

**MR. SPINKS AND
HIS HOUNDS: A
HUNTING STORY**

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Mr. Spinks and His Hounds: A Hunting Story by F. M. Lutyens & C. Lutyens

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F. M. LUTYENS & C. LUTYENS

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THE BOSBY HOUNDS.

MR. SPINKS
AND HIS HOUNDS

A Hunting Story

BY

F. M. LUTYENS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

C. LUTYENS AND THE AUTHOR

SECOND EDITION

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MR. SPINKS AND HIS HOUNDS.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT the beginning of the reign of our gracious sovereign, Queen Victoria, there lived in Cheapside a hairdresser, named Spinks. His shop was chiefly frequented by men of business, many of whom were members of the Stock Exchange. Of these he took a double advantage, picking their brains at the same time as he clipped their hair, something in the same way as the silversmith scrapes two shillings' worth of silver off his lordship's forks, and charges him eighteenpence for doing it.

The intelligence thus acutely acquired enabled him to invest the substantial profits accruing from the sale of his inimitable hair-wash to the best advantage; and such was his good fortune in the choice of investments that by the time any ordinary hairdresser would have been merely in comfortable circumstances, Spinks was very well advanced into his second hundred thousand.

Notwithstanding this unprecedented success, he was loth to retire from business. For the barber's shop is notoriously the home of wit and gossip, and, being a witty man himself, he did not wish to risk losing the society of those who might not care, under other circumstances, to admit

him to a closer intimacy. His wealth, in short, did not tempt him to try the upper rungs of the social ladder. He would have dreaded nothing more than the solitary existence of the hermit whose untimely joke is born

“To waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

In the recesses of his heart, however, there lay a hidden force, an unknown quantity, that brought about this state of equilibrium. Possibly he was unconscious of its action upon himself, although perfectly aware that its influence over his customers produced a beneficial effect upon his business.



The attraction that made itself thus felt was a beautiful girl, Mary Hall by name, who stood behind the counter, and had supreme control of the ladies' department. She was a farmer's daughter, and till her eighteenth year had lived upon the farm, imbibing pure air, pure milk, and pure morals, when she came to London "to better herself," as wholesome a young woman as could be found between Land's End and John O'Groats.

Could we accurately describe the delicate form of her

nose, the dazzling depths of her blue eyes, the dimpled cheek, the rounded chin, the short curved lip, now jealously guarding, now generously revealing its pearly treasures, the richness of her colouring, and all the perfections of her features, we should still fail to give our reader an-idea of the indescribable charm that pervaded them, the charm of an innocence born, not of ignorance, but of a wholesome use of a bright intelligence. "A beauty" of whom it could be said :

"There were none to praise,
And very few to love."

is happily a rarity. In the smallest village community which happens to contain a "Lucy," there are generally at least half a dozen swains eager to damage each other's faces in her cause. Unfortunately for Mary, the Lord of the Manor, a disreputable old nobleman, was to be counted among her lovers. His attentions were odious to her from the first, but when, three months after his wife's death, he began to make what he protested were honourable proposals, she found his advances so intolerable that she was compelled to place herself beyond his reach. Her beauty was thus the actual, though not the ostensible, cause of her coming to London.

For every rustic admirer she had a dozen in her new home; but there was an indescribable something in her face that kept them at a distance. They came, worshipped, and went away, one and all treating her with the courtesy which is the natural tribute paid to the true gentlewoman. Imagine, then, her indignation and dismay one afternoon in the early summer, after she had been nearly a year in London, on seeing the bleared eyes of her persecutor blinking at her across the counter.

She found it impossible to avoid his importunities; to return home was useless; nor was it easy to find another refuge at a moment's notice. The state of things had