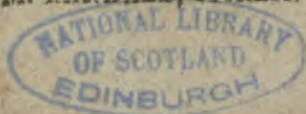


THE  
STRANGE  
AND  
WONDERFUL  
HISTORY AND  
Prophecies  
OF  
MOTHER  
SHIPTON.



PRINTED BY M. RANDALL, STIRLING.



25 June 1822 <sup>3/4</sup>

STANGE

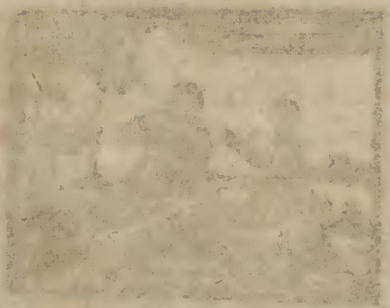
WONDERFUL

HISTORY AND

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MOTHER

SHIP TON



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THE  
HISTORY

OF

MOTHER SHIPTON, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of her Birth and Parentage.

**M**OTHER SHIPTON, as all histories agree, was a Yorkshire woman. The particular place was very much disputed, because several towns have pretended to the honour of her birth; but the most credible and received opinion ascribes it to Knareborough, near the the dropping well, in the said county. Concerning her pedigree, or parentage, there is likewise very various reports; some say her father was a Necromancer, and that he had skill in the black art, which thereby became entailed on her by inheritance; but the



common story, which therefore, I shall follow, yet without forcing the reader to believe whether he will or no, is, that she never had any father of human race, or mortal weight, but was begot as the great Welch prophet Motlia was of old, by the phantasm of Apollo, or some wanton ærial Dæmon, in manner following: Her mother, whom some records call Agatha, and others Emmathe, 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 others sloth: As she was once upon a time sitting bemoaning herself on a shady bank by the highway side, a spirit appeared to her in the shape of a handsome 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 thy business and doubt not but I will help thee out of thy troubles," The maid 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," said he, "that's nothing be-  
 ruled by me, thou shalt never lack."  
 She hearing him promise so fairly, told  
 him she would; and thereupon to draw  
 her by degrees to destruction, he first  
 tempted her to fornication, and pre-  
 vailed 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 visited once a day by her  
 hellish gallant, and never wanted  
 money; for still as she swept the house,  
 she would find some odd nine pences,  
 quarters of thirteen-pence half-pences,  
 and the like, sufficient to supply her  
 occasions.

## CHAP. II.

How Mother Shipton's Mother proved  
 with Child: How she fitted the severe  
 Justice, and what happened at her  
 Delivery.

THE neighbours observing that  
 Agatha, without any employ, lived  
 so handsomely, wondered exceedingly  
 how she came by the money to support  
 her in that way; but were most sur-  
 prized when they soon after found her:

to be with child which she could not long hide, for after 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 threatened and chided 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 how gravely you talk now, and yet the truth is, your worship is not altogether free, for here stands two of your servant wenches, who 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 blanked that his wife plainly saw what she said was true, and therefore fell upon the harlots like fury; for all that Mr Justice and the constables could do, was not enough to keep the peace, and the whole family was in such confusion, that Agatha at that time was dismissed; and soon after, in the month of July, in the fourth year of the reign of king Henry VII. which was in the year of our Lord 1484, was brought to bed of a daughter; her travail was very grievous, and a most terrible clap of thunder happened just as she was



delivered of this strange birth, which afterwards was so famous by the name of Mother Shipton; nor could the tempest affright the woman more than the prodigious physiognomy of the child; the body was long and very sharp and fiery, a nose of unproportionable length having in it many crooks and turnings, adorned with great pimples, and which like vapours 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 observed, that as soon as she was born, she fell a laughing and grining after a jeering manner, and immediately after the tempest ceased.

