

knowledge and the progress of the human mind. And it is of great importance that these should be studied, not only in their essential, and, if we may so express ourselves, generic character, but also historically, in the various modifications of shape and colour which have marked them at their several periods of revival, and which will almost always be found to depend on some peculiarity of pursuit or opinion prevalent at the time, or, if connected with the physical sciences, on some newly-opened course of discovery. The various *species* of error once thoroughly mastered, the student will find ever after that it is with but its *varieties* he has to deal. Nay, by thoroughly knowing the *species*, and the history of the changes through which they passed at their several appearances, he may be able to anticipate the exact course which they would have to run should they re-appear in his own times, when men worse taught, and unacquainted with this cycloidal character of error, will neither know whence they come nor whither they are going. The native sagacity of the late Dr M'Crie was greatly sharpened by a knowledge of this kind, derived from his profound acquaintance with Church history; and he is said to have predicted, while Rowism was yet a howling enthusiasm, gibbering the untranslateable tongues, and stretching forth its hand to work miracles, that it was to end at no very remote period as a decrepit superstition. The fluttering butterfly was destined, agreeably to its previously determined constitution, to produce a brood of creeping caterpillars, though only the laborious student who had acquainted himself with its specific character, as exhibited in former manifestations, knew that such was to be the case. This perception of the specific essentials and consequents of both truth and error constitutes, too, at once the charm and the value of such a mastery over the controversies which have arisen within the Church, or in which, in self-defence, the Church has been compelled to engage, as that