

A CRACK SHOT.

The Story of the Female Hunter of Long Eddy.

HONESDALE, PA., July 28.—Mention has frequently been made in the metropolitan papers of Lucy Ann Lobdell, better known, perhaps, as the "Female Hunter of Long Eddy," and after much search I am enabled to give the first accurate account of the life of this remarkable woman ever published. On the 23d of October, 1855, Lucy Ann Lobdell, the pretty daughter of an old Delaware county lumberman, living at Long Eddy, N. Y., was married to George W. Slater, a raftsmen who was then well-to-do. Lucy was at this time only 17 years old. Although she was slight in figure, pretty as a picture, and a belle in that section, yet her tastes were strongly masculine. She could handle a gun, shoot a bear, or knife a "buck" as well as any man in the county of Wayne, and was known far and wide as one of the best shots in the Delaware Valley.

THE DESERTED WIFE.

After about a year of happy married life Slater deserted his wife, then the mother of a babe only a few weeks old, and as her parents were very poor and objected to her becoming a burden upon them in their poverty, she donned male clothing and determined to earn money by hunting and trapping. She left her little child with her mother, and for many months made her home in the mountains of Delaware, Ulster and Sullivan counties, New York, and in Pike, Wayne and Monroe counties, Pennsylvania. Occasionally she paid flying visits to her mother, and left enough money to clothe her baby and pay for its board. For eight years the young woman made her home in the forest, only visiting the country towns to sell her wares and purchase ammunition. She roamed from the Hudson river to the Susquehanna, and was familiar with every inch of ground in Northern Pennsylvania. Her habitations were about a dozen in number, principally in caves which she had fitted up with cooking utensils and rough pallets. Her wild life was one of constant adventure and peril and privation and finally, broken down in health, she determined to return to civilization. Her accumulated savings were sufficient to maintain her and the little child, then in its ninth year, in comfort. On her return to Long Eddy Mrs. Slater found that her child had been placed in the County Poor House at Delhi, New York. This affected her mind, and after a brief time she became as "crazy as a loon." She resumed female clothing, however, and roamed about the country, living on the charity of those whom she knew and would help her. At times she was perfectly rational, and related many thrilling narratives of miraculous escapes from death by being eaten alive by bears, gored to death by infuriated deer, or killed by catamounts and panthers. She also suffered untold agonies from forest fires, cold weather and poisoning. She was very intelligent, and had had in her youth a good common school education. She wrote an interesting account of her life, detailing the troubles which led her to abandon female attire and become a hunter. The book was spicy and well written, but the edition was small, and copies of the work readily bring \$10 each.

Finally Mrs. Slater, or "Lucy Lobdell," as she was then called, was taken by the town authorities and put in the same poor house where her child had been for eight years. Not long afterward the child was taken from the poor house by David Fortnam, of Tyler, Wayne county, Pa., where she found a comfortable home with his family.

A POOR HOUSE COMPANION.

In 1868 Mary Perry, aged twenty-five years, was brought to the poor house where Lucy Lobdell was confined. Mary Perry had four months before married a brakeman on the Erie Railroad, and had lived in Jersey City, where, after three months' married life, her husband deserted her and ran away with a servant girl. Hearing that her husband was in Susquehanna, Mary started for that place and got as far on her way as Delhi, where she was taken sick, her money gave out, and she was put in the poor house. Lucy Lobdell took a strange fancy to Mary, and her love was returned, Lucy left the establishment in 1867, and cut off her hair and donned male attire again. Shortly afterward Mary Perry ran away, and, strange as it may seem, she and Lucy Lobdell—who then called herself Rev. Joseph Lobdell—were married. Lucy looked so like a man that the minister who performed the ceremony was hoaxed.

One day in August, 1869, the Rev. Joseph Israel Lobdell and wife appeared suddenly in Stroudsburg, Monroe county, and subsequently found a house among the villages on the Pocono mountains, in the southern part of Monroe county. For two years they lived there, subsisting on the alms they obtained and what the rifle of the man brought them. By and by they became such nuisances that they were arrested as vagrants and lodged in the county jail at Stroudsburg, and while there it was discovered that the Rev. Joseph Israel Lobdell was a woman, and was consequently identified as Lucy Ann Lobdell, the great female hunter. The companion of the alleged reverend was none other than Mary Perry. The couple then went to Delaware county, N. Y., and were again thrown into the poor house, but only remained there a few days when they again escaped and came to Wayne county, where they claimed to be man and wife Lucy still wearing her male attire.

THE ARREST AT HONESDALE.

In the fall of 1776, Lucy Ann, or "Joe," as she was called, came to Honesdale and was arrested and lodged in jail as a vagrant. The next day "her wife" came to town to look for her and finally secured her release from jail. The petition for Lucy's release was written by Mary Perry in her backwoods home, and is now in the County Clerk's office here. The writing is beautiful and regular, the language used is excellent, and when the

fact is taken into consideration that the document was written with a pen made from a pine stick whittled to a point and split, and that the ink used was but the juice of the red poke berry, the petition is indeed a literary curiosity.

After being released from jail Lucy and her wife went to Damascus township, Wayne county, and lived there together in a house they had erected until 1879, when "Joe" suddenly disappeared. "He" was heard of not long afterward and was taken to the Ovid Insane Asylum. His late companion still lives in Wayne county, and was a regular attendant at court during the celebrated trial of Benjamin K. Bortree for the murder of Henry W. Shouse, which took place there last fall.

The daughter of Lucy Ann, named Mary Slater, who was adopted by Mr. Fortnam, seemed to have inherited bad luck. Refusing the attentions of a young man named Kent, after she had grown to womanhood, she fell a victim to a vile plot. Kent abducted her from home one dark, stormy night in August, 1871, drugged her, accomplished her ruin and threw her apparently lifeless body in the Delaware river, near the town of Cohecton. She was washed ashore on an island, where she was found by a man who restored her life, but her reason was entirely overthrown. She wandered into the woods, was found a day or two afterward a raving maniac and conveyed to an asylum, where in time she recovered her mental and bodily health. She then had Kent arrested, but he escaped his merited punishment by jumping bail and leaving the State. Miss Slater subsequently married a farmer in Delaware county, N. Y., and is now living happily near Delbi, where so much of her early life was passed.