

sible and probable, but, allowing for the degree of authenticity in each case claimed, on the whole historically true. No honest man, who absolutely disbelieves in all documents in which the original chronicler has mingled accounts of supernatural events with the record of his own personal knowledge, could possibly either write or edit such Lives as those included in the following pages ; still less could they be made public by one who disbelieves in the reality of modern miracles altogether.

In presenting, then, the present and other similar volumes to the ordinary reader, I anticipate some such questions as these : "Do you really put these stories into our hands as history ? Are these marvellous tales to be regarded as poetry, romance, superstitious dreaming, or as historical realities ? If you profess to believe in their truth, how do you reconcile their character with the universal aspect of human life, as it appears *to us and to our friends* ? And finally, if you claim for them the assent to which proved facts have a right from every candid mind, to what extent of detail do you profess to believe in their authenticity ?" To these and similar questions I reply by the following observations :

The last of these questions may be answered briefly. The lives of Saints and other remarkable personages, which are here and elsewhere laid in a popular form before the English public, are not all *equally* to be relied on as undoubtedly true in their various minute particulars. They stand precisely on the same footing as the ordinary events of purely secular history ; and precisely the same degree of assent is claimed for them that the common reason of humanity accords to the general chronicles of our race. No man, who writes or