

THE

LIFE AND TRANSACTIONS

OF

Mrs JANE SHORE,

CONCUBINE TO KING EDWARD VI.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

Her Parentage, Wit and Beauty,
her Marriage with Mr Shore, the
King's Visits to her. Her going
to Court, leaving her husband.
Her great distress and Misery af-
ter the King's Death, &c.



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THE
LIFE AND TRANSACTIONS
OF

Mrs JANE SHORE.

MRS Jane Shore was the daughter of Mr Thomas Wainsted a citizen of good repute who lived in Cheapside, by trade a mercer. She being the only child of her parents, was brought up with all care and tenderness imaginable; not wanting any education that was thought necessary or proper for her; her natural temper, which was very airy being joined to her education; and that degree of pride which, as it is natural, some make necessary for the female sex, helped to set her off to the best advantage. Fine feathers make fine birds; and if the birds are fine without them, doubtless they make them so doubly.

This lovely woman was the delight
of

of her father, who clothed her richly, adorned her with jewels; and his trade lying among the court ladies, he often carried her with him to shew her the pastimes, which were made frequently there to divert the Queen, &c. which gave her an early longing after a greater genteelity than she had ever yet attained to, or her city breeding could produce.

When she grew to the age of fifteen, her competent stock of beauty and good carriage, caused many to fall in love with her, and some great Lords fixed their eyes upon her, to get her for a mistress, which her father perceiving, sent her to his sister at Northampton, where she remained about a year, till he supposed the enquiry after her was over, and that she might return without any hazard of being any further tempted to lewdness. Yet she was no sooner returned, but a plot was laid one night to have her carried away by Lord Hastings, who, after the death of
King

King Edward, took her for his concubine, as will appear in the close of this history. But the maid he had bribed with gold to get her abroad, repenting of such treachery to her master, gave timely notice, and so prevented it.

Her father perceiving that, unless he took some speedy course, her great stock of beauty would be her ruin, resolved to marry her, so that having surrendered her Virginitie, and being in the arms of a husband, those that sought to crop her Virgin Rose would not regard her, but give over their pursuit.

And among those that courted and earnestly sought her in way of marriage, was one Matthew Shore, a rich goldsmith in Lombard-street, whom her father pitched upon as a husband, and acquainted his fair daughter with his intention to marry her to him, but she appeared very averse to it, alledging sometimes disproportion of years, he being above
thirty;

thirty; at other times his being disfigured with the small pox. and many other exceptions she made. However, her father's positive commands, and the rich presents her love made her, won her consent, or seemingly she yielded to the match, and so married they were in great pomp; many of the court, as well as the city, being invited to the wedding, which was kept with great feasting, many days.

The wedding now being over, and the bridegroom having enjoyed his charming bride, grew exceedingly fond of her, even to dottage, which sickened and pallied her love toward him, and he perceiving it, strove to wind himself more into her affections; and to this end he clothed her very richly, and adorned her with jewels, denying her nothing she desired, or that he thought would tend to her satisfaction or delight.

It was not long before, Lord Hastings heard the unwelcome tidings, that

that his fair Jane was married; which however, did not make him give over his purpose of enjoying her fair body; so that he often resorted to see her, treating her at home, and her husband abroad; often inviting them both to court; and took his opportunities to pour out many amorous discourses, endeavouring by all means to make her defile the marriage bed. And one time endeavouring to try his utmost efforts, he threw her on a bed, when they were alone; but she got from him and ran to her husband, telling him plainly how rude Lord Hastings had been; which angering Shore, he modestly rebuked him, forbidding him his house, which made him run away in a great heat, resolving to be revenged

This Lord being chamberlain to Edward the Fourth, having frequently his ear, and finding he was much inclined to lady Elizabeth Gray, took an opportunity to tell him of Jane's beauty, extolling her wit above her features, which made the King hear-
ken,

ken to this new adventure, and he resolved to go to Shore's shop in disguise to see her.

The King whose thoughts still run on his intended mistress, delayed not long to pay her a visit; and in order to it, attired himself like a merchant, and withdrew privately from the court, only attended by a page.

And coming into Shore's shop, then the richest in Lombard street, he found the good man employed in his business; and, waiting till he was a little at leisure, he desired to see some plate, which being shewn him, he, under a pretence of carrying it beyond sea, soon agreed for a considerable quantity.—But yet no wife appeared, which made him delay the time with discourse, of what was then transacting in England and places abroad, where, he said, he had travelled.

