

BROTHER JUCUNDUS

At York were two religious houses — St. Mary's Abbey and St. Leonard's Priory — so close together that their walls abutted. The magnificent ruins of St. Mary's Abbey Church, the heavy fragments of the Priory Church of St. Leonard's, now stand in the gardens of the Botanical Society, and resound no longer to the sound of psalmody, but to the strains of the band playing marches, waltzes, and overtures.

At the close of the fifteenth century, before the Dissolution was thought of, there lived, and fasted, and prayed in St. Leonard's Priory a fat monk named Brother Jucundus. He had not been long in the house. He had joined the order in a fit of headache and remorse, after heavy potations on the occasion of the installation of a new Lord Mayor, and it is possible — probable, I suspect — that he somewhat regretted his precipitancy. Yet there was no escape. The irrevocable vows were on him; for life he was bound to eat only vegetables and bread, drink very small beer, and sleep only six hours in the night.

Convivial songs floated through his mind when he ought to have been chanting the Psalms of David, and the flavour of old sack rose upon his palate when he looked dolefully down at dinnertime into his mug of "swipes."

A year passed. The full paunch of Brother Jucundus began to subside; his fat cheeks to fall flabby, like the dewlaps of a cow; a dispirited expression took the place of the watery twinkle which had once animated his eye.

Come what might, Brother Jucundus felt he must have a fling. He should die without it. Just one jolification in the twelvemonth, and then he would put up for the rest of the year with beans and cabbage, small beer and matins before dawn.

York fair approached. York fair! of all that is ravishing! The shows of dancing dogs, the whirli-go-rounds, the giantesses and dwarfs, the "spice" stalls, the drinking booths! To York fair he must, he would go, if condemned to a bean and a thimbleful of water for fasting dinner ever after.

And go he did. He managed it in this way: — After dinner the whole community took an hour's sleep. As they rose at midnight and dined at mid-day, this was very necessary, and the Priory was silent, save for snores, from one o'clock to two. At half past one Brother Jucundus stole to the porter's lodge, found the porter asleep in his chair — so took possession of his keys; went to the Prior's apartment; the Prior was asleep; pocketed a crown from his money-box, and left the Priory.

At two o'clock the community awoke. The porter missed his keys. The Prior missed the crown. All the monks were summoned into the chapter house, and all missed Brother Jucundus.

After long deliberation it was decided that two sedate and trusty brothers should be sent out in quest of him.

It was a bright, sunny afternoon. Jucundus had enjoyed himself amazingly. The amount of gingerbread horses and men he had consumed was prodigious. He had seen "The Spotted Boy" and "The Bearded Woman;" he had gone round in the whirligig on the back of a wooden horse; he had shot for nuts at a mark, and won his pocket full, which he cracked every now and then, and washed down with a draft of really good ale. And now, just now, he was going up in the boat of a great seesaw, with a foaming tankard in his hand, his jolly red face illumined with glee, and his ample throat thundering forth —

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,
Up, up, up we go-o-o;"

when his sweet jubilee was cut short by the sight of two monks from his Priory, with grim faces, making their way towards the seesaw.

Brother Jucundus tried to scramble out, and in so doing tumbled down. He was picked up. Either his libations, or the fall, or disinclination to return to St. Leonard's weakened his legs, and he tottered so much that the reverend fathers were obliged to put him in a wheelbarrow and roll him to the Priory gate. At the entrance stood the Prior with a brow of thunder.

Brother Jucundus looked pleasantly up in his face from out of his conveyance, smiled benignantly, and piped —

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,
Up, up, up we go-o-o."

The chapter was still sitting, stern and threatening.

The helpless monk was trundled in his barrow into the midst of the assembled fathers, to be tried and sentenced.

He had been caught, *flagrante delicto*, in a seesaw, drunk, riotous, and incapable. Nevertheless, Brother Jucundus was not disposed to view his case unfavourably. He looked round on the chapter with an affectionate glance from out of his watery eye, and the kindest, most winsome smile on his ruddy cheeks.

He was asked at once for his defence. He murmured, with a hiccup —

"In dulce júbilo-o-o."

The sentence was unanimous, and unflinching given. He was to be walled alive into a niche in the Priory cellar. The execution was to be carried into effect immediately.

As he was helped down the cellar stairs, some glimmer of his situation came in on the mind of Jucundus, and he sadly trolled out —

“Down, down, down we go-o-o.”

A convenient niche was soon found. A cruse of water and a loaf of bread, with cruel mockery, were placed in the recess. The ready hands of zealous monks mixed the mortar, brought the bricks, and in a quarter of an hour Brother Jucundus was firmly walled in to his living grave.

Now for the first time did the extreme inconvenience of his position break upon the unfortunate monk. In the wheelbarrow he had been able to sit; here he was walled upright. It was cramping, intolerable. He kicked, he pressed backwards with all his might; and suddenly, with a crash, the wall behind him gave way, and he rolled backwards over a heap of fallen bricks into a cellar.

The shock brought him completely to his senses. Where was he? Now he saw the gravity of his offence — the terrible fate that had been prepared for him. Escape was fortunately open to him. He ran up the cellar stairs, and found himself in the Abbey of St. Mary's. The cellars of the two monasteries had adjoined; a wall alone had divided them. He had tumbled out of St. Leonard's into St. Mary's.

