

# THE REVIEW

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## THE GREAT NORTH SHORE ROUTE!

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### AT SPIRIT LAKE.

BY M. A. TIRRELL.

Deep in Canadian woods, hidden away from the gaze of civilization, and as little influenced by its advances as if it were located in the heart of Nigritia or on some lone island of the Polynesian Group; nesting in the bosom of a wilderness where the fall of the white man's tread is seldom heard, and where the moccasined foot of the Indian rarely leaves its imprint; where the forest has never echoed the knell of the lumberman's ax, and Father Time has left no apparent trace of his tireless march, there in the pristine purity of the forest primeval is situated Spirit Lake.

I happened on this lake in this way. In the Autumn of 1894, my friend Bill and I were camping at a small Indian reservation in Northern New Brunswick, awaiting the annual migration of geese and brant. Owing to exceptionally fine weather the birds were late in their Southern movements, causing us several days of inactivity. In conversation with the Indians we were informed that some twenty-five miles in the interior were several lakes where good shooting could be had. Among others was one called Spirit Lake, at which immense flocks of black, wood and shell ducks resorted for shelter during stormy weather; but at the same time they intimated that it was a good place from which to stay away. Upon further inquiry an aged aborigine, so old and wrinkled that he might successfully have posed as the original savage, who was well posted in the folklore of his race, told us the legend of the psychologically named waters. Somewhat after this fashion runs the Mic Mac tradition:

In days long gone by, ere the European's big winged ships bore the paleface adventurer across the great waters to this land of the West, here were born the spirits of evil. On stormy nights when the spirit of light has gone to rest behind the far western hills, and the spirit of darkness casts his gloomy shadows over the earth, riding on the night-rolling breath of the east wind from their abode in the land of ghosts and shadows, comes Mitche Manito and his dusky troupe of evil ones to hold high feast in the "Cave of the Fearful Voice," and woe betide the Indian who happens to disturb their revels. There it was that Atonga, famous in war and wise in council, and his gentle wife Miami, laughing-eyed Miami, had been spirited away to the beyond never more to return, a fate which has happened many a foolhardy brave. Even at this late date the superstitious Indians place considerable faith in the romantic story. So much so, that it is almost impossible to induce one of them to engage as guide, more especially if one wishes to stay at the lake over night.

The old chief, seeing, however, that we were bent on visiting the ghostly spot, gave us directions that would enable us to find the cave without the aid of a guide.

Next morning at daybreak, with a supply of provisions, we started up a little river oddly called the Big Northwest, a branch of which led into Spirit Lake. It was a lovely day in golden October, the remembrances of which shall long linger in my memory. Winding a tortuous course through a heavily wooded country we paddled, admiring this wonderland of Nature. Now rounding a bold headland recalling recollections of that haunted promontory on the dear old German Rhine where sunny-tressed Lorelei of old sang her wild melodies, enticing to destruction the poor fisher-lads of Bingen and Coblenz to open out a widening of the river as placid as a mill pond, then sweeping under the overhanging banks casting their

jagged shadows in the sunlit here below; again winding our way among many beautiful islets, suggesting those mythological islands of the blessed where, in everlasting joy, dwell the favored of the gods, around whose shores the whirling, eddying stream had innocently wound a wreath of silvery foam. All along the way grew tall spruces, firs and mighty pines, nodding o'er the drooping ash, birch and maple trees whose Autumn-tinted verdure, mingled with the varied shows of coppice dwarfs that tangled underneath the forest in wild confusion. Each tree, shrub, lichen and moss-covered rock was in itself a color study, and when pictured as a whole, framed in a sky of cerulean blue, and mirrored on the limpid waters of the river, the combination of form and color blending showed the master hand of the Creator in a scene which no human art could reproduce. Upon yon Parnassian mount might dwell the fabled pagan deities of ancient Greece, and further along in that perfect dell could fair Diana and her chaste huntresses haunt the sylvan shades. On yonder wood-crowned eminence, fancy throned Odin and Thor, whom according to Scald and Kemper, Viking and Norseman bold were wont to worship or heard the voice of Druid priestess as she chanted her Celtic hymns of praise. On we guided our bark canoe through the ever-changing vista, with naught to break the stillness but the splash of the paddle and the rippling current as its sheeny, lapping tide wandered to the sea.

We at length came to the rapids where, according to our directions, we discovered the branch leading to the lake. Upon turning up this brook we found it was barely ten feet wide, but very deep. Here everything was somber, dank, and wet with Nature's dewy teardrops. It was overgrown with a dense growth of alders and swamp trees that interlaced themselves overhead, arching the brook with a canopy through which no sunbeam dared to peep in at the sports of the otter, beaver and muskrat that denized the place. We reached our destination and found ourselves at a pretty sheet of water some two miles long and one-half mile wide, which we knew to be Spirit Lake from the little island in the center.