This delighted Shore mightily, so that he ordered his man to fetch up a

bottle of wine, and they drank merrily, the good man beginning with a health to the King, which the King pledged him in. So when some other healths had passed, the King asked if there was not a mistress to so fair a house? otherwise he could help him to a wife, rich and beautiful.

For this offer, Shore thanked him, but told him he was already married to such a one as he described, whom he loved extremely. This discourse made the King more desirous to see her ere he departed, and asked if he could not have a sight of her. Shore little thinking that was intended for his ruin, and proud of his wife's beauty, soon yielded to his request, and ordered her to be called down; who came, attired in a sky coloured morning gown, flowered with gold, embroidered with pearls and spangles, her head attired with curious lace, under which her hair flowed wantonly, and her blushes made her appear still more beautiful.

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The king no sooner saw her, but he stepped forth and saluted her coral lips impressing on them many balmy kisses. Then by her husband's desire, she sat down and the King drank to her, she pledged him, and passed it to her husband. Then much discourse ensued, in which she appeared so witty, that the King resolved to have her at any rate, and so presented her with some curious things. He paid for his plate, which the goodman would have sent home, but he refused it, ordering his page to carry it: and with many kisses, he took leave of the charming fair one for that time.

The King had no sooner departed but Jane asked her husband, who that gentleman was that had been so liberal to her; he told her; he said he was a merchant, but he knew him not. Ah! said she, I rather take him for some lord in disguise; therefore dear husband, if he should come again, tell him that I am sick, or any thing you can feign to disappoint him.

Mr

Mr Shore was greatly pleased at her conduct and more discourse had pass'd, but people coming into the shop about business, she retired.

The king soon arrived at court, where he had been missed by his nobles, soon changed his apparel, and came amongst them with a chearful countenance, and though others were ignorant. Hastings well perceived where he had been, and the satisfaction he had received; and no sooner were they in private, but the king said, well Hastings, thou hast good judgement in fine women; I have seen Shore's wife, and she excels the praises you gave me of her; I like her well, and must enjoy her, but how must I bring it about? To court her in her husband's presence, as a private person, I shall be served as you was; and to take her from his arms, that would cause a murmuring among my subjects, who would fear the like by their wives and daughters; but I must have her, and with her own consent,

Hastings

Hastings smiling, immediately said, Take no care, for this shall be easy to your Highness, there is one Mrs Blague, your lace woman, has a house pretty near Shore's, and is very intimate with his wife—this woman is very fond of money, to such a degree that it would make her do any thing. Her will I engage in this matter, and trust me she will soon bring it to pass to your satisfaction → The King liked this advance, and it was agreed that he should see her at this Mrs Blague's and have freedom to court her; but she should not know that he was the King, until he thought proper to have it discovered.

Lord Hastings was not idle in promoting his master's happiness, and with gifts and large promises soon made the lace woman pliable, so that many meetings were made at her house, the king coming in disguise as her friend, and though Mrs Blague often

often left them alone and the King courted her with all his rhetoric, yet she appeared averse to his love, and often blamed him sharply for persuading her to defile her husband's bed; and then she would chide Mrs Blague for suffering such a rude man to come to her house, telling her the design he had on her chastity; she seemed very much surpris'd at it, but intreating her to be at ease, for she would not suffer him to come there again any more.

This pacified her, but the plot was still deeper laid for her ruin, and at Christmas time, she got leave of Mr Shore for his wife to accompany her to the court, to see the ball there, to which he consented with some unwillingness. And soon after she was introduced, a man of very comely port, entered with a mask on; and Mrs Shore heard the ladies whisper, *That's the King*; who looked round through his mask, fixed his eyes upon her, immediately stepped to her seat, took her out to dance along with him.

him. At this she blushed, but not to be unmannerly, she complied and the dance being ended, he took her to a single light, and pulling off his mask to salute her, she perceived it was the same man whom she had seen at her own shop, and at Mrs Blague's house; and putting a letter into her hand, he retired. She then coming to Mrs Blague, desired to go home; to this she consented, and then read the letter which was to this purpose.

