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## ARTICLE I.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE JESUITS.

THERE are certain periods in the history of the world, so prolific in great events, so abounding in mighty men, so fraught with portentous principles, that they seem engraved upon its pages in characters of light. They are periods when abstract ideas, long slumbering in the human bosom, have come gradually to assume a tangible form, and to work out changes in the social and moral condition of men. By the application of a practical philosophy, they have been brought to bear on the existing institutions of nations, and have effected those revolutions, mental and physical, which make these periods landmarks in history, eras in the progress of civilization.

Such was the epoch embracing the latter half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. Perhaps there have never been condensed in the short period of one hundred years so many wonderful events, so many important changes, and we might almost add, so many illustrious men. There was certainly never an age, which has exerted so powerful an influence on our own times. Within that short period, the reign of Charles VIII, in its varied course, laid the foundation of the present political condition of the several governments of Europe, and thus drew a broad line between the modern and the middle age. The freedom of the north was created by Gustavus Vasa. The religion of the south

was upheld by the iron hand of Leo de' Medici. Columbus and de Gama laid open the boundless continents of America and India to European enterprise. And, greater than all, the art of printing appears among the discoveries of this age. But the fifteenth century contained the germ of still greater things, which were to bud and blossom in the next,—for which America and India were to furnish the ground of action, and by which all Europe was to be shaken to its centre.

These were two grand, conflicting ideas ; their weapons were the press ; their object, the rise or the ruin of Popery. The freedom of the mind, on the one hand, the absolute submission of the will to sovereign dictation, on the other, were the two great principles then preparing to agitate the world.

In 1483, in the town of Eisleben, amidst the forests of Germany, was born that man who was destined to be the champion of intellectual liberty. Eight years after, rocked in his cradle among the mountains of Biscay, slumbered the *incarnation of spiritual despotism*. And surely there never were two men on earth better fitted to become the leaders of the powerful parties, that rallied under their separate and opposing standards, than were Luther and Loyola. Men, alike possessed of gigantic minds, of unconquerable energy of will, of a determined perseverance which no obstacles could impede and no fear could intimidate, they stand forth, the master-spirits of the age. The morality of the church of Rome, for a long period, had been such as to cast reproach upon the Christian name. The holy zeal for the religious advancement of their subjects, the stern virtue and uncompromising integrity, which marked the earlier bishops of Rome, had given place to a desire for temporal aggrandizement. Ever since the ambitious Hildebrand had compelled the emperor Henry IV to stand bareheaded three days in the blasts of an Apennine winter, praying admittance, that he might humble himself before him,—or Alexander III had placed his foot on the neck of the haughty Frederic, with the expression, "*Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis*," the church of Rome had descended from its high purpose, and stooped to grasp at temporal dominion. A succession of daring pontiffs had made the ancient capital of the world once more the arbiter of Europe ; and the sword they wielded over the heads of kings and princes, for the last four centuries of the Middle Ages, was hardly less potent than the power of Roman arms

over barbarian nations before the fall of the republic. But power engendered luxury, and luxury corruption, until the hierarchy, satisfied with the tranquil possession of authority won for them by more virtuous or more energetic leaders, relaxed its severe and purifying discipline; and, by an extension of the doctrine of indulgences, connived at open immorality and sensual gratification. A moral pestilence pervaded the entire mass of the Catholic church, and made all Europe a prey to licentious passions. No efforts at reform were made by the pontiffs. A refined dissipation had assumed the throne of a holy religion. The study of the fine arts, and the cultivation of belles-lettres, supplied the place of religious zeal and theological inquiry. An old statue, or a fine painting, was to them a higher source of enjoyment than the spiritual beauty of their faith; and a classic manuscript, discovered among the ruins of antiquity, was, to their atheistic eyes, more venerable than the law delivered amid the thunders of Sinai. Nor was Leo X an exception to this. The son of Lorenzo de' Medici inherited the taste and genius of his father, and with them the refined skepticism which prevailed among the Italian nobility of the time. His predecessor, Julius II, had begun that vast cathedral which received the name, and was to perpetuate the worship, of the founder of the hierarchy. Every thing which this brilliant era in the history of art could furnish, was applied to adorn the holy temple. The coffers of Rome were emptied, and St. Peter's was scarcely begun. To defray so enormous an expense, Leo resorted to a general sale of indulgences; and, from the proceeds of this nefarious traffic, the cathedral was completed. So gross an abuse of the papal power met with a stern rebuke from the pen of Luther,—and thus commenced the great Reformation in the north. Up to this date, 1521, no measures, except those prompted by the vindictive spirit of Leo, had been taken to prevent a result, which a careful observer of the times might have foreseen. But the keen eye of Loyola discovered the remedy, and his intellect and energy planned and completed the work. His early training had been such as to fit him for the task. Born of a noble family, his youthful days had been spent at the court of the Castilian queen, and had given him the manner and address adapted to the polished circles in which his influence was to be exerted. His early manhood was