It was getting late in the afternoon, and expecting a storm, we searched along the shore for a camping place. We discovered a small cave on the margin of the lake which would save us the necessity of pitching tent. We took our provisions ashore, and while Bill caught and dressed a mess of lovely trout, I built a fire and got supper ready. And such a supper! Here is the menu: Broiled bacon, baked trout, baked potatoes, hot toast, coffee and Bass' ale. There was a feast for the woods and perhaps we did not do justice to it. If you have never cooked trout our way I will tell you how it is done. Scale the fish, haul out the gill and gut without splitting the belly, insert a slice of fat bacon or pork, roll the fish—after peppering and salting—in well-battered brown paper, then wrap the whole in dampened moss and place it on the fire among the hot coals. When the moss is well charred your fish will be done; and I feel sure you will say we know a thing or two about cooking trout.

After a good smoke we cut some small fir bows and strewed the floor of our natural little castle, so situated that it would shelter us from wind and rain, no matter how heavy it stormed. Nowhere was there sign of ducks, and unless the weather changed we would have our trip for nothing; but we felt satisfied that the jagged, white-edged, black clouds that were rising over the northern horizon meant something, and that the relative humidity of the day indicated an atmospheric change. Darkness being upon us we turned in for a rest, and, wrapped in our heavy blankets, lying on the delicate aromatic branches, with no electric cars, elevated roads or other city noises to disturb our slumbers, how we slept!

During the night I was aroused by a heavy thunder clap, and striking a light I found it was ten minutes past 3 o'clock, and that Bill was up. The night was very sultry, and dark as Pluto's shades, with a strange sulphurous smell permeating the air.

"I have been awake over half an hour, and how you could sleep among such noises as the heavens have been voicing is a mystery to me; you must have an easy conscience, my boy," remarked my friend. A strange feature of the night was, that a heavy thunder-storm was raging without any accompanying wind or rain. Peal after peal, each one louder than its predecessor, would crash from the southern sky, leaving a momentary lull of deathly stillness.

"Hast thou not marked, when o'er thy startled head Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has rolled, How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead

Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold? The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold, The rustling aspen's leaves are mute and still, The wall-flower waves not on the ruined hold: Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill, The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill."

Suddenly from the north came the sound of a hoarse, roaring noise, and in a few moments, preceded by a cold north-west blast, a terrible hailstorm was upon us which lasted nearly twenty minutes, during which time icedrops from one-half to two inches in diameter fell. This was followed by a terrible electric storm which had previously been giving us warning. And how it did rain, thunder and blow! I had seen September gales in the Caribbean Sea when the equinoctial hurricanes blow along the Spanish main, had been overtaken by a mountain tornado high up among the weather-beaten crags of the Cordillera range, had viewed a Kansas cyclone plow its way across the Western plains; but never till this night had I witnessed the elements at their best. The lightnings blazed, the thunder rolled, while flash and peal were almost instantaneous, announcing the proximity of the electric current. The rain came down in unbroken sheets, swelling the hillside brooks into mountain torrents. Huge boulders were torn from their bed of ages and tossed about like pebbles on a surf-battered beach. Giant trees became the playthings of the winds and flood and were uprooted and snapped more quickly than if attacked by a woodman's ax. The Storm God was abroad, and his worthy lieutenants Jupiter, Pluvius and Tonans were doing themselves proud. Again and again they bellowed their challenge, and back came as often the defiance of the echoing hills. After a time the wind changed to northeast and the thunder became silenced, but the rain still kept falling in a heavy downpour.

As it was approaching daylight we built a fire under an overhanging rock and prepared our breakfast, after which we donned our oilskins and paddled across to the little island where we had the previous afternoon built a blind to await daylight and the ducks we expected the storm would surely bring in. While sitting in the darkness smoking, we heard the ducks quacking in all directions and the whistling of their wings as they flew by satisfied us that for once in our lives we would be "in it." We were on the western end of the island, by which we thought the birds would fly on their way from the sea. All birds passing to the left were to be mine, and those to the right were to be taken care of by Bill. My friend cautioned me to keep my weather eye open as he intended to "wipe it out" before night, and prompted by

"The stern joy which warriors feel In foemen worthy of their steel,"

I advised him to keep his own lamps carefully trimmed, for I also intended to do some shooting. Just as day was breaking in a deep drizzle, Bill drew on a pair of wood-ducks which he neatly stopped, and a moment after I duplicated the shot by knocking two sawwills out of the air. The next shot offered was a big loon, which I missed clean with both barrels. Three black ducks came along on Bill's side inviting a shot, on which he failed to connect. He had smiled at my miss, so I just remarked "there are others." A flock of woodducks swerved my way, to be followed by a bunch of blacks on the other side. Result: two wood and one black ducks. The birds were now coming every way, affording us no time for conversation. It was bang-bang to right, and bang-bang to left. Among the shots fired were some good and some bad. I was laying out some fair work for Bill, but his side of the blind was being guarded in good shape, and it was a question which of us would need the services of an oculist. Incomers, right and left quarters, towerers and droppers kept us busy and gave us an opportunity of noisily advertising to each other how much we knew about wing shooting.

