

"Do you remember, Joe?" she asked. "Here you stopped and told me you had something very special to say to me." "Did you guess?" he asked. "Of course I guessed." She smiled up at him with tender eyes. "You told me you had only twenty-seven shillings a week then."

"Yes, but I knew that I would be having a rise to thirty soon," cried the old man sharply. "Jim Attenbury doesn't see any chance of a rise for years." "I wasn't talking about Jim, dearie," said the little mother with her wise old smile.

They walked on. In the distance, like a little round piece of blue metal, lay the Leg o' Mutton Pond. "Do you remember the little seat not far from there?" asked Joe Mead. "We carved our names in the tree above it. Wonder if it is still there?"

"I don't expect the seat is," answered the little old lady. "I remember your saying, just as we stood about where we stand now, 'Lucy, my lass, I'll say my say over there under that tree.'"

And they seemed just young man and young girl again as they sat there, side by side, and the memories of their hopes, their joys, their sorrows and their trials came before them—all shared together.

"If you had your chance over again, Lucy," asked the man, "would you marry me again?"

"I would," the old woman answered. "Oh, my dear, you know I would!"

They rose, for it was twilight, and the man stood looking down at his wife.

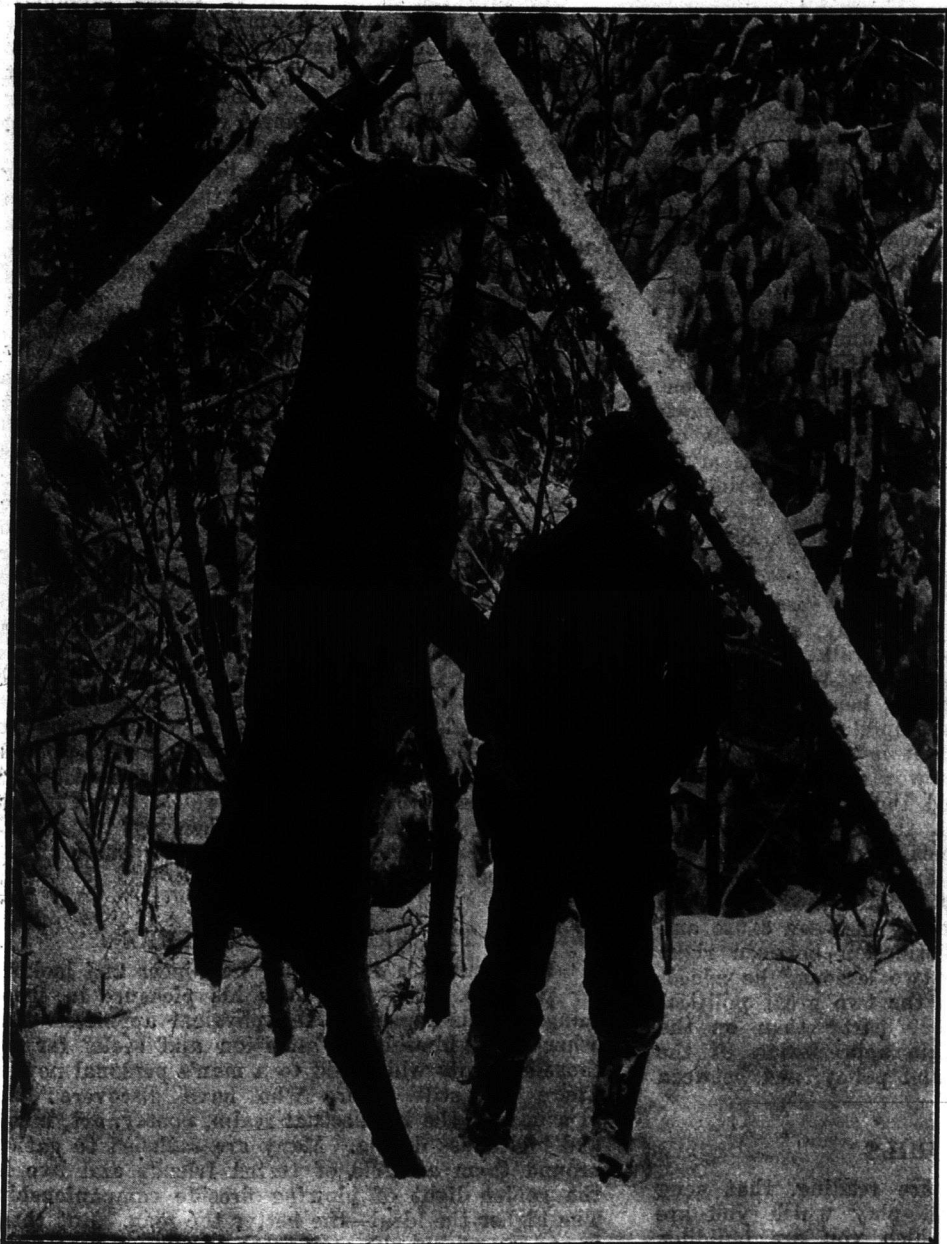
"I think," he said, "I'll give our girl her chance to get as much happiness and good out of life as you and I have done. She shall marry Jim Attenbury on one condition."