St. Mary's Abbey belonged to the severe Cistercian Order. Complete silence was one of the rules of the society. Except on Easter day, no monk might speak; on Easter day every one talked, and nobody listened. When Brother Jucundus accordingly appeared in the cloisters, no monk turned to look at him, or asked him “how the saints he had come there?” but swept by him like a ghost. Jucundus made himself as much at home as was possible. He took his place at table, ate and drank what was set before him, occupied a pallet in the common dormitory, lifted his voice in concert with the others in the Abbey choir, and nobody meddled with him. The monks, if they thought about him at all — and it was against their rules to think of anything but their own spiritual affairs — thought he was a new monk just joined in the usual accepted manner.

A twelvemonth passed. It had been dull in St. Leonard's; it was duller in St. Mary's. The day came round on which York fair was held, the day, that happy day, which had ended so dolorously.

Now the day before York fair the office of cellarer fell vacant in St. Mary's Abbey by the death of the monk who had presided over the wine and beer. The Abbot by a happy inspiration committed the keys to Brother Jucundus. Here

was an opportunity! If York fair might not be enjoyed in the market place and the Pavement, he would at least commemorate it in the Abbey cellar.

On York fair day, accordingly, Brother Jucundus, after having seen all his fellow monks safe in bed, stole down the stone steps into the vault where were the barrels, with a tankard in his one hand and a lantern in the other.

St. Mary's Abbey was often called upon to receive noble, even royal guests, and entertain them nobly and royally. It therefore contained barrels of very prime wine and very strong audit ale. Brother Jucundus went along the range of barrels trying one tippie after another. There is nothing so dangerous as mixing your drink, and this the reverend brother discovered at last, for he sat down, unable to proceed further, by the best cask of Malmsey, and turning the tap, filled his tankard.

Next day at noon the Cistercians assembled in the refectory for their frugal repast, dinner and breakfast in one: and as they had been up since midnight, and had eaten and drunk nothing for twelve hours, were tolerably hungry and dry. But the mugs were empty. At the Abbot's table even was neither wine nor beer. The silent fraternity bore with this some time, but at last even the rules of the Order could not keep them perfectly silent. They shuffled with their feet, growled and grunted discontentedly. At last the Abbot, in a voice of thunder, shouted —

"I want my beer!" and, the example of the head becoming infectious, "Beer, beer, beer! we all want our beer!" resounded from every part of the refectory.

"Where was the cellarer?" Nobody knew. At last two brothers were commissioned to go to the cellar and fetch ale. They presently returned with awestruck countenances, beckoned to the Abbot to follow them, and led the way along the cloisters down the cellar stairs. Curiosity, though against the rule, was infectious, and all the monks crept *en queue* after the Abbot. When they reached the vault a shocking sight presented itself to their eyes. Brother Jucundus lay with his head against the butt of Malmsey, flourishing his tankard over his head, and feebly, incoherently, trolling forth —

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,
Up, up, up we go-o-o."

It was too flagrant an offence to be passed over. A chapter of the Order was at once constituted in the cellar itself. All the monks were present. Unanimously it was decided that after solemn excommunication with bell, book, and candle, the guilty brother should be walled up alive on the scene of his crime in that very cellar.

The awful scene of excommunication was proceeded with. It took some time, and during the ceremony Brother Jucundus gradually resumed consciousness

— the fumes of Malmsey slowly evaporated. A convenient recess was found, where a heap of crumbling bricks lay prostrate. It was the identical nook out of which a year and a day before Brother Jucundus had escaped into the Cistercian Order and Abbey of St. Mary.

Into this niche therefore he was built. His terrible position had not, however, as yet forced itself on the monk's brain; he still tasted Malmsey, still was his heart buoyant, and with swelling lungs he roared forth his song —

“In dulce júbilo-o-o,
Up, up, up we go-o-o.”

Now, it happened that the clocks in St. Leonard's and St. Mary's differed by a quarter of an hour. That of St. Leonard's was slower than that of St. Mary's. Consequently it was only just dinnertime in St. Leonard's Priory, and the cellarer, pitcher in hand, had just descended the stairs, and was filling his vessel with small beer, when he heard close to his ear, from behind the wall, a stentorian voice thunder forth —

“In dulce júbilo-o-o,
Up, up, up we go-o-o.”

The voice, the strain, the words were those of Brother Jucundus, who a year and a day before had been immured at that very spot.

Down went the pitcher, and away fled the monk — amazement, admiration in his countenance, “A miracle! a miracle!” in his mouth — to the monks, just issuing from the church and the recitation of Sext and the office for the dead around the body of their Prior, lately deceased, and that day to be buried.

The whole community rolled like a tidal wave down the cellar stairs, and stood with breathless awe in a circle about the spot where twelve months and a day before they had walled in Brother Jucundus.

It was a miracle — there could be no doubt of it. Eager hands tore down the wall, and revealed the reverend brother, hale and rosy as of yore, and at his side a loaf as fresh as when put in, and a pitcher still full to the brim.

There could be no doubt but that this was a special interposition to establish the innocence of the monk, and to indicate to the community who was to be their future Prior.

With one voice they shouted, “Jucundus our Prior! Saint Jucundus our head and father!”

On the shoulders of the enthusiastic brethren the miraculous monk was carried upstairs and installed in the Prior's seat in the chapter house.

Under him St. Leonard's jogged along very pleasantly, and he did much in his long rule of the monastery for its discipline and good order, if not to justify, at least to excuse the dissolution which fell on it immediately after his death.

MARY BATEMAN, WITCH AND MURDERESS

Mary Harker was the daughter of a small farmer at Aisenby, in the parish of Topcliffe, near Thirsk, where she was born in 1768. From an early age she exhibited great quickness, which, instead of taking a direct course and developing into intelligence, was warped into low cunning.