We had been shooting a couple of hours and the sundry bunches of inanimate feathers drifting toward the opposite shore proved that all our S. S. powder was not being wasted, and that either a Parker or Smith gun is good enough if held right. If anybody should ask the reader about the choice of a gun, let him give it as his opinion that all modern guns, bored true to gauge, shoot well, and that there is more in their holding than their make, notwithstanding the fact that some makers claim theirs is the only gun on earth. The Greener gun has made some wonderful scores; so have the Scott, Francotte, Parker and Smith, but it obtains forcibly

with the writer that the man pointing the gun had just a little to do with it; and I am further favorably impressed that the same man behind any other latter-day gun would obtain just as good results. Mr. Catalog Compiler, in your next issue, while you may praise your particular make of gun, won't you please give the shooter a little more credit? Don't be selfish. Should the amateur inquire about powders, please tell him that nitros are far ahead of the black article, if handled properly, and that there is not much choice between S. S., Schultze, E. C., or Du Pont; at the same time advise him to use chilled shot in conjunction with these smokeless explosives. But I am digressing; the subject of guns and powders is one on which I shall write more exhaustively anon.

While shooting during the forenoon we head an elegant shot at a flock of geese—some twenty in number—out of which we got four, but should have killed twice that number as they were nicely bunched and not more than thirty yards away.

The shooting was so good and continuous that we had no time to cook dinner. But who would leave a duck pass to eat, when birds are flying? All through the afternoon we shot, living in the meantime on tobacco smoke, and when we finished about 4 o'clock, let me tell the reader we had some birds to pick up. How many did we kill? No, dear reader, I will not answer that question point blank and thereby give you a chance to call us game-hogs, pot-hunters, or some other such pretty name. While I shall maintain a dignified silence as to the exact number, I will, however, say that we shot more ducks that day than I ever again expect to shoot. I will also add that we did not sell a single bird, but each one did its share in testing the gastronomic abilities of some hungry Mic Mac. Whose eye got wiped out? Bill and I have been boon companions for years, have slept together by many a campfire, and shared the pot luck of the woods many a time and oft. We are both men of peace, and modest to a degree, and to stop any complicating arguments that a direct answer might cause, I will simply say, I forget.

After our birds were secure we dressed two each of wood and black ducks and broiled them. These, with fixings, furnished a supper to which we paid our hungry respects. That night we slept the sleep of the just, and when we awoke next morning the sun had just arisen, giving promise of fine weather, during which there was no use of prolonging our stay. After breakfast (we are good feeders) we loaded the canoe with our traps. Taking a lingering leave of the surroundings we should probably never again see, we headed down-stream for camp. The river from the recent rains was full to overflowing, and on its consequently swiftly running current we reached the reservation early in the afternoon, satisfied with our journey to Spirit Lake, and with a memory to last as long as life, beating the wondrous ducking stories of the far-famed Horicon marshes, or wildly celebrated Chesapeake Bay.

Boston, Mass. [The foregoing graphic description of a visit to "Spirit Lake" and vicinity was penned by Mr. M. A. Tirrell, who is well known to many of our readers. As the scenes are laid in Kent County, it will doubtless prove interesting to many. Mr. Tirrell's friend, "Bill," is W. R. Robertson.—Ed. REVIEW.]

### A High Valuation.

"If there was only one bottle of Hayward's Yellow Oil in Manitoba. I would give one hundred dollars for it," writes Phillip H. Brant, of Monteth, Manitoba, after having used it for a severe wound and for frozen fingers, with, as he says, "astounding good results."

### Liver on the Left Side.

Hubert Place, a negro, 27 years old walked into Bellevue and said he would like to be examined, as his heart was on the wrong side of his body. The clerk was incredulous, but finding that Place was in earnest, he was referred to the house surgeon. Afterwards in the presence of the entire surgical staff connected with the hospital, a thorough examination was made of him. It was found that not only was his heart on his right side, but that his right lung was on his left side, the left on the right side, the liver on the left side, and the spleen on the right side. Place is of medium height, strongly built, and has never been seriously ill for a day in his life. His mother, three brothers, and a sister are living, and there is nothing unusual about the vital organs of any of them. Last fall his wife urged him to get his life insured, and he underwent a medical examination. The insurance doctor discovered the misplacement of the vital organs, and refused to pass him.—Chicago Chronicle.



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