

**REVIEWS OF A PART OF
PRESCOTT'S "HISTORY OF
FERDINAND AND ISABELLA", AND
OF CAMPBELL'S "LECTURES ON
POETRY."**

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Reviews of a Part of Prescott's "History of Ferdinand and Isabella", and of Campbell's "Lectures on Poetry." by Elizabeth Elkins Sanders

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ELIZABETH ELKINS SANDERS

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By
Eliz. E. Sanders

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A

REVIEW

OF

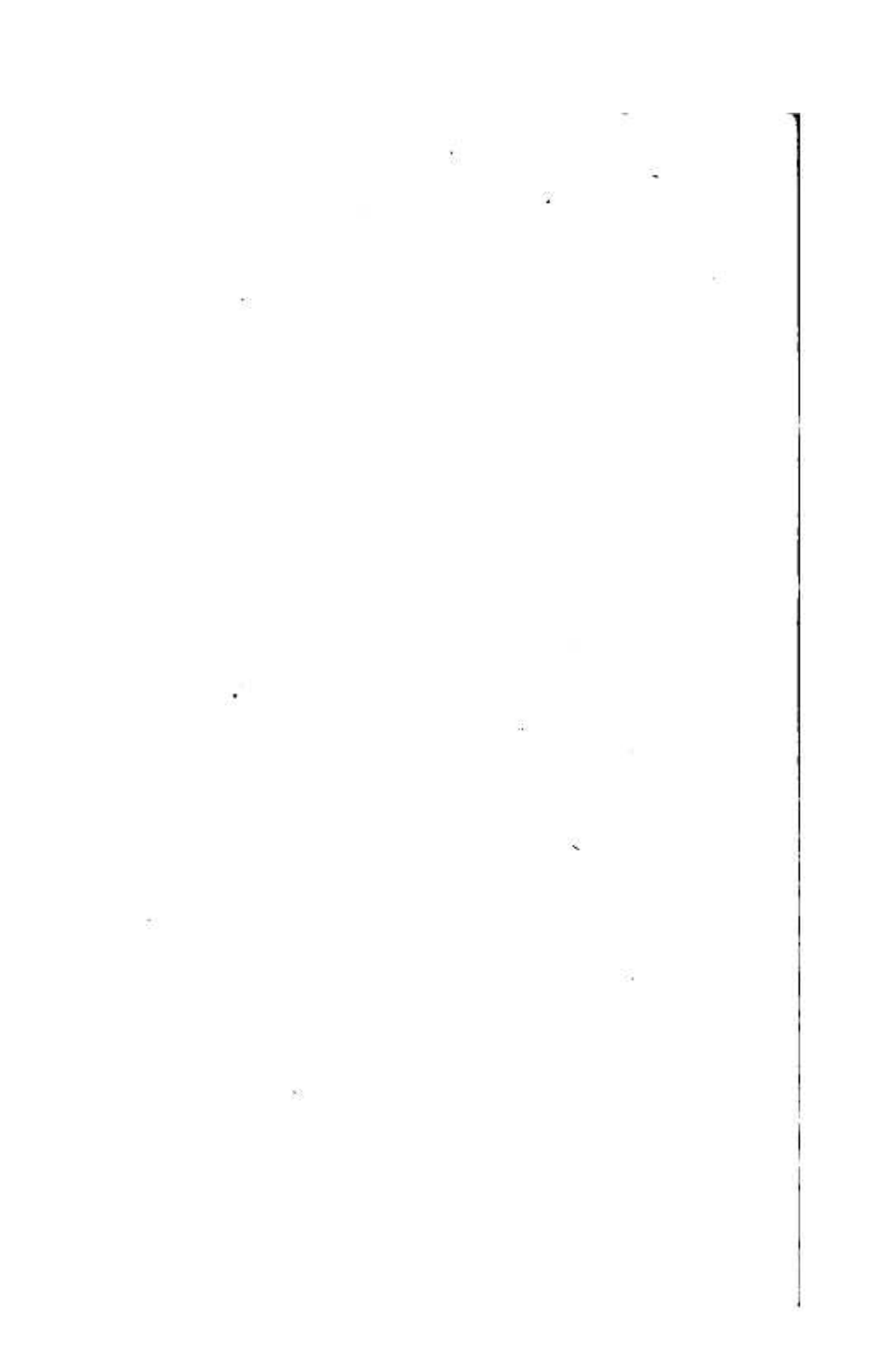
THAT PORTION OF PRESCOTT'S 'HISTORY OF FER-
DINAND AND ISABELLA,'

