

edits a history of distant events, professes to have precisely the same amount of certainty as to all the many details which he records. Of some his certainty is all but absolute; of others he can say that he considers them highly probable; of a third class he only alleges that they are vouched for by respectable though not numerous authorities. Still, he groups them together in one complete and continuous story, and gives them to the world as *history*; nor does the world impute to him either dishonesty, ignorance, credulity, or shallowness, because in every single event he does not specify the exact amount of evidence on which his statement rests.

Just such is the measure of belief to be conceded to the Life of St. Frances, and other biographies or sketches of a similar kind. Some portions, and those the most really important and prominent, are well ascertained, incontrovertible, and substantially true. Others again, in all likelihood, took place very much, though not literally, in the way in which they are recorded. Of others, they were possibly, or even probably, the mere colouring of the writer, or were originally adopted on uninvestigated rumour. They are all, however, consistent with known facts, and the laws on which humanity is governed by Divine Providence; and therefore, as they may be true, they take their place in that vast multitude of histories which all candid and well-informed persons agree in accepting as worthy of credit, though in various degrees.

Supposing, then, that miraculous events may and do occur in the present state of the world's history, it is obvious that these various degrees of assent are com-