

## Literature, &amp;c.

THE BRITISH MAGAZINES.  
FOR OCTOBER.From Bentley's Miscellany.  
THE VISION OF CHARLES THE  
TWELFTH.

BY H. B. ADDISON.

Of all the singular apparitions or visions that have ever been set down, the vision of Charles XII. is perhaps one of the most curious, and certainly the best authenticated relation of the kind on record,—depending not upon the testimony of an individual, who, from nervous excitement or other mental morbidness, might have fancied the whole scene, and afterwards transcribed his waking dream in the glowing terms of a fanciful imagination, but upon the concurrent authority of one of the most learned and grave characters in Sweden supported in many of his assertions by the *conserve* of the palace. The original document is still in existence, and open to the inspection of every traveller who desires to see it. The whole is clearly and concisely written, and signed by the King, his physician, Dr. Baumgarten, and the state porter. A note is attached in his Majesty's own hand-writing, stating his thorough conviction that so strange a vision must have been vouchsafed to him as a prophetic warning, and also his desire that the said document should be preserved among the State archives, in order to see whether the prediction would ever be accomplished. This note bears date some time before Charles was killed—as well as I can recollect, about 1716. The complete fulfilment of the vision came to pass in 1792, above eighty-six years after its appearance. As I unfortunately did not take an exact copy of the MSS. when on the spot, I can only relate it so nearly as I can remember, changing however the style of this narrative from the first to the third person.

It was a dark and gloomy night. The clock had just struck ten. The ill-lighted room cast an additional gloom on the figure of Charles the Twelfth as he sat in front of a huge fire in his favorite saloon in the Palace of Stockholm. Immediately in front of him, over the fireplace, was suspended the picture of his queen, with whom, to tell the truth, he had just been disputing, and now sat in silent discontent, mentally comparing the charming form which hung before him with the now less beautiful figure of her Majesty, breaking his sullen silence occasionally by muttering some curse on her altered temper.

When the King was in these moods, he was always closely attended by his physician Baumgarten. The reaction in a mind so buoyant as that of Charles, being proportionately dangerous, it was often feared he might commit suicide; so the doctor always remained near to him, seeking for a convenient opportunity to draw his mind back to livelier themes, to arouse him from the dreadful mental prostration to which he was subject.

On the evening in question, Baumgarten sat patiently for an hour, alternately watching his Majesty and the storm which was raging outside. But neither the view of the sullen monarch, nor the opposite wing of the palace, which formed the grand ball where the state trials and similar events took place could afford much amusement to the tired son of Esculapius, who, finding his patience begin to wear out, suddenly started up, and began pacing the room up and down, in the same manner that mariners pace the quarter deck of a vessel at sea, occasionally stepping in front of the window to look out upon the black and gloomy pile of building I have mentioned.

Suddenly he started back.

‘Great heavens, sire!’

‘Silence!’ growled the king.

The doctor took two more turns across the chamber. At length he could contain himself no longer.

‘What is this extraordinary appearance? Please your majesty some strange event is taking place in the hall of justice.’

‘Hold your tongue, sir, or I shall command you to quit the room!’ replied the monarch, who felt much annoyed at these interruptions in his reverie, and which he believed arose from a mere desire to arouse him from his meditations.

The doctor paused—but after awhile curiosity got the upper hand of his better judgment, and walking up to the king, he touched him on the shoulder, and pointed to the window.

Charles looked up, and as he did so, beheld, to his great amazement the win-

dows of the opposite wing brilliantly illuminated. In an instant all his gloom and apathy vanished. He rushed to look out. The lights streamed through the small panes, illuminating all the intermediate court yard. The shadows of persons moving to and fro were clearly discernible.

The king looked inquisitively at the doctor. At first he suspected it to be a trick to entrap him from his indulgence in moodiness. He read, however, fear too legibly written in the countenance of the physician to persevere in the notion.

The King and his doctor exchanged glances of strange and portentous meaning.—Charles, however, first recovered self possession, and affecting to feel no awe, turned to Baumgarten.

‘Who has dared to cause the grand hall to be lighted up!’ he exclaimed; ‘and who are they that, without any permission, have entered it?’

The trembling physician pleaded his utter ignorance.

‘Go instantly and call the state porter hither!’

Baumgarten obeyed, and returned with the terrified menial, to whom, however, he had not communicated the reason for his being sent for; but who, nevertheless, was sadly alarmed at being summoned before his royal master at this unusual hour.

‘Where is the key of the eastern wing?’ demanded the king in a voice of unexpressed anger.

‘Here, sire,’ replied the servitor, instantly producing it.

Charles started with surprise, but quickly recovering himself, asked,

‘To whom have you afforded the use of this key?’

