They were married with great solemnity at Westminster, February 14, 1602.

Mother Shipton having proceeded thus far with her Prophecies, broke off abruptly with a deep sigh, the tears trickling down her cheeks, accompanied by a wringing of her hands, as if some extraordinary mischance had befallen her. The Abbott wondered greatly what should be the cause of this sudden alteration, having observed all along before a settled composedness in her countenance, and now to break out

in such exclamations; he therefore said unto her, "Mother Shipton, it is more than some extraordinary matter which hath made you break out into this sudden passion, and if it may not be troublesome unto you, I shall desire, that as hitherto you have not been scrupulous in revealing the secrets unto me which have wrought in me both wonder and amazement, so that you will not so abruptly break off, as to leave me in suspense of the cause of your sorrow." Ah! Mr. Abbott (said she) who can with dry eyes repeat what must next ensue, or but think upon it without a heart full of agony; to see virtue trampled on, and vice exalted; beggars on horseback, and princes on foot: the innocent condemned, and the bloodthirsty go scot free; but since my promise binds me to fulfil your request, I shall proceed from where I left off—

"The crown then fits the White King's head,
 Who with the Lillies soon shall wed;
 Then shall a peasant's bloody knife
 Deprive a great man of his life.
 Forth from the North shall mischief blow,
 An English hob shall add thereto.
 Then shall the Council great assemble,
 Who shall make great and small to tremble.
 The White King then (O grief to see!)
 By wicked hands shall murdered be."

These lines are so plain, relating to the actions of former times, as shall hardly need explaining; however, we shall proceed as we did before.

By the "White King," is meant King Charles I. so called not only in respect of the purity and uprightness of his life, signified by white; but also that at the time of his coronation he was clothed in white. He had, previous to the death of King James, married the Lady Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV., King of France; who is hereupon said to wed the "Lillies," the lillies being the arms of France.

By the "Great Man," who was to loose his life by a bloody knife, was meant the Duke of Buckingham, the greatest man in favour of those times, and (as it is commonly seen) most hated of the people, who laid the blame of all miscarriages in the state upon him; being made general for the relief of Rochelle (then besieged by the French forces)

before he embarked at Portsmouth, he was stabbed by one Felton, an officer in his army; who, so far from flying for the same, though he might pass away undiscovered, boldly avowed himself to be the man that did it. He was hanged in chains at Portsmouth, in the year 1627.

The next part of this Prophecy alludes to that ancient proverb, "From the cold 'North' all ills come forth;" and may be understood of our troubles of 1630, taking their original rise from Scotland, and fomented by several factious spirits in England, the venom of which poison so infected the veins of the English, that it broke forth into a most bitter war, and ended not, but with the deaths of many thousands of people.

By the "Great Council," is meant the long-lasting Parliament, so known to all posterity for the remarkable transactions therein: by them fell the wise Stafford, and Reverend Laud: by them was Episcopacy voted down, and Presbytery voted up: by them was the Common-prayer denied, and the Directory exalted: by them was the Church and State turned topsy-turvy; but this cannot be reported of all amongst them; many of them hated their doings, dissented from them and suffered by them.

The "White King by wicked hands, &c.," alludes to the beheading of King Charles I. who was the principal victim of these savage wars.

"The White King dead the Wolf shall then
With blood possess the Lion's den.
But death shall hurry him away,
Confusion shall awhile bear sway;
But fate to England shall restore,
A king to reign as heretofore.
Great death in London shall be though;
And men on tops of houses go."

By the "White King," (as we said before) is meant King Charles I. and by the "Wolf," Oliver Cromwell, whose ambition was such, that he left no means unattempted until he had got into the "Lion's den," that is to say, until he had attained the sole government.

"But death shall hurry him away."

Very remarkable was the day on which the Protector

died, being September 3rd, 1658, wherein the wind was so violent, that it overthrew many houses, tore up many trees by the roots, tumbled down chimneys, and unroofed barns and stables; but as it is a very ill wind that blows none good, so with all the hurt this wind did, it made recompense to some folks who had lost their estates in the civil wars, by blowing this Oliver away.

“ But fate to England shall restore,
A king to reign as heretofore.”

Which part of the Prophecy was fulfilled in the restoration of King Charles II. which put a period to all the commonwealth, and restored the land to its ancient government.

“ Great death in London,” verified by the great plague in London in 1665, which (for number) was the greatest that hath been known in these latter centuries of years; and which, if not anything else, might convince our sectaries how necessary that prayer in the Litany is to be used, “ From plague, pestilence, and famine, good Lord, deliver us.”

“ And men on tops of houses go.” This was suddenly fulfilled in that great conflagration of fire which happened in London, September 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 1666, by which so many houses were destroyed, that men afterwards, in the ruins, went on the tops of those houses, whose lofty structures not long before seemed to brave the sky.

