

**LIGHTEST LONDON:
A
FARCICAL FANCY**

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Lightest London: A Farcical Fancy by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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FARCICAL FANCY**

Lionel Brough Esq
With the Author's love
June 1922

LIGHTEST LONDON.

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LIGHTEST LONDON:

A Farical Fancy.

BY

A BOY IN BELGRAVIA.



LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & CO.,
LIMITED.

1892.

LIGHTEST LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

BIOGRAPHIES are fashionable, therefore it behoves me, a Belgravian boy, to be in the fashion. To begin properly, I must go back to that remote period when I, *the* boy, was not. It is difficult to realize that before my advent the world did without me.

My father, Lord Tendertoe, married the only daughter and heiress of the Earl of Softfoot, so I may consider myself a very aristocratic boy indeed. My sire was tall, stiff, and haughty; my mother stately, fair, and striking. I inherit all their attributes.

When to every one's delight I made my appearance in this world, I was warmly welcomed, if for no other reason than that I was a variation. My mother having given birth to six daughters consecutively, had quite relinquished the hope that her habit would change, and that after all the Honourable Misses she had presented to her

husband her last mission would be to bestow on him a boy, born in Belgravia, to be his heir. It remains a question if in the end my mother would have called me Honourable, but to the world in general I am known as the Hon. Spendall Tendertoe.

In the nursery I had it all my own way. The Hon. Miss Alicia, the Hon. Miss Cynthia, and the Hon. Miss Helen were too old to join the younger Honourables; but though they were freed from the tender mercies of the head nurse, they often paid us a visit, and then it was high jinks for me.

When I was five years old my mother died, or perhaps this record of my doings might never have been given to the world; for had she remained with me to counsel me, my life, though dull, might have been free from the pitfalls and temptations that assailed me in every phase of my gilded youth. Even as a baby I was utterly spoiled by every one, not so much from affection, but because I was a baby, a *boy* born in Belgravia.

Had I superior wit? Was I more beautiful than other babies? More generous? More lovable? Not at all. I once happened to overhear myself discussed by Mrs. Toady, our head nurse.

"Lor' bless you, Mrs. Whineall! 'tain't 'cos the little Spendall is such a werry interesting boy as

every one gives in to him," she said emphatically, "but 'cos he will be Lord Tendertoe if he lives long enough; if he had been plain Master Jones, now, he'd 'ave got more kicks than ha'pence, he's that *stoopid* is the Honourable Spendall!" And that nurse was about right; but I don't complain, as I got all the halfpence and missed all the kicks.

For some time I lorded over every one in the nursery. All my sisters had to give in to me; even if I wanted, as I frequently did want, to melt her doll's face before the fire, scream as she might, the Hon. Kate had to give in to me. They knew that I could act the tyrant as much as I liked, and consequently they were all my devoted slaves.

Time went on, and my father decided on sending me to Eton. His parting words were—"Knock any boy down who contradicts you. Stick to those in your own rank, and always remember you will one day be Lord Tendertoe."

The last of these admonitions I was never likely to forget. I was not clever, I was not wise, I was not attractive; but I was heir to an old title and a rent roll of £30,000 a year, so why *should* I be anything but a dunderhead? It would be an unjust balance, and not compatible with the law of compensation, if I, a boy so fortunate as to have been born in the princely purlicus of Belgravia

with such magnificent prospects in the future, were to usurp the privileges of the common people, to be talented, painstaking, thoughtful, and energetic. No! my title was the lever by which I could compass all the pleasures which I looked forward to enjoy.

When I left Eton I knew little more than when I first went; from there I proceeded to Cambridge, where I immediately began to enjoy my aristocratic self.

It soon became known that I had plenty of money to spend, and that I was heir to a title and vast fortune. I made many friends, and was much sought by obliging tradesmen and kind gentlemen who begged to be allowed to furnish me with any sum I might need.

Wine merchants considered it an honour to supply so very distinguished a member of society with as much wine as I could pack into my rooms; one and all were most confiding.

I felt that I owed their generous conduct to the fact that I carried the stamp of nobility in my high-bred nose, and the blue blood of many ancestors in my aristocratic instep, for I was sure the thought that I had plenty of filthy lucre in the present, and would have a tremendous fortune in the future, could not possibly influence these people.

No! in me they saw undoubtedly the representative of a noble family, one of the *elite* of the earth; they recognized my superiority, and hastened to bend the knee in homage, and to proffer their humble services in my behalf, which was but a right and proper thing to do.

I had one particular pal, Albert Forster, the son of a clergyman, who by stinting himself and family managed to send his only son to Cambridge.

Albert was clever, handsome, and winning, but his many enemies told me thoroughly unscrupulous. From the first he made a point of ingratiating himself with me, and he succeeded. I was dense, he was sharp; I was dull, he was witty; I had money, he had none: hence his devotion. When I left Cambridge, he quitted it also, but not before he had initiated me into the charmed circle of the betting ring and the wild excitement of the classic race-course, which are the only studies to which a boy born in Belgravia need care to give his time and attention.

While the clergyman thought his son was burning the midnight oil, and working hard for honours, and my father imagined that if I were not studying hard, I was at any rate perfecting myself in the manners of the high born, Albert and I were computing the chances of the different race-