

# Mother Shipton investigated/Chapter 4

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< Mother Shipton investigated

## Chapter fourth.

ANOTHER ANCIENT RECORD RELATING TO MOTHER SHIPTON—THE VERSION OF LILLY, THE ASTROLOGER—THE FULFILMENT OF MOTHER SHIPTON'S PROPHECIES.

William Lilly, the astrologer, published "A Collection of Ancient and Moderne Prophecies. . . . London, Printed for *John Partridge* and *Henry Blunden*, and are to be solde at the Signe of the *Cock*, in *Ludgate Streete*, and the *Castle* in *Cornehill*, 1645." This book contains what he calls "Shipton's Prophecy, *after the most exact Copy*," and this version having been published but four years later than the earliest record in the British Museum, it may or may not be the more trustworthy of the two, from the care professedly exercised by Lilly in the selection. I discovered Lilly's version in the course of my researches on this subject in the British Museum Library, and do not know that the authorities there or others were previously aware of its existence. It is not catalogued in the Museum with the Shipton literature.

Line by line I have compared these two earliest versions, and find that they agree tolerably closely. Lilly spells Besley's name "Beasley." "Mungate barre" Lilly spells "Walmgate bar," and rather more of Besley's narrative is set in type in verse. "Stocknmore," is rendered "Storktonmore." Here and there Lilly's version contains trifling additions not in the earlier pamphlet. For instance, it says that after Mother Shipton told Lord Percy that his body would be buried in York pavement and his head carried into France—"They all laughed saying, that would be a great lop between the Head and the Body."

But this 1645 pamphlet is of exceeding interest, because it shows that nearly all the alleged prophecies of Mother Shipton published in these earlier records, had been fulfilled before 1645, that is to say, they have been fulfilled more than 200 years ago, Lilly's reprint sets forth the following points

in relation to the fulfilment of the prophecies printed in the last chapter:--

I. That the Duke of Suffolk had been beheaded.

II. That Lord Percy had risen in rebellion in the North, that he had been beheaded and that his body was buried in York; also that his Head was stoln away and carried into France. Temp. Eliz. R."

III. That Trinity steeple in York had been blown down in a tempest, and Ouse bridge broken down by a great flood; also that the repairs made in the day fell down in the night, till they, remembering the prophecy, made the highest stone of the steeple the foundation of the bridge, and then the work stood. By this was partly verified another of Mother Shipton's sayings, "that her maid should live to drive her cow over Trinity steeple."

VI. The prophecy about the North rueing it "wondrous sore," is supposed to refer to the suppression of religious houses, and "at the Lord William Howard's house at Naworth, a Hare came and kinnell'd in his Kitchin, upon the hearth."

V. As to the King of Scots at Holgate Town. When King James arrived at Holgate, such a multitude had assembled that he was forced to ride another way. His children were in Edinburgh.

VI. As to the prophecy about the water over Ouso bridge and the windmill on a tower, water was carried into York through "boared Elmes," and a windmill drew up the water at Conduit House.

VII. A Lord Major whose house was in the Minster yard in York, was killed with three stabs.

VIII. "Sir T. Wentworth and Sir John Savil, in choosing Knights for the shire, in the Castle-yard at Yorke, did so fall out, that they were never well reconciled."

IX. "Colton hag in her time was a Woodland ground full of trees, which bore Corn seven years, and the seventh yeer after that was the yeer of the coming in of the Scots, and their taking of Newcastle."

X. "In the yeer 1616 the two Judges of Assize went out at a gate in York, where never any Judges were known to go out before or since."

XI. About wars beginning in the spring, King Charles raised an army in the spring of 1639, after which many ladies lost their husbands, and people were so taxed it was worst for those who had the most.

XII. "Calder and Are" are two Yorkshire rivers, and "Are passeth through Craven."

XIII. Where "Crookback Richard made his fray." This, says the chronicler, refers to "Neer Leicester, where Richard the third was slain in battel, there Colonel Hastings was one of the first in arms, endeavouring to settle the Commission of Array, in opposition to others, that were then setting the Militia."

XIV. "1642. Two shillings and sixpence was publicly promised by many Lords for the King's use, to pay one Horseman a day's wages."

XV. Many Welsh and Irish were killed in the war.

XVI. The prophecy about quaking for fear of dead man, not fulfilled.

XVII. War between England and Scotland not fulfilled. "Brammish is a river in Northumberland."

XVIII. A child had been "credibly reported" to have been born at Pomfret with three thumbs.

XIX. The prophecy of the siege of York and its accompanying incidents not fulfilled.

XX. The prophecy about London not fulfilled.

The foregoing category catalogues nearly all Mother Shipton's prophecies as having been fulfilled before 1645. That of the mariner in the Thames weeping for malt liquor in the partly destroyed city, may more particularly be supposed to yet remain for fulfilment, but Mr. Baker, the writer of her 1797 biography, claims that this last one describes the results of the Great Fire of London in 1666, which left not one house between the Tower and the Temple. This fire, at all events, occurred long after Mother Shipton's death and the publication of her alleged prophecy.

The third copy in point of antiquity, of Mother Shipton's Prophecies in the British Museum, is a black-letter pamphlet, published in 1663, "Printed by *T. P.* for *Fr. Coles*, and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the Lambe in the Old-Baily, neare the Sessions House, 1663." It is entitled *Mother Shipton's Prophecies: with Three and XX more, all most terrible and wonderfull, Predicting strange alterations to befall this Climate of England.*

This version agrees closely with Lilly's, but the latter is rather more complete, and is in a better state of preservation. The 1663 edition, however, ends with the following couplet, not given by Lilly:—

In the world old age this woman did fore-tell,  
Strange things shal hap, which in our time have fell.

Mother Shipton's prophecies, therefore, were generally recognised as having been fulfilled before the middle of the XVII Century.



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