

catastrophe took place. But how gratuitous the assumption ! It would be quite as safe to infer, that as the human race multiplied greatly in Ireland during the first half of the present century, it must have also multiplied greatly in Italy, a much finer country, during the first half of the fifth century, or in the wealthier portions of Kurdistan during the first half of the thirteenth. Ere applying, however, the Irish ratio of increase to either the Italy of thirteen hundred years ago, or to the Kurdistan of five hundred years ago, it would surely be necessary to take into account the important fact, that these were the ages of Zingis Khan and of Attila ; of Zingis Khan, who, on possessing himself of the three capitals of the one country, coolly butchered four millions three hundred and forty-seven thousand persons, their inhabitants ; and of that Attila, "the scourge of God," who used to say, more especially in reference to the other country, that "wherever his horse-hoofs had once trod, the grass never afterwards grew," and before whose ravages the human race seemed melting away. The terms in which the great wickedness of the antediluvians is described indicate a period of violence and outrage ;—the age which preceded the Flood was an age of "giants" and of "mighty men," and of "men of renown,"—forgotten Attilas, Alarics, and Zingis Khans, mayhap,— "giants of mighty bone and bold emprise," who became famous for their "infinite manslaughter," and the thousands whom they destroyed. Such is decidedly the view which the brief Scriptural description suggested to the poets ; and certainly, when a question comes to be one of guess-work, no other class of persons guess half so sagaciously as they. It has not unfrequently occurred to me,—and in a question of this kind one suggestion may be quite as admissible as another,—that the Deluge may have been more a visitation of mercy to the race than of judgment. Even in our own times, as happened in New Zealand during the present century, and