She received, for one in her situation, a good education — was taught to read, and write, and cypher. But she very early showed a want of moral principle, very possibly because it was never instilled into her by her parents, and her first petty thefts having been pardoned or laughed at, she grew bolder, and what had been occasional grew to be frequent, and matured into a habit of peculation. Her father sent her into service at the age of thirteen, in Thirsk, and for a while she either concealed or did not yield to her propensity for theft. At all events, if she did pilfer, she was neither suspected nor discovered.

At the age of twenty she left Thirsk for York, and after a year's sojourn in that city, was detected in an attempt at robbery, and ran away to Leeds, where, in 1788, she worked as a mantua maker; but as her knowledge of dressmaking was imperfect — she had only acquired it during her twelvemonth at York, where her mistress had been a dressmaker — she was able to work for the lower classes alone. She lived in Leeds for four years, following this occupation and occasionally telling fortunes. Her professed calling admirably served to introduce dupes to her, and the servant girls for whom she worked not infrequently introduced her to their young mistresses.

In the year 1792 she married an honest, hard-working man named John Bateman, who had made her acquaintance only three weeks previously. This man, there is no reason for believing, was, at first at all events, an accomplice in, or acquainted with, the crimes committed subsequently by his wife, though afterwards it is scarcely possible to exculpate him from connivance in them.

She now began openly to profess fortune telling, the removal of spells, the power of controlling the future, etc., in which, however, she did not act in her own name, but as the deputy of Mrs. Moore, whom she represented as a person endowed with the supernatural powers belonging to the seventh child of a seventh child.

Whether such a person existed or not was never ascertained, but it is certain that Mary Bateman, at the outset of her career, had some accomplice, and she was from her youth fond of associating with gipsies and other vagrants, from whom she learned the art she afterwards practised.

The Batemans lodged in High Court Lane, Leeds, and she stole from a fellow lodger a silver watch, a spoon of the same metal, and two guineas. The theft was discovered, and she was made to restore what she had taken, but she was not prosecuted.

Several charges of obtaining silk goods under various names of persons with whom she was acquainted were made and substantiated at this time, but the shopkeepers, with mistaken clemency, regarding her as a poor milliner, forgave her.

A poor man, a neighbour, who earned his living and supported his family with the assistance of a horse and cart, sickened and died, leaving a widow and four children, the eldest a boy about fifteen years of age. The widow, who was only stepmother of the children, was persuaded by Mary Bateman that the eldest boy meant to sell all the little property his father had left, and appropriate the money to his own use, to prevent which she advised the mother to sell the horse, cart, and furniture as soon as possible, and to quit Yorkshire. This advice the infatuated woman took, turned everything into money, left a share with Mary for the children, and departed. Mary Bateman appropriated the sum entrusted to her, and sent the children to the union.

A gentleman living in Meadow Lane, in Leeds, bought a leg of mutton at the shambles, and requested that it might be sent home immediately. Mary, ever on the watch for her prey, hastened to the bridge over which the butcher's boy had to pass, and when she saw him approach, made towards him in a great hurry, pretending she was the gentleman's servant, scolded the boy for being so long upon the road, and taking the mutton by the shank, gave him a slap on the back, telling him she would carry it home herself. It is needless to say that carry it home she did, but not to the gentleman's house. When dinnertime came the joint had not arrived. The gentleman went to his butcher to inquire about the neglect, but he was informed that the meat had been sent an hour ago, and was taken from the boy by a woman, whom the butcher described, and whom the gentleman recollected to have seen at the stall when he was buying the meat, and whose residence he luckily knew to be in the Old Assembly Room Yard, in Kirkgate. He accordingly posted down to her house, and the first object that presented itself to his eyes on entering it was his leg of mutton roasting before Bateman's fire. After upbraiding Mary, she agreed to pay for the mutton, and the matter was thus compromised.

In 1793 Bateman took a small house in Well's Yard, and furnished it decently — by what means, unless from the proceeds of her frauds, it is difficult to say, though it is due to the husband to admit that he was never proved to be cognisant of any of her malpractices, and was sometimes the victim of them. She once went to his workshop and took with her a letter representing that his father, who was then town crier at Thirsk, was at the point of death.

Her husband instantly set off for that town, and had scarcely entered it when he heard his father's voice in the market place announcing an auction. He hurried back to Leeds to inform his wife of the hoax that had been practised upon them; but on his return he found his house stripped of every article of furniture, which Mary had sold, in all probability to hush up some robbery she had committed.

After some time they jointly found means to get fresh furniture, and they took in lodgers, one of whom, a Mr. Dixon, discovered Mary in the act of purloining money from his box. She was forced to refund it, and make good several losses that Mr. Dixon had before sustained, but for which he had not been able to account.

In the year 1796 a tremendous fire broke out in a large manufactory in Leeds, and by the falling of one of the walls many unfortunate people lost their lives. This calamity Mary Bateman turned to her own advantage. She went to Miss Maude, a lady known for her charitable disposition, and telling her that the child of a poor woman had fallen a victim, and that she had not linen to lay the child out on, begged she would lend her a pair of sheets. This request was complied with; but the sheets, instead of being turned to such a benevolent purpose, were pledged at a pawnbroker's shop. Three similar instances occurred at the same time, and all the sheets were disposed of in the same way. Nor did her frauds on the plea of this calamity end here. She went round the town representing herself as a nurse at the General Infirmary, and collecting all the old linen she could beg to dress the wounds, as she said, of the patients who had been brought into the infirmary, but in reality to dispose of them for herself.

