

# VANITY FAIR - Volume XXVI

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

Issues published in the half-year, from July 2, 1881 to December 31, 1881.

## Cartoons and selected excerpts

24. *Dec. 10, 1881*

### NOTES.

It is very funny to see people waiting on the judgments of Sir William Harcourt. Respectable men hope he will be lenient with the bribers ; or they trust he will set his face as steel ; or they are content to abide by his decision. It is an odd sight. Every week this man is called on to decide issues of life and death, yet he does not know the law he has to administer. Only a fortnight ago he thought he saw a chance of getting a slant wind of cheap applause, and he must needs degrade his office, his manhood, and his Sovereign by writing a cheap letter, which contained an error of law in every paragraph and an error of taste in every line. Yet he is the final court of appeal in matters of life and death, and of liberty and freedom. He got his place and his notoriety by slavish truckling to Mr. Gladstone, whom he had abused and insulted in 1875 when Mr. Gladstone had nothing to give. He has no gifts but supreme faculty for epigram, a majestic voice, and consummate insolence. Yet he is a sort of Pasha—a Cadi whose words decide the fates of Englishmen every day. The moral is—be fat, be impudent, have a loud voice, kick everyone who is down, and achieve success.

\* \* \*

Every person not tainted by cant must feel disquieted at the treatment of unfortunate men sentenced to various periods of imprisonment for that very naughty but time-honoured practice of bribery at elections. It was the first conviction under the new Act, and the circumstances of the case would have been met with a substantial fine.. What is worse is the indignity to which the unfortunate victims of political Pharisees have been subjected on the way to prison where they are to undergo their cruel sentence. To handcuff them was a needless precaution, and therefore a gratuitous insult. After all, the Government itself bribes more or less indirectly, and I can discern little moral difference between securing support in Parliament by places and social blandishments, and giving a voter so much hard cash.

The Hon. Charles Robert Spencer, M.P.

Four-and-twenty years ago was “Bobby” Spencer born. About three-and-twenty years ago he became aware that he was a pretty babe ; and he resolved to remain so. He had scarcely passed through Harrow and Cambridge when he was recognised as a beautiful object which might safely adorn the mantel-piece of any lady’s boudoir. He dresses, deports himself, and languishes like an artist. Nature would seem to have formed him to be an ornament of his age ; but cruel ambition drove him into the attempt to be useful to his Party, his Party being, as well as he could make out, the Liberal Party. Being a clever youth, he became therefore an advanced Radical, got elected last year for North Northamptonshire, and has since been known as “Bradlaugh’s Baby.”

He is a statesman who has as yet had sufficient self-restraint to avoid becoming an orator. Yet he is not a silent Member of the House of Commons ; he constantly interpolates the pregnant remarks of “Oh, oh !” and “Divide !” and he never loses the occasion of giving to Lord Hartington and to Mr. Gladstone a patronising cheer. He has a future, but no man can yet tell whether it lies in the direction of shirt-collars, of revolution, or of mere inheritance.

JEHU JUNIOR



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

"Bradlaugh's Baby"