

# VANITY FAIR - Volume XXVI

“A Weekly Show of Political, Social, and Literary Wares.”

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## Cartoons and selected excerpts

9. Aug. 27, 1881

### NOTES.

The notion of commons preservation entertained by that irresponsible body styling itself the Commons Preservation Society is, to say the least, eccentric and peculiar. For centuries the wild and tangled beauties of Ashdown Forest in Sussex have been allowed to exist and flourish unmolested. Very recently some wealthy and influential residents in the neighbourhood, technically described as “tenants of the forest,” have assumed the high-sounding title of “Conservators,” and formed an offensive and defensive League for the purpose of “preserving” the forest by legalising its denudation of fern, brake, and heather, and thus ultimately converting it into an enlarged edition of Battersea Park. Lord De La Warr, as Lord of the Forest, resists this attempt to irretrievably ruin the historic beauties of Ashdown, and is endeavouring, mainly on public grounds, to preserve it from the clearing process advocated by the “Conservators.” While the matter is *sub judice*, the Commons Preservation Society, instead of sympathising with Lord De La Warr, who has the misfortune to be in the odious position of a landlord, says in its report:—“It is hoped that the Commoners will not cease from their labours until they have obtained some more general declaration of right, and induced Lord De La Warr to place the forest under proper regulations”—*i.e.*, the knives and pruning-hooks of the tenants. Strange to say, this very society, in the case of Epping Forest, supported exactly what Lord De La Warr seeks to maintain for Ashdown. Stranger still, one of the most active of the Commoners—Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson, Lord of the Manor of Hampstead Heath—is very zealous in preventing the tenants from doing at Hampstead what he spends money in enabling them to do at Ashdown. As a matter of fact, Lord De La Warr is the “Conservator,” and the tenants the “depredators,” only it suits the society’s politics to invert their respective *rôles*. If this society ambitions any influence at all in these matters, it would be well if for the future it made due inquiries before publishing reports in condemnation of the very object which justifies its existence. The whole question, so far as Ashdown is concerned, was settled before the end of the seventeenth century, and, apart from legal considerations, it will be matter of lasting regret if mistaken notions or false sympathy lead to the utter defacement of one of the oldest and noblest examples of English sylvan scenery.

The Right Honourable Earl Percy, M.P.

The Duke of Northumberland and his family are a Tory stronghold ; and no more energetic defender of the Conservative position is to be found than Lord Percy, the Duke’s eldest son. Of very ancient and noble lineage, and the heir to one of the finest titles and one of the largest estates in England, he has devoted himself to politics with all the eagerness of a very energetic nature. Born forty-five years ago, he went to Oxford, and married a daughter of the Duke of Argyll. At twenty-two he was elected for North Northumberland, for which he still sits. He is not a great speaker, but he is a most industrious worker and a persevering attendant in his place in the House of Commons. He is a gentleman ; and when below-the-gangway Radicals try to howl him down, they find that he is an obstinate one.

JEHU JUNIOR

**VANITIES.**

The Prince of Wales’s indisposition, to which I alluded last week, has proved, as was expected, of short duration. H.R.H. is now, I am glad to learn, in the enjoyment of his usual health, and able to resume his usual occupations and amusements.

This indisposition having occurred on Wednesday of last week and announced in *Vanity Fair* which appeared on Friday, the Daily Dullards got information of it last Tuesday, when the Prince was in perfect health again, and of course had to contradict themselves yesterday. They are not improving.

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It is rumoured that Mr. Mundy no longer intends to further his wife’s plan of becoming Countess of Shrewsbury.



T.

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

"Northumberland"