Bateman, ashamed of the disgrace caused by his wife's conduct, entered the supplementary militia, but he took with him his plague — his wife. And here a wide field opened for a woman of her disposition. She practised her old arts and learnt fresh ones. Of her exploits while in this situation we have no information; but when she quitted the army with her husband in the year 1796, on their return to Leeds, they took up their residence in Marsh Lane, near Timble Bridge. Mary then began to practise on a large scale. She herself, as she said, had no skill in casting nativities or reading the stars, but a certain Mrs. Moore was a proficient in this art, and to Mrs. Moore she referred all knotty points. It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Moore had no existence whatever.

The first experiment in witchcraft was made upon a Mrs. Greenwood, whom she attempted to persuade that she, Mrs. Greenwood, was in danger of committing suicide on account of domestic misfortunes, and that the skill of Mrs. Moore would be necessary to prevent so dire a catastrophe. Next she informed her that her husband, who was then from home, was taken up for some offence, and placed in confinement; that four men had been set to watch him; and that if four pieces of gold, four pieces of leather, four pieces of blotting paper, and four brass screws were not produced that night, and placed in her hands to give to Mrs. Moore to "screw down" the guards, her husband would be a dead man before morning. In vain did Mrs. Greenwood plead that she had no pieces of gold; this difficulty Mrs. Bateman proposed to overcome by suggesting to her that she might borrow or steal them; the latter proposal startled her intended dupe, and, fortunately for her, she had fortitude enough to emancipate herself from the witch's trammels.

The family of Barzillai Stead, a person who had been unsuccessful in business, next became the object of Mary's iniquitous exactions. Upon the

husband's fears she contrived to work with so much success, by representing the bailiffs to be in continual pursuit of him, that she obliged him to enlist, and to share his bounty with her and her imaginary wise woman. Her next object was to arouse the jealousy of the wife: this she did by assuring her that it was the intention of Barzillai to take with him, when he went to his regiment, a young woman out of Vicar Lane, Leeds. In order to prevent this it became necessary to "screw down" the rival queen; this was to be effected by the agency of Mrs. Moore, but Mrs. Moore's screws would never drive without money — three half crowns were to be produced for this purpose, and two pieces of coal; the coals were to be placed at the woman's door in Vicar Lane; they were then to be laid on the fire — the woman was to be thrown into a sound sleep — the fire was to communicate to her clean clothes, which had been washed in contemplation of the intended journey, and, the clothes being consumed, she could not of course elope without them. The morning after this charm had taken effect, Stead left Leeds to join his regiment, and left the imaginary woman of Vicar Lane behind him. Mary was then left at liberty to play off the whole artillery of her frauds upon the unsuspecting wife of Stead. To enter into all the expedients she adopted to fleece this poor woman would swell this article to an inconvenient length; suffice it to say that she obliged her to sell or pawn every article in her house that would raise money, and drove her to such a state of desperation as to lead her victim to attempt suicide. While Mary Bateman was practising upon this woman, her dupe was confined, and the Leeds Benevolent Society, finding her in a state of destitution, determined to apply a guinea to the relief of her wants. This sum was given to her in three payments of 7s., and out of this guinea Mary Bateman had the inhumanity to extort 18s. by persuading the credulous woman that she would "screw down" the Benevolent Society, so as to force the managers to give her more alms.

The furniture and clothes were now all gone, and nothing remained but a few tools left by Stead when he went into the army, but even these could not escape the avarice of Mary Bateman, who was never at a loss for expedients to effect her purposes. She persuaded Stead's wife that it was in the power of Mrs. Moore — Mrs. Moore again! — to "screw down" all the officers in her husband's regiment, and so to screw them that they could not avoid giving him his discharge; but then money must be raised, and how, when nothing remained in the house but the tools? They of course must be sent to the pawnbroker's and every farthing they fetched was paid to Mary to get her friend Moore to interpose her kind offices for the liberation of the soldier. This charm failed, as the officers were too much for the witch.

Mary Bateman next became acquainted with a tradesman's wife of the name of Cooper. She persuaded this woman that her husband was about to abscond, and take with him all the property he could raise, and that she might not be left quite destitute, Mary prevailed upon her to convey as much of the furniture as she could out of the house, including an excellent clock, and to lodge all this furniture at Bateman's. There it did not remain long. Mary took it all to the pawnbroker's, got for it what it would fetch, and left the abused husband and his credulous wife to redeem it at their leisure.

Blown upon as the credit of Mrs. Bateman's witchcraft then was, she removed from Timble Bridge to the Black Dog Yard, at the Bank. While she lived here one of her hens laid a wonderful egg, remarkable for bearing this inscription —

“CHRIST IS COMING.”

But as so singular a phenomenon was not likely to obtain all the credit necessary for carrying into effect her fraudulent intentions unless supported by some kind of proof, she had the ingenuity and cruelty to contrive that two other eggs, bearing similar inscriptions, should be deposited in the nest by the same unfortunate hen. Persons flocked from all quarters to see the wonderful eggs, and they who dared to disbelieve stood a good chance of being maltreated by the credulous multitude. Mary's motive for producing those eggs is not well made out, but it is supposed that she had at that time a notion of following the example of Joanna Southcote, as she was then in the habit of attending the meetings of the sect founded by that extraordinary woman. Mary succeeded in realising no inconsiderable sum by means of these eggs, for she made those who came to see the miracle pay a penny each for the gratification of their curiosity.