WHERE

A PARALLEL IS DRAWN

BETWEEN

ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND AND ISABELLA
OF SPAIN.



REVIEW.

THE interesting History of Ferdinand and Isabella has been too well received to need any laudatory comments of ours ; and it is not without reluctance that we feel compelled to express our dissent from the author of a work so invaluable. In doing this however we object only to that small portion of the history where a parallel is drawn between the characters of Elizabeth of England and Isabella of Spain, two of the most illustrious sovereigns that ever graced a throne.

The English queen had, from the beginning of her reign, to contend with nearly the whole of Christendom ; whilst the religious belief of the Catholic queen not only accorded with that of her subjects, but with the religious creed of all the potentates of Europe, with the Roman pontiff at their head. Now, although we

are not insensible to the great and amiable qualities of Isabella, we feel compelled to avow a decided preference to the English queen for her superior intellectual endowments. Few monarchs so nobly contended with and overcame so many adverse combinations. From the earliest period she was assailed by the Catholic, whose power in her own dominions nearly equalled that of the Protestant, party. The pope had issued a bull declaring Elizabeth to be illegitimate; and of course all were licensed to seize, and put her to death, or consign her to perpetual imprisonment, as might suit the views of the party opposed. The queen of Scotland was declared to be the lawful heir of the English crown, and was supported by a powerful confederacy, who openly avowed their intention to dethrone the heretical queen, and place her accomplished rival on the throne. Nor were bigoted enthusiasts wanting to carry their plots into execution; witness the desperate and daring assassinations, to which recourse was so frequently had, to aid the party of the eminent defenders of the protestant faith.

This assuredly may palliate in some degree the duplicity practised by Elizabeth to obtain possession of a rival, who, so long as she retained power, had never ceased to exert it, to accomplish the destruction of the English queen. The events, which followed the captivity of Mary, were but acts in the same drama, all tending to the consummation of the plot; for although Elizabeth had possessed herself of the person of Mary, it did not put an end to the conspiracies hitherto employed for the subversion of her kingdom, and the sentence which doomed Mary to die appeared the only al-

ternative allowed by the law of self-defence. The same law may, we apprehend, plead in justification of Mary, who had, when in captivity, no other way of freeing herself from the power of Elizabeth, although no excuse of this kind could be urged in defence of the previous hostile measures which had kept Elizabeth in perpetual peril and anxiety. It should be remembered that, during much of this period, the royal competitor of Elizabeth was the acknowledged queen of Scotland, and the consort of the heir apparent of France. Nevertheless the talents of Elizabeth enabled her to triumph over her insidious foes, who threatened to overwhelm the whole protestant party, and again subject them to the oppressive yoke of catholicism.

The glorious spirit, which actuated the English queen, has been diffused and transmitted through successive generations, and has been the source from whence the British nation have derived their true greatness. In later days, impelled by the same spirit, they have broken in pieces the gigantic power of a bold usurper, who had subjected to arbitrary sway a great portion of continental Europe, and was preparing to extend his iron sceptre over distant lands. But their last great act, in breaking the fetters of their African subjects and restoring them to the rights of humanity, attests a nobleness of soul which entitles the British nation to take precedence of all others.

But to return to our subject. Elizabeth, like Isabella, was by her vigilance, magnanimity, and economy, prepared to meet and overcome all the difficulties and dangers to which she was exposed, and both alike guarded with tenacity their rights and prerogatives ;