"And that?"

"That you give me as big a kiss, my dear, as you did that day you sat here and promised to take me for better or for worse."

"Well, perhaps I had forgotten what it was to be young, little lass."

"And so, dad?"



An ex-monarch of the woods

"And I did," chuckled her husband. "Lucy, if you hadn't said 'Yes' —"

"Well, what if I hadn't said 'Yes'?" asked the little old lady. "Jim's case is different with our Nancy," announced the man, for no reason at all. "Young fellows don't love as they did in our young days."

"Oh, yes they do!" smiled his wife. They came to the tree and the same old seat.

"Why, the seat is there!" cried Joe Mead, and threw back his grey head and laughed like a delighted schoolboy. "And here are our names just as we carved them! Well, I never! It doesn't seem any time, does it now! Ay, Lucy?" His eyes grew misty. "We mattered a mighty lot to each other in those days. I should never be what I am now if you hadn't helped me every step of the way. You've been a rare good helpmate, lass!"

They sat down on the seat, hand in hand, and stared at the shining water.

"Joe," the old lady said, timidly, "if someone had stepped in and forbidden us to marry, as we are forbidding Nancy and her lad, what then?"

"There was no one to do it," answered Joe Mead. "And I had twenty-seven shillings a week and good prospects when I married you."

"And so you can have each other! God bless you both!"

The girl's face was very white, and fear had been in her eyes. Now her color flashed back, and her sweet eyes were radiant.

"Jim's had a rise," she laughed. "So, after all, we marry on more than you did! Thirty-two shillings a week!"

But it was obvious that the information would have to be repeated, for the two old folk were gazing into each other's eyes, and finding love, and youth, and many memories down in the dear faded depths of them.

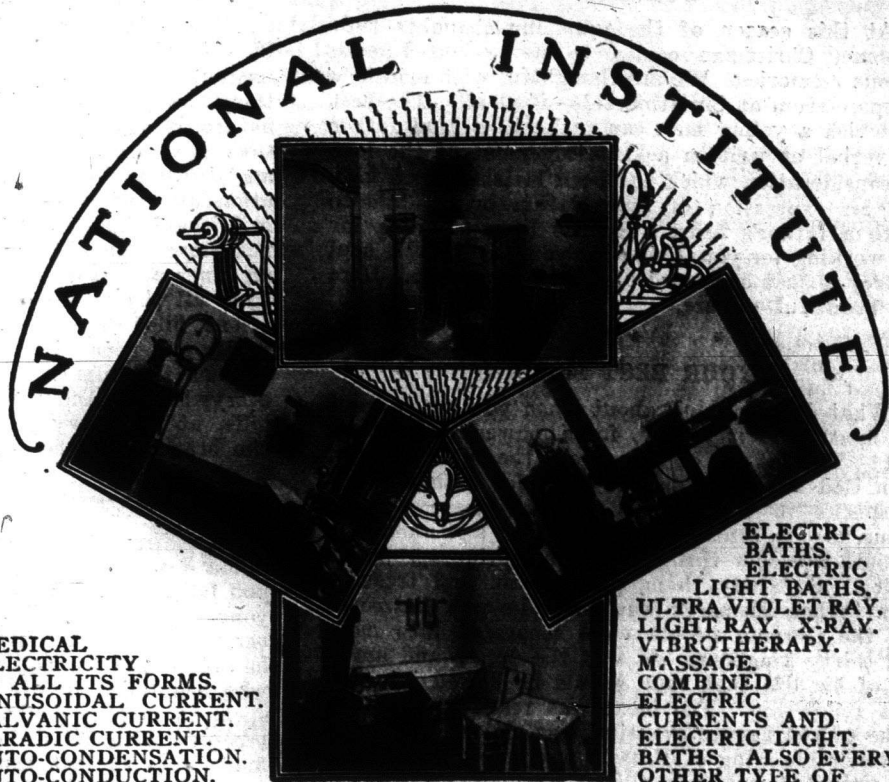
Bobby's brother and all his young friends were enthusiastic members of the S.P.C.A., but Bobby himself declared his unwillingness to join until after Christmas. His mother, knowing the boy to be as tender-hearted as his brother, could not understand the reason for any postponement.

"Why should you wait until Christmas to begin to do good?" she asked.

"Well," explained her son, "daddy promised me a rifle for Christmas, and just as soon as I shoot that cat that comes around our back fence every night I'm going to join the S.P.C.A."

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