Shortly after, the subject of this narrative contrived to ingratiate herself, as she well knew how, into the good graces of a family of the name of Kitchin, two maiden ladies of the Quaker persuasion, who kept a small linen draper's shop near St. Peter's Square, in Leeds. There is every reason to suppose that she had deluded these unfortunate young women with some idea of her skill in looking into futurity, or, at least, that some of her friends — a Mrs. Moore or a Miss Blythe perhaps — could read their destiny in the stars! For some time Mary was the confidant of the Misses Kitchin. She was frequently at their house; she assisted in their shop; and her interference extended even to their domestic concerns. In the early part of September, 1803, one of the young women became very ill; Mary Bateman procured for her medicines, as she said, from a country doctor. These medicines, like those administered afterwards to Perigo and his unfortunate wife, were of powerful efficacy, and in the course of less than one week Miss Kitchin died. In the meantime her mother, hearing of her dangerous situation, came from Wakefield, and though in good health when she left home, the mother as well as the second daughter took the same illness, and in a few days both were laid in the grave, at the side of their ill-fated relation.

Previous to the death of one of the sisters a female friend of the family was sent for, and when she arrived the poor sufferer seemed oppressed with some secret that she wished to communicate, but her strength failing her, she expired without being able to do so.

Only ten days sufficed to carry off the mother and two sisters. The complaint of which they died was said to be *cholera* — a complaint, let it be remembered, attended by symptoms resembling those produced by poison. It did not, however, suit the purposes of Mary Bateman to give the disorder so mild a

name. She represented it to be the plague, and the whole neighbourhood shunned the place, and would as soon have entered the most infectious wards of a pest house as this dwelling. Mary alone, in the face of all danger, was ready to afford her friendly offices; and when the persons composing this unfortunate family were buried, the door was closed, and a padlock placed upon it.

A physician of eminence in the town, on being called in to visit the last surviving sister, was so strongly impressed with the opinion that her sickness and sudden death had been caused by poison, that he examined with much care many of the vessels in the house, inquired if any water for poisoning flies had been used, and expressed a wish to open the body; but the family being all dead, and no persons at hand who thought themselves authorised to give that permission, the corpse was interred unopened, and with it the opportunity for detection. During the time of the fatal illness in the Misses Kitchin's house, Mary Bateman was unremitting in her attention; she administered their food, and from her hands the medicine was conveyed to their lips. Some time after the death of these ladies their creditors looked over their effects, when it was found that their house and shop had been plundered of almost everything they contained: and to add to the embarrassment of their affairs, the shop books were missing. The creditors only divided eightpence in the pound.

Two young women, then servants in Leeds, had long been in Mary's toils, and she had fleeced them pretty handsomely; and not only them, but their friends, for she had prevailed upon one of them to rob her mother of several articles, and amongst the rest of a large family Bible. When she had got all from them that could be extorted without awakening the suspicions of their friends, she sent both these deluded girls, at different times, to seek service in Manchester, cautioning them, if they met, not to speak to each other, on pain of breaking the charm. When they arrived in Manchester, Mary contrived to keep up a correspondence with them, and got from them even the clothes they wore, so that they were almost reduced to a state of nakedness. One day these poor destitute girls met in the streets of Manchester; the meeting being quite unexpected, they both burst into tears, and their emotions became so violent that further concealment was out of the question. They thereupon related to each other their sad history, and by comparing notes, found that they were both the dupes of Mary Bateman. They then wrote to Leeds, and laid their case before their friends, who interfered in their behalf, and got from the witch part of the property she had so wickedly extorted.

The witch also contrived to ingratiate herself into the good opinion of another young woman, and got from her several sums of money for the purpose of curing her of an "evil wish" laid upon her by an old beggar woman whom she had refused to relieve. The cure was to be effected by Miss Blythe, to whom a pocket handkerchief was to be sent. In due course the directions arrived, and Miss Blythe, who, like Mrs. Moore, could never put her charms in motion without money, required that different sums, amounting in all to five guineas, should be produced, and as much wearing apparel as was worth about the same sum; but this money and these clothes were only to be kept till the evil wish was removed, and then to be restored to the owner. The period fixed for the opening

of the mysterious bags, in which these articles were deposited, had arrived, when one day a person brought a fruit pie to the young woman, telling her that her sweetheart had sent it. This pie she tasted, and let a fellow servant partake with her, but though very nice in appearance, the taste was hot and offensive; they in consequence desisted from eating it, and the young woman took it down to Mary Bateman to ask her opinion. Mary affected that she knew nothing herself of such things, but she would send it to the sagacious Miss Blythe. This, as the simple girl supposed, was done, and Miss Blythe informed her that it was very well she had not eaten much of the pie, for if she had, it would have been her last, as it was "full of poison!" Soon after the girl opened the bags, and found that her guineas had turned to copper and her clothes to old rags!

In the year 1807, Bateman, who, owing to the conduct of Mary, never remained long in one place, removed into Meadow Lane. While living in this situation a very extraordinary circumstance occurred, and it is not improbable that Mary was in some way privy to the transaction. A man of the name of Joseph Gosling, a cloth dresser, had been long out of employ, and his family, which consisted of a wife and four children, was reduced to great extremity. One day the whole of the family had been out for some time, when one of the children, a boy about seven years of age, returned, and found on the table a small cake; the mother and other children soon after returned, and partook of this cake. They immediately became so sick as to render medical aid necessary. Mr. Atkinson, the surgeon, was then sent for, and by administering emetics saved the lives of the family. On analysing the cake it was found to contain a large quantity of arsenic. It is impossible to say why or by whom this poisonous bread was placed in the situation in which the boy found it, and the only reason why it is supposed to have been placed there by Mary Bateman is the knowledge that poisonous drugs were much in use by her, that human life was in her estimation of little value; and that the cries or tricks of the children may have inconvenienced her.

