

Literature.

[From the Edinburgh Review.]

THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

By LORD BROUGHAM.

The two male conspirators against the liberties of mankind, the rights of nations, the peace of the world, have now been painted, but in colours far more subdued than the natural hues of their crime. It remains, that the most profligate of the three should be portrayed, and she a woman!—but a woman in whom the lust of power, united with the more vulgar profligacy of our kind, had effaced all traces of the softer nature that marks the sex, and left an image of commanding talents and prodigious firmness of soul, the capacities which constitute a great character, blended with unrelenting fierceness of disposition, unscrupulous proneness to fraud, unrestrained indulgence of the passions, all the weakness, and all the wickedness, which can debase the worst of the human race.

The Princess Sophia, of Anhalt Zerbet, one of the smallest of the petty principalities in which Northern Germany abounds, was married to Peter III., nephew and heir presumptive to the Russian crown, and she took the name of Catherine, according to the custom of that barbarous nation. The profligacy of Elizabeth, then on the throne of the Czars, was little repugnant to the crapulous life which her future successor led, or to his consort. Following their joint example, the young bride, accordingly, soon fell into the debauched habits of the court, and she improved upon them; for having, more than once, changed the accomplices of her adulterous indulgences, almost as swiftly as Elizabeth did, she had her husband murdered by her paramour; and having gained over the guards and the mob of Petersburg, she usurped the crown, to which she could pretend no earthly title. To refute the reports that were current, and to satisfy all inquiries as to the cause of Peter's death, she ordered his body to be exposed to public view, and stationed guards to prevent any one from approaching near enough to see the livid hue which the process of strangling had spread over his features.

The reign, thus happily begun, was continued in the constant practice of debauchery, and the occasional commission of convenient murder. Lover after lover was admitted to the embraces of the Messalina of the North, until soldiers of the guards were employed in fatiguing an appetite which could not be satiated. Sometimes the favourite of the day would be raised to the confidence and influence of Prime Minister; but, after a while, he ceased to please, as the paramour, though he retained Ministerial functions. One of the Princes of the blood, having been pitched on by a party to be their leader, was thrown into prison; and when the zeal of that party put forward pretences to the throne on his behalf, the Imperial Jezebel had him murdered in his dungeon, as the shortest way of terminating all controversy on his account, and all uneasiness. The mediocrity of her son Paul's talents gave her no umbrage, especially joined to the eccentricity of his nature, and his life was spared. Had he given his tigress mother a moment's alarm, he would speedily have followed his unhappy father to the regions where profligacy and parricide are unknown. Although Catherine was thus abandoned in all her indulgences, and unscrupulous in choosing the means of gratifying her ambition, especially, yet she did not give herself up to either the one kind of vice or the other, either to cruelty or to lust, with the weakness which, in little minds, lends those abominable propensities an entire and undivided control. Her lovers never were her rulers; her licentiousness interfered not with her public conduct; her cruelties were not numerous and wanton; nor the result of caprice, or the occupation of a wicked and malignant nature, but the expedients, the unjustifiable, the detestable expedients, to which she had recourse, when a great end was to be attained.

Her capacity was of an exalted order. Her judgment was clear and sure, her sagacity penetrating; her providence and circumspection comprehensive. To fear, hesitation, vacillation, she was an utter stranger; and the adoption of a design was with her, its instant execution. But her plans differed widely from those of her companion, Joseph II., or of her neighbour, Gustavus III. They resembled far more those of her long headed accomplice of Prussia. They were deeply laid in general, and for the most part, well digested; formed as to their object, with no regard to principle, but only to their execution, with no regard to the rights or mercy for the sufferings of her fellow creatures. Over their execution the same dauntless, reckless, heartless feelings presided; nor was she ever to be turned from her pursuits by difficulties and perils, or abated in her desire of success by languor and delay, or quelled in her course by the least remnant of the humane feelings that mark the softer sex, extinct in her bold, masculine and flinty bosom.