" My lovely Jane,

*" Your beauty has enthralled my heart,
 "'tis a King sues; you will be kind
 " to him, and by a line tell him so to
 " his comfort."*

When she read this letter, she left Mrs Blague abruptly, judging she had a hand in the matter.

All that night the fair Jane was restless; her husband enquired the cause, but could not learn it. As soon

soon as she was up she went to Mrs Blague to consult, what she must do in this strait, well knowing the king's humour.

Mrs Blague seeing her thus pensive, said, come, my dear, you must not be coy, nor deny the King's request; glitter near a throne, and enjoy a gallant bed fellow: I find he is resolved to have you for a Mistress, and therefore it is best for you, willingly to submit to him.

At this discourse she trembled; yet considering from the many attempts her beauty had caused, that it was not made to be enjoyed by one, in a fatal hour she consented; and instead of writing an answer to the King's letter, it was agreed that very night she should take her apparel, and put herself into the arms of the King—This being concluded, Mrs Blague sent the King notice, who sent a chariot for them, and, in the mean time her clothes were conveyed away to Mrs Blague's. However she supped with
her

her husband; when, on a sudden, some body came on a feigned errand and said, her mother was taken ill, & desired to speak with her. He would have gone with her, but she put it off; and giving him the last kiss he ever received from her, she left him.

And coming where the chariot stood ready, she and Mrs Blague got into it, and were admitted into the King's secret apartments, and they found him in his closet, he welcomed them; but it being late, Mrs Blague departed, and they went to bed.

Mr Shore sitting up late, and his wife not returning, was very much troubled, and went to his mother in law; but they had not seen her, nor was her mother ill; so that her absence troubled the whole family, the next day was spent in seeking for her amongst her relations and friends, but found her not, Mrs Blague protested she had not seen her, dropping some disembling tears; so that her
husband

husband was almost distracted and at last they coneluded she was taken away by some courtier; and in three days after a lady informed them that she was with the King. This added more to their grief, they knew not what course to take; and they knew if they went to cross the King, it would be their ruin.

They made inquiry indeed if it was her voluntary act, and finding it was, and she quite unwilling to leave her new lover, so that Mr Shore recovering her, so that Mr Shore growing melancholy, sold off all he had and went abroad, but having spent his fortune, he returned in a poor condition, he practised clipping and filing gold coin to maintain himself; for which he suffered death in the latter end of Henry VIII's reign.

Jane Shore having rendered up her chastity to the King, pleased with the gliticaing of a court, and endeared by a monarch's love, was admired
by

by the vulgar, towards whom she behaved in a most courteous manner.

Her power was so great with the King, that when his courtiers durst not intercede with the poor and miserable that lay under his displeasure, she with her wit, would so abate his anger, so that she saved the lives of very many, both rich and poor. And though she could in a manner do all with him, but it was never known she used her influence to the prejudice of any. And both in London and the progress she made in the country, she would cause poor people to be sought for, and relieve their necessities, inducing and persuading others, who expected any good offices from the King, by her means, to do the same, never selling her favours; and by her ready wit, she so baffled the court ladies, who envied her aspiring, that they found themselves unable to repartee. And though the King had another mistress before her, namely Lady Bessy, yet he preferred our heroine much above her, and would often merrily say I have two mistresses,

of quite different tempers, one of the most religious and the other the merriest in England; and indeed she was had in great favour all the reign of the King, having crowds of petitioners waiting at the chamber door, or at the chariot side when she was to ride abroad, whose suits to the utmost of her power she preferred. As for Mrs Blague, who least deserved it of her she procured of the King a stately house and manor worth 280*l.* per annum. The Romish priests were spighted at her, because she sheltered many from their rage and fury, after they had burned John Hall for a heretic.

As no worldly pomp nor greatness is of long continuance, so now her glory it was ended, and her days of inexpressible misery began; for the king dying at Westminster, in the 40th year of his age, no sooner was he buried in the chapel of his own founding, at Windsor, but Crook-backed Richard, his brother, who murdered Henry VI. and Prince Henry,

Henry, his son, aspiring to the throne, though Edward had left two sons behind him, viz. Edward and Richard, and several daughters, all lawfully begotten, by the Queen, quarrelled with Lord Hastings, who after the death of the King, had taken Jane Shore for his concubine, as now free, because he would not assist him in his wicked project of making away with his two nephews, whom he afterwards caused to be murdered in the tower, alledging that the Queen and Shore's wife had bewitched him, shewing his withered arm, which all knew had been so from his cradle. And that Lord thinking to excuse her, said, if they had done so they ought to be punished. Richard furiously replied, thou traitor, dost thou serve me with Ifs and Ands? I say they have done so, and that I will make good on thy body; wherefore, I arrest thee, Lord Hastings, of treason. And soon after he caused his head to be cut off in the Tower.

