

STATESMEN. No. 357.

EARL NELSON.

THE Nelson family—already of some repute and property in Norfolk—had been parsons for generations when it occurred to the wife of the Rev. Edmund Nelson to present him with Horatio as one of his eleven children. Horatio became a sailor. He proved himself the ablest captain, the purest patriot, and the most self-sacrificing man known to modern history. He became the saviour of Europe, and the darling hero of his countrymen; and finally, going into action at Trafalgar with the noblest prayer ever penned—not for himself, but for his country—he gave his life for the land he loved. That land, to its lasting shame, neglected his last wishes; but the son of the Norfolk parson, who had found his family one of obscure priests, left it endowed with the noblest name in England.

When he was no more, the name he had ennobled in battle fell back among the priests. He was succeeded in the peerage he had won by his elder brother, William, a Doctor of Divinity and a Prebendary of Canterbury, who was improved into an Earl. But Doctor William died without children; and then the title went to a son of the great Nelson's sister who had married one Bolton of parsonic race, and who had left a son Thomas. This Thomas now cast off the name of Bolton to take that of Nelson, succeeded to the earldom, and in 1835 died, leaving as his successor his son the present Earl.

Horatio Nelson, Earl Nelson of Trafalgar and Merton, and Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Hilborough, was born eight-and-fifty years ago. He succeeded to his title at the age of twelve. He was sent to Eton and to Cambridge. Two of his own brothers were parsons, one of his sisters had married a parson, most of his relatives were in holy orders in some form or other; and the heir of the glories of the Nile and of Trafalgar took from his early youth a great interest in all matters connected with the Church of England as by law established. He became therefore and still is a member and a very thorough supporter of the High Church Party. He also wrote a hymn-book, which is much used and admired in the diocese of Salisbury. He is a good, kindly man, too, and has been very active in forming and maintaining Friendly Societies. He is moreover a sound and energetic Tory, a fair speaker, and a good man of business. He is besides a country gentleman who does his duty by his tenants and his neighbours, living with decency though not with magnificence in his own county of Wiltshire, and doing all he does conscientiously and honourably.