But as it was incomparably more easy for an absolute Sovereign, at the head of forty millions of slave subjects, with a vast, impregnable, almost unapproachable dominion, if ruled by no principles, to subdue other countries, than to improve her own, to extend the number of her vassals, than to increase their happiness or their civilization, she failed in all the more harmless or beneficent parts of her schemes, while she unhappily succeeded in many of her warlike and unprincipled projects: and she rested easily satisfied with the name of civil wisdom, and the mere outward semblance of plans for internal improvement, while she enjoyed the sad reality of territorial aggrandizement through cruelty and violence. The court she paid to men of

letters obtained a prompt payment in flattery; and they lavished upon her never-ending, never-executed plans of administration, the praises to which a persevering and successful execution of them would alone have given her a title. Pleased, satisfied with those sounds, she thought no more of the matter, and her name has come down to our times, though close adjoining her own, stript of every title of respect for excellence in any one department of civil wisdom, while her unprincipled policy in foreign affairs has survived her, and still afflicts mankind.

A woman of her commanding talents, however, had other holds over the favour of literary men than the patronage which her station enabled her to dispense. Besides maintaining a kind of literary envoy at Paris, in the person of Grimm, she invited Diderot to St. Petersburg, and purchased D'Alembert's library, patronised the illustrious Euler, and gratified others of less fame, by admitting them to the familiar society of a great monarch; but she had abilities and information enough to relish their conversation, and to bear her part in it upon nearly equal terms.—She had the manly sense, too, so far superior to the demeanour of Frederick, and the other spoilt children of royal nurseries, that no breach of etiquette, no unbecoming familiarity of her lettered guests, ever offended her pride, or roused her official dignity, for an instant. Diderot used to go so far, in the heat of argument, as to slap her on the shoulder or knee with the 'empotement' of a French 'savant,' and he only excited a smile in the well natured and truly superior person, whose rank, and even sex, he had, for the moment, forgotten. Her writings, too, are by no means despicable; but the difficulty of ascertaining that any work published by an empress-regnant proceeds from her own pen, deprives criticism of all interest, as connected with her literary reputation.

On the whole, the history of princes affords few examples of such talents, and such force of character, on a throne, so diverted from all good purposes, and perverted to the working of so much mischief. There have been few abler monarchs in any part of the world. It may well be doubted, if there has been one as bad in all the important particulars in which the worth or the wickedness of rulers tells the most powerfully upon the happiness of the world.

The accidental circumstance of sex has sometimes led to instituting comparisons of Catherine with our Elizabeth; but the points of resemblance were few. Both possessed a very strong, masculine understanding; both joined to comprehensive views the firm resolution, without which nothing great is ever achieved; both united a vehement love of power with a determination never to brook their authority being questioned; and both were prepared, though in very different degrees, to sacrifice, unscrupulously, those whom they regarded as obstacles in the way of its gratification. Whether Elizabeth, in the place of Catherine, might not have become more daring, and, throwing off all the restraints imposed by the Ecclesiastical and Parliamentary Constitution of her country, have attained, by open force, those ends which she was obliged to compass by intrigue, is a matter of more doubtful consideration. Certainly, her reign is sullied by none of those atrocious crimes which cast so dark a shade on the memory of Catherine; nor can any comparison be fairly made between the act which approaches nearest the enormities of the Northern tyrant, and even the least of those mighty transgressions.

The passions that most influence the sex, present remarkable points both of contrast and of resemblance, in the kind of empire which they exercised over these two great sovereigns. The one was the victim of sensual propensities, over which she exercised no kind of controul; the other carefully avoided even every appearance of such excesses. So differently were they constituted, morally as well as physically, that it is more than doubtful if Catherine ever felt the passion of love, or Elizabeth that of sex, while the latter was in love with some favourite or other all her life, and the existence of the former was a succession of the grossest amours.—But, in this, both pursued the same course, that the favourite of the woman in either case never obtained any sway over the Queen; and that the sensual appetites of the one, and the tender sentiments of the other, were alike indulged, without, for a moment, breaking in upon the schemes of their political lives.

Catherine, who had walked to supreme power over her husband's corpse, easily defended her sceptre by the same instruments which had enabled her to grasp it. The single instance in which Elizabeth shed a rival's blood, for her own safety, admitted of extenuation, if it could not be justified by the conspiracy detected against her life; and the times she lived in, rendering assassination perilous, instead of murdering her rival in a dungeon, she, at least, brought her charges openly into a court of inquiry, and had her tried, judged, executed, under colour of law, before the face of the world.