### CHAP. III.

By what name Mother Shipton was christened 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 christened,

which was performed by the name of  
 Ursula Seathiel, for the latter was her  
 mother's and consequently her maiden  
 surname; as for Shipton, it was the  
 name of her husband, whom she after-  
 wards married, as will appear in the  
 sequel of this history; and in these  
 particulars most of the authors I have  
 read have been fully mistaken. But to  
 proceed, when she was about two years  
 old, her mother coming to be sensible  
 of her evil, in holding a correspondence  
 with a wicked spirit, applying herself  
 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 age's devotion,  
 put herself into a neighbouring monas-  
 try, having put out her child, with  
 a piece of money, to a friend, and so  
 spent the remainder of her days in the  
 famous convent of the order of St Brid-  
 get, near Nottingham, in prayers and  
 tears, and other acts of penance to ex-  
 piate 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; par-



ticular one day, the nurse having been  
 abroad, when she returned, she found  
 the door open: whereupon, fearing  
 that she was robbed, she called three or  
 four neighbours and their wives to go  
 into the house with her; but before  
 they got into the entry, they heard a  
 noise, as if there had been a thousand  
 cats in consort, which so dismayed them,  
 that they all ran towards the door, en-  
 deavouring to get out again; 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 coal-staff  
 was laid on two of the men's shoulders;  
 upon which an old woman presented  
 herself 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, ex-  
 posed their shape to public view, and  
 so continued till a fryar accidentally  
 came to the house, and then they were  
 suddenly released; but still the child  
 being taken out of the cradle, could not  
 be found, till at last one of the com-  
 pany looking by chance up the chim-

ney, saw it stark naked, sitting astride upon the iron, to which the pot-hooks were fastened; whence they took it down without the least hurt, and so far from being frightned, that it seemed by its monstrous smiles to be very well pleased at these pleasant exploits.

CHAP. IV. His years and  
of his gains

Several other merry Pranks played by Mother Shipton, in Revenge of such as abused her.

AS our Ursula grew up to riper years she was often affronted by reason of her deformity, but she never failed to be revenged on those that did it. As one day all the chief 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 devil's bastard, and hag face, and the like; whereupon she went away grumbling, but so ordered her affairs, that when they sat down to dinner, one of the principal yeomen, had, in an instant, his ruff which in these days they wore, pulled off and the seat of an house of office

clapt in its place: He that sat next him, bursting out into laughter at the sight thereof, was served 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: Besides, this a modest young gentlewoman, that sat at the table at the same time, looking at these two worthy spectacles of mirth, endeavoured all she could to refrain laughing, but she could not; and withal, continued breaking of wind backward for above a quarter of an hour together, like so many broadsides in a sea fight; which made all the company laugh so extremely, that the matter of the house, being the chief inn in the town, was alarmed below therewith and desiring to share with his guests in their mirth, came running up stairs as fast as his legs could 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 a gazing on one another, as more than half distracted, they were in at first; after which followed a cise, as



if more than an hundred persons were laughing together, but nothing was seen.

CHAP. V.

How Ursula married a young Man named Tobias Shipton; and how strangely she discovered a Thief.

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 longed for a husband as well as the best of them, and at last obtained her desire, for whether she used any love powder, or charms to enamour her, or whether the hopes of getting a little money, which she was reported to have, though nobody could tell how she got it, caused him to court her, as there are some men that would not only marry the devil's daughter, but his dam too for money, I cannot certainly inform the reader; but a sweetheart she had, named Tobias Shipton, by trade a carpenter, to whom she was shortly after married, and very comfortably they lived together, but never had any children. It happened

about a month after her marriage, one of her neighbours leaving her doors carelessly open, had a smock and petticoat stolen away, while she was telling a gossip's tale of an hour long, at the next door, where she went to fetch fire, which misfortune much troubled her: she made her moan to mother Shipton, who did not go about like our little silly conjurors with their schemes and figures, to give a blind description of they know not whom; but roundly told her such a one by name had stolen the things, adding, that she would make her restore them with shame to her; and so indeed she did, for the market-day, before all the people, the woman could not avoid putting on the smock over her clothes, and the petticoat in her hand, and so marched through the croud in the market-place where the other was, by Mother Shipton's directions, to receive them singing these words. —

I stole my neighbour's smock and coat,  
I am a thief and here I shew't.

