

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THERE is a structure in the world, to the completion of which every thinking man is bound to lend his assistance, I mean the fabric of intellectual light and spiritual freedom, without which real and material liberty cannot be attained. Providence has given to some few the power of contributing a corner-stone, or even an entire pillar, to this building, and those few are the "Spiritual Knights" of whom Heine sings. But even when to the remainder this power is wanting, are they on that account to lay their hands on their lap and totally refrain from labour, when, perhaps, they might be in a position to pass on towards this erection the mortar and small stones? I say "No"; and upon this "No" have I completed the "History of the Jesuits." May this book contribute a little, if not to the stripping-off of the fetters of superstition and spiritual thralldrom in which so many hundred thousands are still bound, at all events to the loosening of them and to the preparation for casting them aside. More I do not expect.