Here follow other Prophecies that were uttered by Mother Shipton, which, because they concern future times, we shall leave to the interpretation of the intelligent reader.

1. The fiery year as soon as o'er,
Peace shall then be as before;
Plenty every where be found,
And men with swords shall plough the ground.
2. The time shall come, when seas of blood,
Shall mingle with a greater flood.

3. Great noise there shall be heard, great shouts and cries,
And seas shall thunder louder than the skies;
Then shall three Lions fight with three, and bring
Joy to a people, and honour to the king."

4. Carriages without horses shall go,
And accidents fill the world with woe.
Primrose Hill in London shall be,
And in its centre a Bishop's See.

5. Around the world thoughts shall fly,
In the twinkling of an eye.

6. Water shall yet more wonders do,
Now, strange, yet shall be true,
The world upside down shall be;
And gold found at the root of tree.
Through hills men shall ride,
And no horse or ass be by his side,
Under water men shall walk,
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk.
In the air men shall be seen,
In white, in black, in green.

7. A Great Man shall come——, and go

8. Iron in the water shall float,
As easy as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be found, and found,
In a land that's not now known.
Fire and water shall more wonders do.
England shall at last admit a Jew.
The Jew that was held in scorn
Shall of a Christian be born and born.

9. A house of glass shall come to pass
In England—but alas!
War will follow with the work
In the land of the Pagan and Turk;
And State and State in fierce strife
Will seek each others life.
But when the North shall divide the South
An eagle shall build in the Lion's mouth.

10. Taxes for blood and for war
Will come to every door.

11. AN APE shall appear in a Leap Year,
That shall put all womankind in fear;
And Adam's make shall be disputed;
And Roman faith shall like root-ed;
And England will turn round.
12. Thunder shall shake the earth;
Lightning shall rend asunder;
Water shall fill the earth;
Fire shall do its work;
Man shall—he shall——
13. In the KING'S HOUSE a POPE shall dwell.
A Packham the POPE'S House shall raise.
HARRY shall be NINE. JOSEPH four. TOM a liner.
CHARLES Two. The Old man VIII.
And Bitters with and without for all.
14. Three times three shall lovely France
Be led to dance a bloody dance,
Before her people shall be free.
Three Tyrant Rulers shall she see;
Three times the people rule alone;
Three times the people's hope is gone;
Three Rulers in succession see,
Each spring from different dynasty.
Then shall the the worser fight be done,
England and France shall be as one.

This prophecy evidently alludes to the battle of Blenheim, Waterloo, and ——-. The Rulers are doubtless Louise XVI., Napoleon the First, and ——-. The Revolutions of 1793, 1830, and 1848, have fulfilled this portion of the prediction, where it is said "Three times the people rule alone; Three times the people's hope is gone;" wherein all readers of history will recognize the political estrangement and want of constitutional freedom the people of France have endured by allowing the usurpation of power by the First Napoleon, Louis Phillipe and ——-.

The three rulers in succession implied are doubtless Napoleon the 1st, Charles X., a Bourbon, and Louis Phillipe, an Orleanist. The remainder of the prophecy has to be fulfilled.—P.D.

15. Waters shall flow where corn doth grow;
 Corn shall grow where waters doth flow.
 Houses shall appear in the vales below.
 And covered be by hail and snow.
16. White shall be black then turn grey,
 And a fair lady be married thrice.
17. Men shall walk over rivers and under rivers.
18. All England's sons that plough the land,
 Shall be seen book in hand.
 Learning shall so ebb and flow,
 The poor shall most wisdom know.

19. There shall be a large house, and it shall fall; be raised again;
 and again. A poor man's seventh son shall raise it up, and seven
 seventh sons shall live in it until the three sevens come.

20. A river and a town shall be on fire.

21. Over wild and stormy sea,
 Shall a noble* sail,
 Who to find, will not fail,
 A new and a fair countree.
 From whence he shall bring
 A herb† and a root‡
 That all men shall suit,
 And please both the ploughman and king,
 And let them take no more than measure.
 Both shall have the even pleasure,
 In the belly and the brain.

22. The world to an end shall come
 In eighteen hundred and eighty one.

The author of these and the foregoing Prophecies lived till she was of an extraordinary age; and though she was generally believed to be a witch, yet all persons that either

* Sir Walter Raleigh. † Tobacco. ‡ The Potatoe.—P.D.

saw or heard of her, held her in great esteem, and her memory to this day is much honoured by those of her own country.

A stone was erected to the memory of Mother Shipton near Clifton, about a mile from the City of York, from which the following epitaph is taken:—

Here lies she who never ly'd,
Whose skill often has been try'd ;
Her Prophecies shall still survive,
And ever keep her name alive.