So when she came to the owner, she pulled off the smock and petticoat, and gave her them with a reverend courtesy, asked her pardon, and so departed.

Her Prophecy against Cardinal Woolley.

BY these and several such like exploits, Mother Shipton had got a name, far and near, of a cunning woman, or woman of foresight, that her words were counted oracles; nor did she meddle only with private persons, but was advised by with people of the greatest quality; among which number at that time was Cardinal Woolley. Whom it was reported, that he intended to live at York, she publicly said he should never come there; which coming to his ear, and being offended he caused three lords to go to her, who came disguised to Ring-houses, near York, where leaving their men, they took a guide and come to Mother Shipton's, and knocking at her door, she cried out, Come in Mr Beasley, (their guide) and these noble lords with you; which much surpris'd them that she should know them for when they came in she call'd each of them by their names, and treated them with ale and cakes: wherupon said one of the lords, it ye knew our errand, you would not make so much of us. You said the



Cardinal should never see York, No, said she, I said that he might see York; but never come at it. Well, said the lord, when he does come, thou shalt be burnt. Then taking her linen handkerchief off her head, says she, if this burn, then I may burn; and immediately flung 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, and it was not so much as singed. Hereupon one of the lords asked her what she thought of him. My lord, said she, the time will come when you'll be as low as I, and that is low indeed! which proved true, for shortly after he was beheaded.

Nor was this speech concerning the Cardinal less verified: for he coming from Carwood, went to the top of the tower, and asked where York was, which being shewn him, enquired how far it was there; for quoth he, there was a witch said I should never see York. Nay, says one present, your eminence is misinformed, she said you should see it, but not come at it. Then he vowed to burn her when he came there, which was but eight miles distant; but immediately he was sent for

back the king, and died in his return,  
of a violent loofness at Leicester.

## CHAP. VII.

Some other Prophecies of Mother Ship-  
ton, relating to these Times.

AT divers other times, when persons  
of quality came to visit her, she deliver-  
ed these several prophecies, following,  
that is to say:—

### I. PROPHECY.

Before 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  
to be the lowest stone of Ouse bridge.

### EXPLANATION.

This came to pass, for Trinity steeple  
in York was blown down with a tem-  
pest, and Ouse bridge broke 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.

### II. 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 ships shall ask him why he weeps,  
since he made so good a voyage? And  
he shall say, Ah! what a goodly city  
this was once, none in the world was  
comparable to it, and now there is scarce  
an house that can let us drink for our  
money.

### EXPLANATION.

These last words were sadly verified  
after the dreadful fire in London, in  
1666, when there was not a house left  
all along the Thames' sides, from the  
tower of 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,

### CHAP. VIII.

Her Prophecies in Verse to the Abbot  
of Beverly.

THE abbot of Beverly giving her a  
visit one day, told her, that as he found  
several things which she had formerly  
said to be exactly true, so he was  
persuaded she was not ignorant of those  
which for the future were to ensue, and



therefore requested her to impart some of her foreknowledge to him; for which favour, though it was more than his deserts could command, yet should he never want tongue to acknowledge, nor a heart to endeavour a requital of so great an obligation. Mr Abbot, said she, leave of complimenting, I am an old woman who will not flatter nor be flattered by any, yet will answer desires as fast as I may: And therefore did in mystic verses discover to him the greatest accidents that have happened in England from that day to this, as in the following explanation will appear.

### I. PROPHECY.

When the cow doth ride the bull<sup>a</sup>  
Then priest beware of thy skull.

### EXPLANATION:

By the cow was meant Henry VIII, who gave the cow in his arms, as the earl of Richmond; and the bull betokened madam Ann of Boulogne, not only as the first syllable of her name, but because her father gave the black bull's head in his crest; and when the king married her, immediately after happened the dissolution of monasteries and restraint laid on the priests.

## II. PROPHECY.

For a sweet pious prince make room,  
And in a church prepare each broom:

## EXPLANATION.

This was meant by king Edward VI. 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 church.