In the month of April, 1807, Judith Cryer, a poor old washerwoman, and a widow, was occasioned uneasiness by the misconduct of her grandson, a boy about eleven years of age. Winifred Bond, a person who had some dealings with Mary Bateman, either as her dupe or her agent, recommended the old woman to apply to Mary, as a person who could remove the cause of her distress. Judith consented to consult her; Mary soon found out the foible of the poor woman. An inordinate fear about the future fate of this darling grandson was the spring in Judith's mind on which the witch found she could play with success. She recommended that an application should be made to Miss Blythe, a lady of her acquaintance, who she said lived at Scarboro', but who, in fact, had no more real existence than the invisible Mrs. Moore. She then undertook to write to her dear friend. In a few days an answer was received from this lady, which shocked Judith beyond description. The letter contained the representation of a gallows, with a rope dangling from it. The letter also stated that the grandson would be executed before he attained the age of fourteen years, unless the catastrophe was prevented by the old woman raising four guineas, and applying them as Miss Blythe should direct. To raise such a sum seemed as impossible to poor Judith as to pay the National Debt. At last, however, she contrived to scrape it

together with the utmost difficulty. When raised, it was, as Mary pretended, to remain unapplied till she received further instructions from Miss Blythe. The instructions at length arrived, and ordered that three guineas should be put into a leathern bag, and sewed up in Judith's bed, where they were to remain untouched till the boy had attained the age of fourteen. The former part of these directions were, as far as concerned Judith, faithfully complied with — Mary, as she thought, deposited the money as directed; but when the witch was afterwards apprehended, Judith opened her bed, took out the bag, and found it empty.

Mary having embraced the faith of the followers of Joanna Southcote, got introduced to the houses of many of them, and invariably robbed them: sometimes by practising on their fears, and at others by absolute theft.

In the year 1808, Bateman's family removed to Camp Field, in Water Lane, and there Mary met with a new and profitable subject for the exercise of her villainous arts. The wife of James Snowden, a neighbour, had a sort of presentiment that one of her children would be drowned; but whether this notion proceeded from morbid fancies originating in her own mind, or was suggested to her by Mary Bateman, is not known. Mary Bateman offered her services, or rather the services of Miss Blythe, to save the child from a watery grave. Miss Blythe was then represented as living at Thirsk, and a letter was received from her, directing that James Snowden's silver watch should be sewed up in the bed by Mary Bateman. This was accordingly done.

Next, money to the amount of twelve guineas was required. Letters were received from Miss Blythe, directing that this money should also be sewn up in the bed, to be restored when the charm had taken effect. By-and-bye it was found necessary to increase the terrors, and in addition to the death of the son, Miss Blythe suggested that ill would befall the daughter, unless the family left Leeds, and removed to Bowling, near Bradford. The bed containing the charms they were allowed to take with them, but it was thought expedient to leave a considerable portion of their property in the house, and deposit the key with Bateman.

At length they expressed a wish to be allowed to rip open the bed and take out the watch and money, but the proper time, they were told, had not yet arrived; and before the property was taken out, the family of Snowden was to take a DOSE, which was at that time in preparation for them, and was to have been administered about the end of October, 1808. Happily for them this dose was never taken.

At this juncture, so critical to the family in question, Mary Bateman was apprehended for the frauds committed on William Perigo's family, and the wilful murder of Perigo's wife, by administering poison, of which she had died nearly two years before. This event naturally created a good deal of interest, and a narrative of the transaction was published in the *Leeds Mercury* of the 22nd of October. On the evening of that day Snowden was sitting in a public-house at Bradford when the *Mercury* was produced, and the narrative read by some

person in the company. Snowden heard the relation with violent emotion, and as soon as it was finished, started from his chair and hurried home with all possible expedition. His first care was to give his wife a hasty and confused notion of the imposition that had been practised upon them, and next to unrip the folds of the bed; when, instead of watch and money, he discovered — a coal! He then went to Leeds, and found his house, which he had left in the care of Mary Bateman, plundered of almost everything it had contained, and on a search warrant being procured, part of the property was found in Bateman's house.

John Bateman, the husband, was in consequence apprehended and committed to prison, to take his trial for the offence, either as a principal or as an accomplice. At the following Sessions his trial came on, and he was acquitted.

A brother of Mary Bateman, who had deserted from his Majesty's navy, had come with his wife to live in Leeds, and lodged with Bateman. Mary finding that her lodgers were a restraint upon her, determined to be quit of them. For this purpose she wrote, or procured to be written, a letter to her sister in law, stating that her father was on the point of death, and summoning her to attend to receive his last blessing. The affectionate daughter answered the summons instantly, but when she arrived at Newcastle, where her father lived, she found him in perfect health. In the absence of his wife, Mary contrived to persuade her brother that she was inconstant, and was plunging him into debt, and so far succeeded as to induce him to write to his wife and tell her she need not return, for he would not receive her. She did, however, return, and convinced him of her innocence; when on examining their trunks it was discovered that Mary had, in the wife's absence, stolen their clothes, and disposed of them for what they would bring. This, as might be expected, roused the brother's indignation; but Mary soon got him out of the way, for she actually went before the magistrates and lodged an information against him as a deserter. He was in consequence obliged to quit Leeds, and afterwards entered military service. This did not, however, content Mary. She wrote to his mother, and told her that her son had been apprehended as a deserter, and that if she could send £10, a substitute was ready to go, and would be accepted in his stead. The ten pounds were sent, and Mary pocketed the money.

On the 21st of October, 1808, Mary Bateman was apprehended by the Chief Constable of Leeds on a charge of fraud, and was, after undergoing several long examinations before the magistrates of the borough, committed to York Castle on suspicion of the wilful murder of Rebecca Perigo, of Bramley.