In one thing, and in one alone, the inferiority of the Englishwoman to the Russian must be admitted; and this arose from the different circumstances of the two sovereigns, and the feeble authority with which the former was invested. Through her whole reign, she was a dissembler, a pretender, a hypocrite. Whether in steering her crooked way between rival sects, or in accommodating herself to conflicting factions, or in pursuing the course she had resolved to follow, amidst the various opinions of the people, she ever displayed a degree of cunning and faithfulness which it is impossible to contemplate without disgust. But, if there be any one passage of her life which calls forth this sentiment more than another it is her vile conduct respecting the execution of Mary Stuart—her hateful duplicity, her execrable treachery towards the instruments she used and sacrificed, her cowardly skulking behind those instruments, to escape the censures of the world. This was the crowning act of a whole life of despicable fraud and hypocrisy; and from the necessity of resorting to this, Catherine's more absolute power set her free; not that the Empress's history is unaccompanied with traits of a like kind. When her troops had sacked the suburbs of Warsaw, and consummated the partition of Poland, by the butchery of thousands of her victims, she had the blasphemous effrontery to celebrate a Te Deum in the metropolitan cathedral, and to promulgate an address to the people professing 'to cherish for them the tender feelings of a mother towards her offspring.' It vexes the faith of pious men to witness scenes like these, and not see the fires of heaven descend to smite the guilty and impious actors.

If, finally, we apply to these two sovereigns the surest test of genius, and the best measure of success in their exalted station—the comparative merits of the men by whom they were served—the Russian sinks into insignificance, while the Englishwoman shines with surpassing lustre.—Among the Ministers who served Catherine, it would be difficult to name one of whom the lapse of forty years has left any remembrance; but, as Elizabeth never had a man of inferior, hardly one of middling capacity in her service, so, to this day, at the distance of between two and three centuries, when any one would refer to the greatest statesmen in the history of England, he turns instinctively to the good times of the Virgin Queen.

To SELL or to LET,

To which an unquestionable Title will be given,

THE FARM OF BROWNSTON, situate on Lot 49, fronting the Pisquid Road, and one mile from Vernon River Inn. It contains 434 acres of the best description of Land in this Island, having abundance of Firewood, pine, spruce and fencing poles. Fifty acres are under cultivation, and in the best condition, and Twenty additional acres are enclosed of natural pasture, which could be easily cleared for the plough, the growth of wood being only young bushes. There is a large Garden and Orchard, planted with apple, plum and cherry trees, &c. of 5 years' standing. The whole is well fenced, and there are gates on every enclosure, as well as the court-yard. The House is very comfortable for a small family, and contains kitchen, small parlour, good bedroom, servant's sleeping room, closets, and a cellar underneath. The House is as good as new, as are the offices, which consist of a large Barn, a Stable, and Cow-house, Poultry-house, Dairy, and Green-houses for potatoes and turnips; an excellent Spring of Water is near the House, and the fields are watered by a brook running through them.

The whole will be let together, or in one Farm, for such term of years and on such conditions as may be agreed on; or the property will be divided into Farms, to suit the views of offerers; or, if preferred, the one half (217 acres), including all the improvements, will be sold separately. Apply to

DAVID ROSS,

Hillsborough River, May 14, 1840.

VALUABLE FREEHOLD FARM FOR SALE. THE Subscriber offers for Sale a Tract of 100 Acres of superior Land, adjoining the Bedeque House Farm, having a front of about 20 chains on Wilmot Creek. From eight to ten acres are cleared, and the remainder is well stocked with Firewood and Fencing stuff. There is also a small stream of water running through the premises, sufficient to drive a Carding and Threshing Mill. The situation is well adapted for a Shipbuilding establishment.

For terms of Sale, apply to Mr. Solomon Desbrisay, Charlottetown, or to

JOSEPH POPE,

Bedeque, 18th May, 1840.

