

MOTHER SHIPTON'S



PROPHECIES

MOTHER SHIPTON'S (c. 1488 – 1561) PROPHECIES

Mother Shipton is perhaps England's most renowned soothsayer, although the method of divination she used to foretell the future does not appear to have been recorded, or has been overlooked by her 'biographers'. My personal theory, and I stress *personal*, is that she may have used water from the nearby 'dropping well' (like the petrifying well in Matlock Bath in Derbyshire) for scrying purposes, scrying having been the method adopted shortly before her death by Michel de Notredame (Nostradamus). Whether or not he took a leaf out of her book, or whether the legend of Mother Shipton came about as a result of his life makes us ponder, for another marked similarity between these two 'prophets' to take into consideration is the fact that he, like Mother Shipton, wrote his predictions in verse format, albeit always in quatrains (4-line verses).

The massive rock perched above the dropping well was formed in precisely the same manner as a stalactite, i.e. by running/dripping water leaving a vast deposit of minerals which build up over a period of time. A great underground lake is the source of that water. It travels approximately one mile underground along a thick layer of heavy mineralised rock (from which it dissolves those huge amounts of different minerals) before emerging as a spring behind the well, gushing over the top at a reputed rate of 700 gallons per hour (3100 litres for younger readers). It is claimed that it takes as short a period as 3 months to turn a child's small, cuddly teddy bear to stone! Many artefacts on display in the small museum were left by celebrities to undergo the process of petrification.



The fable of Mother Shipton's life begins in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire in 1488. The word 'fable' has been chosen because no-one knows for certain whether or not Mother Shipton actually existed, but if she did then it was most likely as Ursula Southeil (also variously spelt as Ursula Southill, Ursula Soothtel or Ursula Sontheil). The legend tells us that the woman who attended her birth reported hearing a tremendous crack of thunder followed by an exceedingly strong smell of sulphur as Ursula came into this world. She was born in a cave close to the River Nidd, the cave itself (now a very popular tourist site) having been formed approximately 12,000 years earlier through a collapsed deposit of minerals, supposedly created by the same spring that now flows over the dropping well. The baby was apparently so hideous it was rumoured that her mother, a young girl of fifteen called Agatha Sonthiel, had actually been seduced out of wedlock by the Devil himself.

At this juncture, one branch of the tale tells us that Agatha died during childbirth, while yet another says she gave Ursula up at the age of two for fostering and went to spend the rest of her shattered life in a convent. Following our own research into Mother Shipton, this second tale seems far more plausible.

As she grew older, Ursula started to show uncanny signs of both prophetic and psychic abilities. At the house where she was being fostered, on the outskirts of Knaresborough, crockery and furniture would move of its own volition in her presence, cutlery would fly across the room, and strange noises would be heard. As she continued to develop, so did her powers, although she reputedly used them *only* to help people, but it was probably because of her growing reputation as a witch, compounded by the fact she was so grotesque, that many locals lived in fear of her. But beauty is only skin deep, or so the saying goes, for despite those hideous features, at the tender age of 24 she married a carpenter by the name of Toby Shipton. Nobody seems to mention Toby's looks, but if he married Ursula simply to get the equivalent of 'child benefit' of the time he lost out on the deal, for the marriage was childless, and his wife died nearly 50 years later in 1561.

Mother Shipton wrote her prophecies during the reign of King Henry VIII, in the form of poems, and 'predicted' his victory over France at the Battle of the Spurs in 1513. The first known edition of Mother Shipton's prophecies did not appear in print until 1641, some eighty years after her death, but it was not until 1684 that what is considered to be the most important edition of her work was

published. This was edited by Richard Head, and included her earliest biography. Richard Head invented much of the story of her life as well as the descriptions of her, mostly based on legend and folklore that had been passed down by word of mouth. Later writers also fabricated prophecies. Charles Hindley, for example, admitted that many of the predictions in his edition of 1862 had been *concocted* to fool the Victorian public.

There are many sites on the internet where you can read all of her prophecies, but it has long been established that they are hoaxes, the majority having been written *after* the events happened. Despite this, her legend has been passed on through the generations and Mother Shipton, just like King Arthur, the unicorn and Robin Hood has now become part of English Folklore.

THE PROPHECIES

A carriage without horse will go,
disaster fill the world with woe.
In London, Primrose Hill shall be
in centre hold a Bishop's see.

Around the world men's thoughts will fly,
quick as the twinkling of an eye.
And water shall great wonders do,
How strange, and yet it shall come true.

Through towering hills proud men shall ride,
no horse or ass move by his side.
Beneath the water, men shall walk,
shall ride, shall sleep, shall even talk.
And in the air men shall be seen,
In white and black and even green.
A great man, shall come and go
for prophecy declares it so.

In water, iron then shall float
as easy as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be seen in stream and stone,
in land that is as yet unknown.

And England shall admit a Jew,
You think this strange, but it is true.
The Jew that once was led in scorn,
shall of a Christian then be born.

A house of glass shall come to pass,
In England. But alas, alas,
a war will follow with the work
where dwells the pagan and the Turk.

These states will lock in fiercest strife,
and seek to take each other's life.
When north shall thus divide the south
and an eagle build in lion's mouth
then tax and blood and cruel war
shall come to every humble door.

Three times shall lovely sunny France
be led to play a bloody dance

before the people shall be free
three tyrant rulers shall she see.

