

# A WOMAN'S STRANGE CAREER

## LIVING IN THE WOODS AS A HUNTER AND CLAIMING TO HAVE A WIFE.

The Varied Attainments of Lucy Ann Lobdell  
—A Woman who Could Fish and Shoot—  
Teaching a Singing School and Courting—  
Life in the Forests and by the Streams.

NARROWSBURG, N. Y., Oct. 17.—In 1835 Lucy Ann Lobdell, a daughter of a lumberman living at Long Eddy, Delaware County, N. Y., married a raftman by the name of George Slater. She was about 20 years old. Her husband deserted her a year after marriage, leaving her in destitute circumstances, with a babe a few weeks old. She had grown up among the hunters and lumbermen of the upper Delaware, then but little better than a wilderness, and could shoot, fish, and raft as well as any of them. She understood music, and was a fair violinist. There were few better rifle shots in the valley than she was. After her husband deserted her, her people being too poor to support her, she placed her baby in their care, put on male attire, and adopted the life of a hunter. For eight years she lived in the forests of Delaware and Sullivan Counties, N. Y., and those of Pike and Wayne, in Pennsylvania. Occasionally she came into the settlements to sell game and skins and buy ammunition and supplies. At such times she would send a portion of the proceeds of her gun and traps to her parents. She lived in cabins she erected in the woods. In 1864 she returned home. Her life of exposure and privation had made her a physical wreck. She found that her child had been placed in the Delaware County poorhouse at Delhi during her absence. This embittered her against her parents. She resumed women's clothing, and for months she roamed about the valley, living on charity, her mind continually dwelling on her wrongs. Then she disappeared again. About that time a man, giving the name of Joseph Lobdell, appeared in a village in the central part of Wayne County. He opened a singing school, and played the violin for dances. One of his young lady pupils fell in love with him, and they were engaged to be married. The night before the wedding day the discovery was made that Joseph Lobdell was a woman—none other than Lucy Ann Slater, "the Female Hunter of Long Eddy."

A party of young men determined to tar and feather her and ride her on a rail. She was warned of the danger, and she fled from the village, making her way to Delaware County, N. Y. As it was plain that she was gradually becoming insane, she was finally taken in charge by the poor authorities, and placed in the almshouse near Delhi.

In the spring of 1868 a prepossessing woman about 26 years of age alighted from an Erie train at Lordville station. She was without money, and too ill to travel further. She said that she was the daughter of parents who lived in a place near Boston. Their name was Perry. She had married against their wishes and gone to Jersey City to live with her husband, who was a railroad employee. Her husband had run away and left her among strangers. She had started in pursuit of him, but, having insufficient means, and falling ill, had been forced to stop at Lordville. She refused to be sent to her home in Massachusetts, or to have her parents notified of her situation, and was taken to the almshouse at Delhi. She was evidently a woman of good breeding and education. At the poorhouse she was attended during her illness by Lucy Ann Slater. A strange affection grew up between them. A short time after the newcomer, who went by her maiden name of Marie Louise Perry, had recovered her health, she and Lucy Ann left the almshouse together. They were gone over two years, and nothing was heard of them during that time. Through a singular occurrence, they were discovered in the summer of 1871, living under most peculiar circumstances.

Lucy Ann Slater's daughter Mary, who had been taken from the almshouse and adopted by a farmer, had been the victim of a terrible outrage, accounts of which, published in the local papers, were accompanied with references to the strange habits of her mother. These accounts were seen by certain residents of Monroe County, Pennsylvania. A few weeks afterward Poormaster Heller of Jackson township, that county, appeared in Delaware County with a man and woman in charge. He said that they had appeared in the northern part of Monroe County in 1869. The man gave his name as the Rev. Joseph Israel Lobdell. The woman claimed to be his wife. The man carried a rifle, and the couple lived in caves in the woods. When Lobdell's rifle failed to procure them subsistence, they lived on berries and nuts and the charity of people in the lumber settlements. They were arrested as vagrants in 1871, and lodged in jail at Stroudsburg. While they were in jail the discovery was made that the Rev. Joseph I. Lobdell was a woman. About that time the account of the outrage at Cohecton appeared. The Monroe County authorities were thus placed on the track of the singular couple, who were the two women who had left the Delhi almshouse together.

They were returned to Delaware County and placed in the Delhi almshouse again, but left it in a few months. Then until 1876 they roamed around the country, living in cabins and caves in the woods, and insisting that they were man and wife. They went by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lobdell. In 1876 "Joe" was placed in jail at Honesdale as a vagrant. His wife, writing with a split stick and using pokeberry juice for ink, drew up a petition to the Court of Wayne County, asking for the release of "her husband, Joseph Lobdell, in consequence of his ill health, which compelled her constant care." The document was a marvel of neat penmanship and correct composition. "Joe" was released and the petition placed among the court files. Soon after "Joe" was free, the pair went to Damascus township, Wayne County, opposite Narrowsburg, and bought a farm of a few acres. They lived there together until a year and a half ago, when Joe disappeared. The remains of an unknown person were found in the woods of Sullivan County, not far from the farm, some months afterward. They were believed to be those of the missing "female hunter," and were buried as such. The wife remained on the farm. A few weeks ago acquaintances of Lucy Ann Slater's were astonished to see her put in an appearance near Long Eddy. She was dressed in a tattered suit of men's clothes, and was hopelessly insane. She became a charge on the town. It was finally decided to send her to an asylum. On Thursday last she was taken to the State Asylum at Ovid.