‘To none, your Majesty; it has never left my side.’

‘Could any one enter without your knowledge, by a second key or entrance?’

‘Impossible, sire. There are three locks to open before admission could possibly be gained.—The sentry would allow no one to pass in without my accompanying them. No human being could have got in.’

‘Look there, then, and tell me the meaning of these lights,’ rapidly demanded the King, who suddenly withdrew the curtain he had purposely let fall before the entrance of the *concierge*.

The poor man stared for a moment, and gasping for breath, totally heedless of the presence of his Majesty, fell back into a chair which stood near him.

‘Arise, arise; I see you have had no hand in this strange affair,’ added the king, in a sullen tone. ‘Get a lantern instantly, and accompany us to this building. We will pass round through the centre of the palace. Do not, however, breathe a syllable to any one; but be quick.’

In five minutes more the trio were in the building, which the King desired his trembling servitor to open. He did so: the brilliant light streamed upon the group. The affrighted porter instantly fled, while Charles, followed by Baumgarten, boldly stepped into the room, though his blood ran cold as he perceived it filled with a large assemblage of knights and nobles superbly arrayed, whose faces, though he saw, neither he nor Baumgarten could distinctly catch.—They were all seated, as if a state trial was going on. The high officers sat in gloomy silence, as one or two inferior officers moved noiselessly about. Presently the word ‘Guilty’ seemed to breathe through the room. A short, a solemn pause ensued, and a door behind a temporary scaffold opened, and three men appeared, apparently of rank, bound and prepared for execution. They were followed by the headsman, and others bearing a block, &c. Not a word was uttered,—not a movement shook the assembled judges. The principal criminal laid down his head on the block, and the next instant it rolled from the scaffold, and actually struck the foot of Charles the Twelfth.

At this juncture every light disappeared. The King called loudly for assistance to secure the persons who had thus assembled and committed violence under the royal roof.—Before he had time to do so twice, the frightened porter rushed in, attended by several officers of the household, and servants bearing torches. Not a vestige of the vision remained. Everything was in its proper place.—The very dust which had been allowed to accumulate, rested on the furniture. Every door was well fastened.—scaffold, block, criminal, and judges, all were gone.

One only token remained to bear out the actual scene which had taken place; a large drop of blood had stained the

stocking of the King, exactly on the spot against which the traitor's head had rolled.

The next day the record was drawn up from which this sketch is taken.

In 1792, Ankerstrom and his two principal accomplices justly suffered death for the murder of their sovereign, Gustavus the Third, King of Sweden.

From Tait's Magazine.

## THE SONG OF OCTOBER.

Now that September's fall feast is all over,  
And Earth and her myriad breathers are blest;

To the swallow's farewell, and the cry of the plover,  
Sweet Nature would sink to repose on Earth's breast:

Unrobe her,

October,

And lay her to rest,

Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby.

So chanted the winds round my pinnacle of cloud,  
Gyrating for ever a frolicsome crowd;

For they waited for me, unbounded in glee,  
Assured, while I live, they may wander forth free.

I would fain be a gentle mother,  
As soft as the dew I weep,  
Or the murmur of each to other,  
As I hush my babe to sleep;

The forest tall,

Who towers o'er all,

And the vines that round him creep;  
With the simple weeds that find a tongue,  
Proclaiming God their roots among;

I would close their wings, and soft and slow,  
Stop their green pulse, and their juice's flow;

For they need the sleep which no dream may break,  
Till Spring to her flowers shouts out, ‘Awake!’  
I would do it thus, with the tender sigh  
Of a loving heart, and a smiling eye,  
While the winds breathed only lullaby!

But hark! From those oaks, at the forest's bound,  
A mocking comes forth, and a titling sound:

What boots it? I must strip them bare  
As ever the boughs of their fathers were.  
I will take their proud fall branches,  
Of gauged or dainty form,  
Hurling leafy avalanches  
In thunder down the storm.

They have felt the brand of my useful hand,  
And the withering gripe of my scathing hand,  
In the tempest's roar, midst their branches hoar.

When the starkest bores I cracked,—  
O'er their angry throes my voice arose,  
Like a deafening cataract:

Huge arms I clove, from their inmost grove,  
Till they writhed and howled with pain,  
And darkened the air, with fragments bare,  
On my furious hurricane.

I will do it again, and, with funeral pall,  
Of a ghastly hue, will envelope them all;  
For my mission's unfilled, till the fast coming rain

Can creep to the Earth's covered crannies again,  
When the vole mouse has burrowed, when  
The squirrel's concealed.

And the Iris-robed snake has forsaken the field,  
And the millions of germs, create by the sun,  
Are scattered and earthed—then my mission is done.

From Bentley's Miscellany.