Three rulers in succession be
each from a different dynasty.
Then when the fiercest strife is done.
England and France shall be as one.

The British olive shall next then twine,
in marriage with a German vine.
Men walk beneath and over streams
fulfilled shall be their wondrous dreams.

For in those wondrous far off days,
the women shall adopt a craze
to dress like men, and trousers wear
and to cut off their locks of hair.
They'll ride astride with brazen brow,
as witches do on broomsticks now.

And roaring monsters with men atop,
does seem to eat the verdant crop.
And men shall fly as birds do now,
and give away the horse and plough.

They'll be a sign for all to see
be sure that it will certain be.
Then love shall die and marriage cease
and nations wane as babes decrease.
And wives shall fondle cats and dogs
and men live much the same as hogs.

THESE VERSES WERE DISCOVERED ON THE OUTER WRAPPINGS OF SOME SCROLLS

I know I go, I know I'm free,
I know that this will come to be,
Secreted this, for this will be
found by later dynasty.

A dairy maid, a bonnie lass,
shall kick this tome as she does pass
And five generations she shall breed
before one male child does learn to read.

This is then held year by year,
till an iron monster trembling fear,
eats parchment, words and quill and ink,
and mankind is given time to think.

And only when this comes to be
will mankind read this prophecy.
But one man's sweets another's bane
so I shall not have burned in vain.

THE FOLLOWING VERSES WERE FOUND ON A SCROLL IN A JAR

The signs will be there for all to read
when man shall do most heinous deed
man will ruin kinder lives
by taking them as to their wives.
And murder foul and brutal deed
when man will only think of greed.
And man shall walk as if asleep,
he does not look - he may not peep.
And iron men the tail shall do;
and iron cart and carriage too.

The king shall false promise make;
and talk just for talking's sake.
And nations plan horrific war;
the like as never seen before.
And taxes rise and lively down;
and nations wear perpetual frown.

Yet greater sign there be to see;
as man nears latter century.
Three sleeping mountains gather breath,
and spew out mud, and ice and death.
An earthquake swallow town and town;
in lands as yet to me unknown.
And Christian one fights Christian two
and nations sigh, yet nothing do.
And yellow men great power gain;
from mighty bear with whom they've lain.

These mighty tyrants will fail to do,
they fail to split the world in two.
But from their acts a danger bred;
an ague, leaving many dead.

And physics find no remedy;
for this is worse than leprosy.
Oh many signs for all to see;
the truth of this true prophecy.

THE FINAL PROPHECY

In nineteen hundred and twenty-six
build houses light of straw and sticks.
For then shall mighty wars be planned
and fire and swords shall sweep the land.

When pictures seem alive with movements free,
when boats like fishes swim beneath the sea.
When men like birds shall scour the sky.
Then half the world, deep drenched in blood shall die.

For those who live the century through
in fear and trembling this shall do.
Flee to the mountains and the dens
to bog and forest and wild fens.

For storms will rage and oceans roar
when Gabriel stands on sea and shore,
and as he blows his wondrous horn
old worlds die and new be born.

A fiery dragon will cross the sky
six times before the earth shall die.
Mankind will tremble and frightened be
for the six heralds in this prophecy.

For seven days and seven nights
man will watch this awesome sight.
The tides will rise beyond their ken
to bite away the shores and then
the mountains will begin to roar
and earthquakes split the plain to shore.

And flooding waters rushing in,
will flood the lands with such a din
that mankind cowers in muddy fen
and snarls about his fellow men.

He bares his teeth and fights and kills
and secrets food in secret hills
and ugly in his fear, he lies
to kill marauders, thieves and spies.

Man flees in terror from the floods
and kills, and rapes and lies in blood
and spilling blood by mankind's hand
will stain and bitter many lands.

And when the dragon's tail is gone
man forgets and smiles and carries on.
To apply himself - too late, too late
for mankind has earned deserved fate.

His masked smile, his false grandeur,
will serve the gods their anger stir
and they will send the dragon back
to light the sky - his tail will crack.

Upon the earth and rend the earth
and man shall flee, king, lord and serf.
But slowly they are routed out
to seek diminishing water spout
and men will die of thirst before
the oceans rise to mount to the shore.
And lands will crack and rend anew
you think it strange, it will come true.

And in some far - off distant land
some men - oh such a tiny band
will have to leave their solid mount
and span the earth, those few to count.

Who survives this (unreadable) and then
begins the human race again.
But not on land already there,

but on ocean beds, stark, dry and bare.

Not every soul on earth will die,
as the dragon's tail goes sweeping by,
not every land on earth will sink,
but these will wallow in stench and stink,
of rotting bodies of beast and man,
of vegetation crisped on land.

But the land that rises from the sea
will be dry and clean and soft and free.
Of mankind's dirt and therefore be,
the source of man's new dynasty.
And those that live will ever fear
the dragon's tail for many year
but time erases memory
You think it strange, but it will be.

And before the race is built anew,
a silver serpent comes to view
and spew out men of like unknown
to mingle with the earth now grown
cold from its heat and these men can
enlighten the minds of future man
to intermingle and show them how
to live and love and thus endow.
he children with the second sight
a natural thing so that they might
grow graceful, humble and when they do
the golden age will start anew.

The dragon's tail is but a sign
for mankind's fall and man's decline.
and before this prophecy is done
I shall be burned at the stake, at I.
My body singed and my soul set free
You think I utter blasphemy.
You're wrong. These things have come to me
this prophecy will come to be.