A poor family of the name of Perigo, living at Bramley, near Leeds, had been defrauded by Mary Bateman of money to the amount of nearly £70, and of clothes and furniture to a considerable amount. These frauds were committed under the pretence of engaging Miss Blythe to relieve Mrs. Perigo from the effects of an "evil wish" under which she was supposed to labour. The money was all represented as sewn up in the bed, and was to be at the disposal of the Perigos when the spell was broken. But when the appointed time for restoring

the property approached, Mary Bateman conveyed poison to Perigo and his wife in their food. The woman died, but providentially Perigo recovered, and was able to bring the poisoner to justice.

It is unnecessary to give the particulars of the series of extortions committed on the Perigos. When nothing more could be extracted from the unfortunate people, and Mary saw that the time was come when she must refund or be exposed, the following letter reached her victims, purporting to come from Miss Blythe:—

“My Dear Friends, —

“I am sorry to tell you you will take an illness in the month of May next, either one or both, but I think both; but the work of God must have its course. You will escape the chambers of the grave; though you seem to be dead, yet you will live. Your wife must take half a pound of honey down from Bramley to Mary Bateman’s at Leeds, and it must remain there till you go down yourself, and she will put in such like stuff as I have sent from Scarboro’ to her, and she will put it in when you come down and see her yourself, or it will not do. You must eat pudding for six days, and you must put in such like stuff as I have sent to Mary Bateman from Scarboro’, and she will give your wife it, but you must not begin to eat of this pudding while I let you know. If ever you find yourselves sickly at any time, you must take each of you a teaspoonful of this honey. I will remit £20 to you on the 20th day of May, and it will pay a little of what you owe. You must bring this down to Mary Bateman’s, and burn it at her house when you come down the next time.”

The rest shall be told by Perigo himself, as given in his evidence at the trial.

Pursuant to the directions in this letter, witness stated that his wife took the honey to Mary Bateman’s; that when she returned she brought six powders with her. The witness went to Mary Bateman’s house, and talked to her about the letter he had received, and said it was a queerish thing that Miss Blythe should be able to foresee that they should be ill. Mary explained that she (Miss Blythe) knew everything relating to them, and that if they followed her directions all would be well. Mary also told him that they were to do with the powders each day as they were marked, or it would kill them all. Mrs. Bateman then mixed a powder in the honey in his presence, and he took the honey home. On the 5th of May witness received another letter from Miss Blythe, but after reading it over one or twice, and copying a few lines from it, he destroyed it. He said the copy he had taken was also destroyed. The witness was then desired to state the contents of this letter, which he recited, as he did all the letters that had been destroyed, from memory, as follows: —

“My Dear Friends, —

“You must begin to eat pudding on the 11th of May, and you must put one of the powders in every day as they are marked, for six days; and you must see it put in yourself every day, or else it will not do. If you find yourself sickly

at any time, you must not have no doctor, for it will not do, and you must not let the boy that used to eat with you eat of that pudding for six days; and you must make only just as much as you can eat yourselves; if there is any left it will not do. You must keep the door fast as much as possible, or you will be overcome by some enemy. Now think on and take my directions, or else it will kill us all. About the 25th of May I will come to Leeds, and send for your wife to Mary Bateman's. Your wife will take me by the hand, and say, 'God bless you that I ever found you out.' It has pleased God to send me into the world that I might destroy the works of darkness. I call them the works of darkness because they are dark to you. Now, mind what I say, whatever you do. This letter must be burnt in straw on the hearth by your wife."

The witness proceeded to state that in consequence of these directions, on the 11th of May (Monday) they began to eat of the pudding, a powder being put in each day as marked on the paper, and that they found no particular taste in the pudding for five days. And that on Saturday the witness was coming to Leeds without seeing the powder put in, when his wife reminded him that it was necessary he should see it put in. Witness said his wife had made the pudding earlier than usual for that purpose. Witness saw the powder put in, which was four or five times larger than any of the other powders. On his return from Leeds, about twenty minutes after twelve o'clock, his wife had prepared a small cake from some of the dough which was left after making the pudding; this she broke in two pieces, and he ate one of them. Witness said the cake tasted very keen, and observed to his wife if the pudding tasted as bad he would not eat it. When the pudding was ready he ate a single mouthful, but it was so nauseous that he could eat no more of it; his wife, however, swallowed three or four mouthfuls, but was unable to eat more, and she carried the pudding into the cellar, and was there seized with the most violent vomitings. His wife said this was the illness predicted by Miss Blythe, and they should take the honey. Witness took two spoonfuls of it, and his wife took six or seven. This made them worse than before. The vomiting continued incessantly for twenty four hours. His wife would not hear of a doctor being sent for, as that was contrary to Miss Blythe's directions, who had assured them that their sickness should not be unto death, and though they might seem to be dead, yet should they live, for that she was sent to destroy the works of darkness. Witness said a violent heat came out of his mouth, which was very sore, that his lips were black, and that he had a most violent pain in his head, twenty times worse than a common headache; everything appeared green to him. Witness had also a violent complaint in his bowels; he could eat nothing for several days, and began to get better only by hairbreadths. The witness then proceeded to detail the symptoms of his wife, which were similar to his own, only more violent. Her tongue swelled so that she could not shut her mouth, she was constantly thirsty, entirely lost her strength, and expired on Sunday, the 24th of May. Before she died he sent for Mr. Chorley, a surgeon from Leeds, but as she died before his arrival, a messenger was sent to acquaint him with this circumstance, and therefore he did not come. His wife before she died made him promise not to be rash with Mary Bateman, but to wait the appointed time. Witness himself went to Mr. Chorley on the day after the death of his wife. Mr. Chorley having examined him

and heard his account of the symptoms, expressed his opinion that he had received poison into his stomach. Witness said that his wife was perfectly well immediately before eating of the pudding on Saturday. By the directions of Mr. Chorley, a paste was made of the flour of which their pudding had been made and given to a fowl; but it received no injury, and the witness said it was alive to this day. A part of the fatal pudding was also given to a cat, which it poisoned, but the result of this experiment was detailed by another witness.