## THE EFFECT OF FEAR.

A THRILLING INCIDENT.

It is curious to remark the sudden effects of fear—the manner in which men of the most acknowledged courage are sometimes paralysed when taken by surprise, when hurried unawares, and threatened by a danger before they had time to prepare for, and meet it.

Mr C— was once riding through Epping Forest, then frequently the scene of highway robberies, caring for no one, fearing no harm, when he suddenly fell in with a couple of as pretty women as any in the country of Essex. The ladies were in the greatest distress.—They had just been robbed and plundered by a couple of footpads, armed with pistols and dirks, two men of most enormous muscular strength, who had gone off across the country carrying with them the purses, watches, and trinkets of the fair damsels, whose postilion and man servant had not dared to interfere. C— had no weapon with him, except his riding cane, he however clapped his spurs to his horse, and started off in the direction pointed out. The pursuit was successful. He came up with the robbers, and, single handed, seized them both, and lodged them in Chelmsford jail. They were tried, convicted and transported.

The daring which Mr C— displayed, in thus encountering and conquer-

ing, unarmed, two armed men, became the theme of the entire country. His health was drunk at all the public meetings. Families hitherto unknown to him flocked around him, all eager to make his acquaintance. Songs were even trotted in honor of his noble exploit. While, on the other side of the question, the poachers and freebooters vowed deep revenge if ever they caught him. His death was said to be solemnly determined on by these gentry; which threat being repeated to our friend, Mr C—, he determined for the future to follow the example of his neighbors, and never again travel unarmed. Months, however, rolled by, and no attack was made on his person or his mansion. The rogues were evidently afraid of encountering one of such determined courage.

One winter evening, about 7 o'clock, Mr C—, with five other gentlemen, well crammed into a stage coach, came to a sudden halt. The door was thrown open, and the muzzle of an awe inspiring blunderbuss thrust through the aperture by an individual with a mask, who, after ‘hoping that he did not intrude,’ demanded their watches and purses; when lo! the six passengers, including Mr C—, although they had pistols enough amongst them to stock a moderately extensive armory, quietly delivered up their valuables to this single footpad.

The story got abroad. The tale was told with gusto by those who had envied C—'s former splendid feat, and additional verses were composed to the songs written upon his courage. Jokes were cut at his expense.—It was in vain that he raved and foamed.—He took the wisest step, and left the country.

I quote this story as a sort of pendant to a very simple case of strange analogy which came under my observation in Bengal.

Tom Philan—so let us call him—was as good a fellow as ever drilled a company of sepoy, or uttered a good pun at a company's mess table. Brave and generous like all his countrymen, Tom was fool hardy. Or in a word, he was a regular out and out ‘Tipperary Boy.’

One evening, having exhausted every other topic for betting, we were trying our utmost to see who could jump the highest, when Lindsay backed himself for twenty gold mohurs to touch the top of a high folding door. The offer was accepted, and my friend took his spring. He succeeded in accomplishing his task, but as he descended, we remarked that he had suddenly turned deadly pale, and gasped for breath. The cause was, however apparent; he had reached with his fingers a cobra manilla, which had been lying at full length on the top edge of the open door. So sudden had been the motion, that the snake had not had time to inflict his mortal bite, but, pushed from his airy position, had fallen on the floor in the midst of us.

A scream burst from almost every lip, and a regular scramble took place, many rushing out of the room, and even the house, fancying themselves pursued by the fell reptile. Not so, however, Philan, who happened to be present. He suddenly caught up a riding whip which was lying on a chair, and advancing boldly up to the cobras, killed it at a single blow, to the admiration of every person present.

On another occasion, returning along the Bund at Berhampore (a high steep bank to keep out the river,) which was so narrow on the top as to prevent but one person walking on it, tolerably well primed with liquor, preceded by his servant carrying a lighted torch, Tom suddenly checked the song he was belting out, on seeing the servant throw down the torch and rush into the water. By the light of the still burning brand, he beheld a cobra capelle already dancing on its tail, ready to spring at him; its spectacled eyes beaming like two red hot conders, its head raised, its every joint in motion. Tom did not like the looks of his enemy, but still he scorned to fly; so, drawing his sword, he manfully attacked the serpent. How he managed it, no one ever knew, not even himself; but certain it is that, in about an hour afterwards, he was found lying fast asleep on the body of the snake, the head of the reptile having been cut clean off by a fine stroke of Tom's sabre.

But perhaps the conduct, the most determined proof of his resolution, was one that happened a few days before I was introduced to him. Philan, like many others in India, chose to keep up his European habits, and, amongst others, that of preserving a neatly fitted up dressing table, on which he was able to have constantly displayed the silver ornaments and mother of pearl handed