## III. PROPHECY.

Alecto next assumes the crown,

And streams of blood shall Smithfield

## EXPLANATION.

These lines decypher queen Mary, called Alecto, the name of one of the furies, for her cruelty to the Protestants, of whom great numbers were then burnt in Smithfield.

## IV. PROPHECY.

A maiden queen full many a year,

Shall England's warlike sceptre bear.

## EXPLANATION.

Spoken to queen Elizabeth, who reigned extremely beloved by her subjects, and dreaded by her enemies, above forty years.

## V. PROPHECY.

The western monarch's wooden  
horses,

Shall be destroyed by Drake's forces.

## EXPLANATION.

The king of Spain's mighty navy,  
1588, destroyed by the English fleet  
under captain Drake.

## VI. PROPHECY.

The northern lion over Tweed;  
The maiden queen shalt next succeedi  
And join in one two mighty states;  
Then shall Janus shut his gates.

## EXPLANATION.

This relates to king James, who  
having been many years king of Scot-  
land, the crown of England, by queen  
Elizabeth's death, fell to him; where-  
upon he came over Tweed to take up  
his residence here, and so joined the  
two kingdoms under one government.  
And as for Janus shutting his gates, you  
must know Janus was one of the Hea-  
then 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.

## VII. PROPHECY.

Forth from the north mischief blew,  
And English Hob shall add thereunto;  
Mars shall rage as he were woc'd,  
And earth shall darken'd be with  
blood.



## EXPLANATION.

This relates to our lamentable civil war.

## VIII PROPHECY.

But tell what's next? O cruel fate,  
A king made martyr at his gate.

## EXPLANATION.

Meaning the execrable murder of that most excellent prince, king Charles I.

## IX PROPHECY.

The just king dead, the wolf shall then,  
With blood usurp the lion's 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.

## EXPLANATION.

This prophecy we have seen fulfilled by Cromwell's usurpations, the committee of Safety's confusion, and our gracious Sovereign's miraculous restoration.

## X PROPHECY.

Triumphant death rides London thro',  
And men on tops of houses go.

## EXPLANATION.

The first line points out the great sickness in London, in 1665; and the second the dreadful fire in the year following.

## XI. PROPHECY.

The north shall rue it wondrous sore,  
But the south shall rue it evermore.

## EXPLANATION.

You shall have a year of pining hunger, and shall not know of the way over night, yet shall you have it in the morning; and when it happens, it shall last three years; and then will come woman with one eye, and she shall tread in many a man's blood up to the knees; then shall come in clubs and clouted shoes:

## XII. 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, for to one man there shall be a thousand women:

Unhappy's he who lives to see those  
days,

But happy are the dead, Shipton's wife  
lays,

Let this suffice, the night draws on,  
You must depart, and I begone;  
Appollo does forbid my chimes,  
For to unveil succeeding times.

Having said this, Mother Shipton  
arose, and the admiring Abbot, who,  
you must suppose, took all these pro-  
phesies in writing, gave her many  
thanks, and returned home.

## CHAP. XI.

### Mother Shipton's Life, and Death.

THIS famous prophetess continued  
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 ap-  
proaching, wherein she must give a  
final adieu to the world, which she fore-  
told to a day, to divers people; and at  
the hour predicted, having taken leave  
of all her friends, laid herself down on  
her bed and died:



On her Grave-stone in the Church-yard  
of Knaresborough,  
Is the following Epitaph,

---

Here lies  
the Body of  
**URSULA SEATHIEL,**  
commonly called,  
**MOTHER SHIPTON,**  
known also,  
by the Titles of, The  
Devil's Bastard, Hag Face, &c.  
who was brought into the world under  
such strange circumstances,  
that it surpris'd every mortal there  
present.

—She had a great gift of Prophecy.—  
was a good neighbour,  
a loving Wife,  
and an affectionate friend.

She lived—till she died, at the age of  
threescore and thirteen years.

Amen, Amen, so let it be,  
So rest her body, and her s-c-u-l go free.

FINIS: