

STATESMEN. No. 122.

LORD RADSTOCK.

OF all the strange phenomena in human nature which complex civilisation has to show, perhaps the strangest is that of a man who, without being absolutely forced to do it, undertakes to preach and to propagate a form of religion which, like that calling itself Evangelical, seems to the unregenerate to consist solely and entirely of phrase and sentiment of an inferior order. This Lord Radstock has set himself to do, with all the vigour and strength of conviction that might be expected from a distinguished nobleman of forty. Many a man in his position would have devoted himself solely to the improvement of his Irish estates, or have endeavoured, by attempting comprehension of and distinction in politics, to add lustre to a title descending from the glorious time of the Union. Lord Radstock, however, is utterly unselfish and enthusiastic, and he has felt himself marked out as an instrument to deal with his fellow-men on higher and less material ground. Having been brought, as he believes, to a thorough insight into and appreciation of the one only form of true religion, he has taken up, from sheer conviction of its importance, the part of an itinerant preacher, in the confident hope that he can do something to bring men into accordance with views the reception of which he holds to be the one necessary preparation for a future state. He spares neither time nor trouble to do the good he holds to be of the highest value in his generation, and may be seen almost any day holding forth with a vehemence that inspires respect, either in the provinces or in London, at a lay theatre surrounded by the appurtenances of phantasmagoria and other secular entertainments. He holds that "religion is not merely the way to get to "Heaven," and has a thorough and entire belief in the Bible, the study of which for a rule and a testimony he believes to be superior even to direct intercourse with the founder of the Christian religion. He knows that the "man of the world, stained "with sin and soiled with iniquity" is not easily brought to listen to Evangelical teaching; and when, with what must be presumed to be an allusion to his title, he announces by handbills that "the Lord is at hand," and that he will (D.V.) preach the Gospel, he secures adherents who seek an audience even in the streets with invitations fearlessly and literally adopted from the admittedly inspired men of old. In an age of trifling and infidelity, it is refreshing to meet earnestness and faith of a kind superior to society or even to ridicule; and Lord Radstock is a remarkable instance of a man who might have been some credit to his order as an Irish peer, but who has rather attempted to be an instructor of his kind as an English preacher.