

naturally have occurred in it through time and damp—more especially in the feet, through the rubbing of religious objects against them.

“The authenticity of this image is so certainly and clearly established, that all supposition to the contrary becomes inexplicable and absurd. Such, for example, is a hypothesis that it should not be attributed to the Evangelist, but to another Luke, also called ‘Saint,’ and a Florentine by birth. This painter lived in the eleventh century—that is to say, about seven centuries after the image of Oropa had been known and venerated! This is indeed an anachronism.

“Other difficulties drawn either from the ancient discipline of the Church or from St. Luke the Evangelist’s profession, which was that of a physician, vanish at once when it is borne in mind—firstly, that the cult of holy images, and especially of that of the most blessed Virgin, is of extreme antiquity in the Church, and of apostolic origin, as is proved by ecclesiastical writers and monuments found in the catacombs which date as far back as the first century (see among other authorities, Nicolas, *La Vergine vivente nella Chiesa*, lib. iii. cap. iii. § 2); secondly, that as the medical profession does not exclude that of artists, St. Luke may have been both artist and physician; that he did actually handle both the brush and the scalpel is established by respectable and very old traditions, to say nothing of other arguments which can be found in impartial and learned writers upon such matters.”

I will only give one more extract. It runs:—

“In 1855 a celebrated Roman portrait-painter, after having carefully inspected the image of the Virgin