Witness now went into a detail of transactions subsequent to the death of his wife. In the month of June, a short time after that event, the witness went to the prisoner's house, and acquainted her with the death of his wife, and told her he was sorry they had not sent for a doctor when they were sick, but that they had acted according to the directions of the letter. Mary Bateman said, "Perhaps you did not lick up all the honey as directed in the letter;" and I said, "No; I am afraid it is that honey that has done our job."

About the beginning of June, Perigo received a letter to the following effect, purporting to be from Miss Blythe: —

"My Dear Friend, —

"I am sorry to tell you that your wife should touch of those things which I ordered her not, and for that reason it has caused her death. It had likened to have killed me at Scarboro' and Mary Bateman at Leeds, and you and all; and for this reason she will rise from the grave, she will stroke your face with her right hand, and you will lose the use of one side, but I will pray for you. I would not have you to go to no doctor, for it will not do. I would have you eat and drink what you like, and you will be better. Now, my dear friend, take my directions, do, and it will be better for you. Pray God bless you. Amen, amen. You must burn this letter immediately after it is read."

Soon after this, witness was ordered by Mr. Chorley to Buxton, and having on his return called on the poisoner, she expressed her surprise that he should have gone to a doctor contrary to Miss Blythe's command, and said that had she known he had been going to Buxton, she would have given him a bottle that would have cured him on the road.

William Perigo proceeded to relate that on the 19th of October, 1808, he unripped the bed in which all the bags were sewn up, and having opened the whole of them, he found no money whatever. In the bags in which he expected to find guinea notes, he found only waste paper, and where he expected to find gold, he found only a halfpenny or a farthing. But the four silk bags in which he saw four guinea notes put, he could not find at all, nor could he give any account as to how or where they were gone. Upon making this discovery the witness went to Leeds, and saw Mary Bateman, and said to her "I am sorry to think you should use me in this manner;" to which she replied, "How?" He then said "I have opened the bags, and there is nothing in them but bits of lead, plain paper, bad halfpennies, and bad farthings." At which she did not seem at all

surprised, but said "You have opened them too soon." He answered, "I think it is too late." He then said he would come down to her house in the morning with two or three men and have things settled. The prisoner begged that he would not, and said if he would appoint a time and place to meet her alone, she would satisfy him. To this the witness consented, and the Leeds and Liverpool canal bank, near the bridge, was fixed as the place of meeting.

The officers of justice arrested Mary Bateman at this meeting.

The trial was conducted at York before Sir Simon Le Blanc on the 17th March, 1809; she was found guilty, and condemned to death.

During the brief interval between her receiving the sentence of death and her execution, the Rev. George Brown took great pains to prevail upon her to acknowledge and confess her crime. On his touching upon the subject of the Quaker ladies, whose death had been so sudden and mysterious, she seemed perfectly to understand his meaning, but said that she knew nothing about it, as at the time she was confined in childbirth.

Though the prisoner behaved with her usual decorum during the time that remained to her, and joined with apparent fervour in the customary offices of devotion, she exhibited no compunction for crimes of which she would not acknowledge herself to be guilty. She maintained her caution and mystery to the last. On the day preceding her execution she wrote a letter to her husband, in which she enclosed her wedding ring, with a request that it might be given to her daughter. In this letter she lamented the disgrace she had brought upon her husband and family, but declared her entire innocence of the crime laid to her charge, and for which she was about to suffer, though she acknowledged — what, indeed, she could not deny to her husband — that she had been guilty of several frauds. "I have made my peace with my God, and am easy in mind. Tomorrow will end all here, and the Lord will care for me hereafter."

It will hardly be credited, though it is a certain fact, that this unhappy woman was so addicted to fraud that even then she was incapable of refraining from her trickery and deception. A young female prisoner had, in her presence, expressed a wish to see her sweetheart. Mary Bateman took her aside, and said that if she could procure a sum of money to be made into a charm, and sewed into her stays, the young man would be compelled to visit her. The simple girl complied, and Mary Bateman having prepared a potent spell, it was bound round the breast of the young woman. No sweetheart made his appearance, and the girl's confidence beginning to waver, she unbound the charm to take out her money, and found that it had vanished.

The circumstance having been reported to the Governor of York Castle, where Mary Bateman and the girl were confined, part of the spoil was refunded, and Mary Bateman directed to balance the account by giving to the dupe some of her clothes. Exhortations and remonstrances failed to move her to confess her crimes. At five o'clock on the morning of Monday, March 20th, 1809, she was removed from her cell and from her infant child, which lay sleeping on the bed,

unconscious of the fate of its wretched mother. She stopped and kissed it for the last time, but without showing any emotion at having to leave it for ever. Every possible effort, every religious influence was brought to bear on her to make her confess, but in vain. At twelve o'clock she was led forth to execution. On the scaffold she again denied her guilt, and with this denial on her lips was launched into eternity.

Her body was taken to the General Infirmary at Leeds. Though the hearse did not reach Leeds till midnight, it was met by a considerable number of people who were waiting for it. At the Infirmary her body was exhibited at the charge of 3d. a head to visitors for the benefit of the institution. At this rate 2500 individuals were admitted, and upwards of £30 was realised. Her body was afterwards dissected, and in compliance with a favourite Yorkshire custom, her skin was tanned and distributed in small pieces to various applicants.