TO BE LET, and POSSESSION given IMMEDIATELY. THE whole or a part of that well-known Dwelling House and Premises in Pownal Street, lately occupied by Mrs. Rebecca Miller. This House comprises four Rooms on the first floor, in one of which (30 feet by 24), the Meetings of the Mechanics' Institute are held; four Rooms on the second floor, one of which is the same size as the one mentioned above, and a large garret. There is a commodious and excellent Cellar under the whole. A Stable, and other out houses, together with a small Garden, are attached to the premises. Rent moderate. For further particulars apply at the Herald Office, or to

CHARLOTTE BAGNALL,

Pownal Street, 1st May, 1840.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND. TO BE SOLD, by private Contract, an extensive and valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE, consisting of nearly 18,000 Acres of Land, situate in the preferable part of King's County, being contiguous to GEORGETOWN, late the property of HENRY WINCHESTER, deceased, a Bankrupt, and now belonging to his Assignees. Vessels of any burden may go up and down Carligan River, by which it is bounded on the Southern extremity.

The Estate is delineated on the Plan of the Island, kept in the Plantation Office, Whitehall, and the Surveyor General's Office of the said Island, as Lot or Township (54).

For printed Plans of the Estate, and further particulars, apply at the Offices of Mr. Briggs, 55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Mr. Belcher, Official Assignee, King's Arms Yard, London; the Hon. Samuel Cunard, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and James H. Peters, Esq., Charlottetown, in the said Island—to either of whom terms in writing, for the purchase, may be made on or before the 1st of September next.

CAUTION.

To the Editor of the Colonial Herald.

SIR:—Having seen in the Colonial Herald of the 20th inst. the Advertisement of the Assignees of the late Henry Winchester, Esq., offering for Sale 18,000 Acres of Land, on Lot or Township No. 54, allow me, through the medium of your paper, to say, that the late Henry Winchester, Esq. had no property on Township No. 54, nor had he ever the actual possession. Actions of Trespass and Ejectment were brought against me, it is true, but what was done in those actions I have not been able to ascertain.—Suffice it to say, that after many years' prosecution, I was not able to get one witness brought forward—this is a case of real grievance, and ought to be looked into.

I find on referring to the provision of the Statute of any pretended right or title to land, unless the vendor hath received the profits for one whole year before such grant; or hath been in the actual possession of the land, or of the reversion or remainder, upon pain that both the purchaser and vendor shall each forfeit the value of such land to the King and the prosecutor.

ROBERT MEARNS,

Township No. 54, July 27th, 1839.

LIFE AND FIRE INSURANCE.

POLICIES will be issued by the Subscriber, in either of the above departments, on the most reasonable terms.

CHARLES YOUNG,

Agent of the

"ETNA" and "ALLIANCE" Insurance Companies, Charlottetown, Dec. 11, 1838.

TEMPERANCE ESSAY.

At a General Meeting of the Charlottetown Temperance Society, held on the 6th April inst. it was unanimously—

RESOLVED, That a Committee be appointed, to provide a fund, and make the necessary arrangements for offering a Prize for the best Essay upon the subject of the Traffic in Ardent Spirits, as bearing upon the civil, political, domestic, moral and physical interests of this Colony—such Essay to be the production of a member of a Temperance Society.

In conformity with the above Resolution, the Committee beg leave to acquaint the Friends of Temperance, that Subscription Lists for the purpose of raising a Fund for the object mentioned in the said Resolution, are now lying for signature at the Stores of Mr. Peake, Mr. C. Welsh, and Mr. T. Desbrisay, Queen Street; at Mr. John Bayver's, Richmond Street; Mr. George Beer's, King's Square, and at the Colonial Herald Printing Office.

COMMISSION BUSINESS.

THE Subscriber begs leave to announce to his friends, and the public at large, that he has commenced business as an Auctioneer and Commission Merchant, at the Village at the extremity of Bathurst Bridge, very near the premises occupied by Gilmour, Rankin, & Co.—where orders will be thankfully received and business of trust carefully attended to. From his long residence in Bathurst, and general acquaintance with the business of the country, he flatters himself, that implicit confidence will be reposed in his punctuality and desire to promote the interests of his customers.

WILLIAM DEACON,

Bathurst, Bay de Chaleur, N. B. Feb. 4, 1840.

