

MEN OF THE DAY. No. 137.

THE REV. HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L.

DR. LIDDON is a rhetorician with notions. He was once a student of Christ Church, and for some time was the head of the Bishop of Oxford's Theological College at Cuddesden, which he left in consequence of his having developed views higher in the Church sense than the Bishop cared to countenance. After this he lived chiefly at Oxford, and eleven years ago he raised a considerable excitement there by a series of lectures on "The Divinity of Our Lord," which caused him to become much remarked, and very popular with those who agreed with him. Since then he has succeeded to Dr. Pusey's position as the recognised leader of High Church at Oxford, and has more than anyone contributed to the acknowledged fact that, at that seat of learning, Low Church is dead, and only unburied in the Broad Church ghost of Professor Jowett. Being, moreover, a practical Church politician, he has also appropriated Dr. Döllinger's notion of uniting the English Establishment with the "Old Catholics" and the Eastern Church, which has quite recently moved him to come forward in order to blow the bellows of rhetoric over the Bulgarian "atrocities." For he regards the Eastern "Christians" as men of his own proper flock, having a duty to rise in insurrection, if need be, in order to join him. Another reason for this may be gratitude to Mr. Gladstone, who, being himself a man of words, and having therefore and for other reasons always had an especial liking for Dr. Liddon, recently made room for him at St. Paul's Cathedral, and thus gave him a position in London as well as at Oxford.

Not long since Dr. Liddon had a paper warfare with Mgr. Capel as to the "Romanising" tendencies of Ritualism. The victory in the controversy remained with Mgr. Capel; but while he proved that many Ritualists had gone over to the Seven Hills, Dr. Liddon proved that he had no sympathy with them, and repudiated their errors. He is nevertheless a master of the English language, but it is rather in speaking than in writing it. As a preacher to cultivated theologians he has indeed no equal, and of that kind the men admire him to the verge of conviction, the women beyond the verge of adoration. His physical weakness, indeed, makes his preaching an apparently painful effort; but he has a beautiful voice, which he nurses conscientiously with many comforters, and his eloquence, formed on the model of the great French preachers, is in nowise marred, but rather ornamented, by the clear falsetto into which his tones, naturally low, soft, and caressing, pass when they issue from the pulpit. He is easily accessible, his manners are excellent, and he has long bid fair to become quite a fashionable preacher. His sermons, however, are long and monotonous, though sometimes relieved by biting sarcasm—carefully excised from publication—such as that in which he said of his antithesis, Professor Jowett: "I live, yet not I, but Plato liveth in me." That cannot be said of him.