Jane

Jane Shore had no sooner notice of the death of Lord Hastings, her paramour, but she perceived a storm was falling on her own head, therefore, she thought it necessary to provide in time, and so she carried her jewels to her old confidant, Mrs Blague, entreating her to conceal them for her; but she like a faithless woman, when Jane came and asking for them, not only denying them, but when in the greatest need she came to crave alms from her, she thrust her out of doors, threatening to have her whipped for her impudence.

Richard, by means aforesaid, having got to the crown, and to make himself seem fair, by others sine, tho' he was a monster by nature, publicly declaring his mother to be a whore, his brother and his children to be bastards; caused his Queen to be poisoned, and would have wedded his neice. He ordered Jane Shore to be apprehended, stripped of all she had, and do pennance, by several times walking in a white sheet, and
then

then walk bare footed and bare headed in her shirt before her procession, -with a cross and a wax-taper in her hand through Cheapside, which she did, looking so lovely in her blushes, that many pitied her; he also stripped all her friends and relations of whatever they had, pretending they had got it all by her means from the crown, in King Edward's reign; which with the disgrace their only daughter had fallen into, caused her parents' death.

Richard not content with this, put out a severe proclamation to this effect. That on the pain of death, and confiscation of goods, no one should harbour her in their houses, nor relieve her with food or raiment. So that she went wandering up and down to find her food upon the bushes and on the dung-hills where some friends she had raised, would throw bones with more meat than ordinary, and crusts, of stale bread in the places where she generally haunted, and a baker, who had been condemned

to die for a riot in King Edward's reign, and saved by her means, as he saw her pass along in gratitude for her kindness, trundled a penny loaf after her, which she thankfully took, and blessed him, with tears in her eyes. But some malicious neighbour informing against him, he was taken up and hanged, for disobeying King Richard's proclamation; which so terrified others, that they durst not relieve her with any thing, so that in miserable rags and almost naked, she went about a most shocking spectacle, wringing her hands, and bemoaning her unhappy circumstances.

Thus she continued till the battle of Bodworth field, wherein Richard was slain, by Henry earl of Richmond, who succeeded him by the name of Henry the seventh, in which reign she hoped for better days. but fortune raised her another adversary, for he married the eldest daughter of Edward the fourth; and King Edward's Queen, who mortally hated her, then bearing a great sway, she procured another

another proclamation to the same effect, and so she wandered up and down in as poor and miserable a situation as before; till growing old, and utterly friendless, she finished her life in a ditch, which was from that time called Shore's ditch, adjoining to Bishop-gate Street.

Thus you may see the rise and fall of this once stately and then unhappy woman, with whose dying lamentation we shall conclude.

THE

DYING LAMENTATION OF
JANE SHORE.

Good People,

THOUGH by the rigour of the law you are forbid to give me any relief, yet you may pity my unhappy state; for the scripture saith, 'That to the miserable, pity should be shown.' I am now putting a period to a miserble life; a life that I have long been weary of. What! would I desire to live in the splendour, pomp, and glory

glory of Edward's court? No; I am happier now on the dunghill than ever I was in his arms, for, oh! it was an adulterous bed indeed, Oh! wretch that I knew King Edward, that ever I was betrayed by him! What floods of sorrow have my sins occasioned? oh! learn from me, good people, to beware of vain delights; they promise fair, but they leave bitter stings behind them. Alas! you know my punishment is grievous in this world, and so it is, for I have endured a thousand deaths in one; but now my dying moments are come, I rejoice since repentance has secured my happiness above. But O where repentance is not given, what seas of torment rack the soul. O happy dunghill, how do I embrace thee! From thee my pardoned soul shall soar to heaven, though here I leave this filthy carcase.

O that the name of Shore may be an antidote to stop the poisonous and foul contagion of raging lust for ever.

F I N I S.