DISSOLUTION OF CO-PARTNERSHIP.

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Co-partnership hitherto existing between the undersigned, was, on the first day of March, instant, dissolved by mutual consent—their term having on that day expired. All persons having demands against the said firm, are requested to render their accounts for adjustment, and all those indebted are requested to make immediate payment to John Hobs.

JOHN HOBBS,

DONALD NICOLSON,

Charlottetown, 6th March, 1840.

JOHN HOBBS, Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer, begs leave to acquaint the Inhabitants of Charlottetown, and the public generally, that he is now carrying on the above business, in his Shop in Kent Street, opposite the residence of T. B. Treatinn, Esq., where all orders in his line will be thankfully received, and executed with neatness, punctuality, and on moderate terms.

March 6, 1840.

SEED WHEAT FOR SALE.

THE Subscriber offers for Sale a small quantity of good Seed Wheat. An early application is requisite.

STORAGE.

Merchants and others can be accommodated with Storage in that commodious Building opposite the residence of the Hon. Mr. Peake. This Building comprises a Loft suitable for fitting out rigging, &c.—A good Cellar can also be had under the above premises.

K. MACKENZIE,

Charlottetown, 1st May, 1840.

CAUTION TO LUMBERERS.

ALL Persons found trespassing upon any of the Estates of the Right Honorable the Earl of SELKIRK, in this Island, by cutting timber, or otherwise, will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the Law. Tenants requiring Timber for Farm Buildings, &c. must apply to the subscriber.

W. DOUSE, Land Agent.

CAUTION.

ALL Persons are hereby cautioned against cutting or carrying away Timber, or Wood of any description, from that part of Township No. 43, belonging to the Estate of the late Honorable William Townsend, deceased, if they wish to avoid law and law costs.

CHARLES WORRELL,

Mortgagee in possession.

APPRENTICES WANTED.

BY the Subscriber, two Apprentices, for the Painting, Glazing, and Paper-Hanging Businesses. None need apply without producing testimonials of good character.

J. DAVIS, Painter.

Charlottetown, March 4th, 1840.

AURELIAN.

THE THOROUGHBRED HORSE AURELIAN will stand for the season, commencing 1st May, at the Government House Stables. Terms, Two Pounds, and Five Shillings to the Groom—to be paid at the time.

AURELIAN was imported from England last year by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, is a chestnut Horse, six years old, by Oppidan, dam by Pioneer, grand dam by Stavelly, &c. &c. Oppidan was got by Reubens, out of Dorina, by Gohanna, &c.

N. B.—Mares not proving in foal last year, will be served on payment of the Groom's fee only.

The Aurelian Produce Cup, to be given by His Excellency, will be run for in September, 1843. See advertisement of last year.

CANADIAN HORSE.

THE Celebrated CANADIAN HORSE will stand for the ensuing season at the following places, viz:—At Charlottetown, on Saturday, the 2d May; on Monday, the 4th, at the Subscriber's, Elliot River; on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 5th and 6th, at Mr. Tod's, Sable; on Thursday the 7th and Friday, and 8th, at John Bell's, Cape Traverse; on Saturday and Monday, the 9th and 11th, at Thomas Robins', Bedeque; on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 12th and 13th, at Mr. Townsend's, Travellers' Rest; and on Thursday and Friday, the 14th and 15th, at William W. Lord's, Tryon. To return to the above places every fortnight.

JOHN HYDE,

Elliot River, April 7, 1840.

CLYDESDALE HORSE COLUMBUS.

THAT beautiful and powerful DRAUGHT HORSE Columbus, imported last summer by the Central Agricultural Society, will stand for the season at the Subscriber's, Princetown Road, in the Royalty of Charlottetown. Season to commence 1st April. Hours of attendance—6 a. m.; 12 noon, and 6 p. m. Terms, Two Pounds. Groom, Five Shillings.

Wm. CRANSTON

CHARLOTTETOWN: Printed and published by JAS. B. COOPER & Co., Printers to the Honorable the House of Assembly, at their Office, East corner of Pownal and Water Streets.—TERMS 15s. per annum, payable half yearly in advance.

\* Gustavus III., and the Emperor Joseph.