

# A TRIP TO THE RED FISH LAKES

By DE WITT P. HIGGS, M. D.

SOLDIER, IDA.

**A**UGUST the first and vacation time! This is the date that I promised myself and family that we would get away from typhoid fever, children's summer ailments, and other ills that come to suffering humanity at this time of the year, and go into the mountains for an outing. So my wife, two children, myself, Jim Crow, the town barber, and his wife and baby packed our beds, guns, ammunition, fishing tackle, and a few hundred other things that go with women and children, and took the train for Hailey, Ida., where John Lightfoot, from Camas Prairie, was to meet us with a two-seated rig and a road wagon to take us to the "Red Fish Lakes" in the "Saw Tooth Mountains." The transition from the hot valley of the "Snake River" to the cool valley of "Big Wood River" was a delight at this time of the year.

We left Gooding, Ida., at noon and arrived at Hailey at 6 P. M., and Lightfoot was there to meet us, and by nine o'clock the next day we had bought our grub and completed our outfit, and were on our way to the "Red Fish Lakes" in the "Saw Tooth Mountains," sixty miles away.

We stopped at Ketchum, an old mining town which once had a population of several thousand, but now somewhat dilapidated, with only about four hundred. Here we nooned and by 1 P. M. were on our way up the easy grade of the "Big Wood River." That evening we camped above Galena, an old deserted mining camp and only three miles from the summit. The next morning we made the summit and nooned on top; the altitude here was 8995 feet above sea level, a distance of forty-three miles from Hailey. Here on one side began "Big Wood River"

and on the other the south fork of "Salmon River." At 1 P. M. we started down the grade on the Salmon River side, and at five we arrived at the upper end of Alturas Lake, one of the "Red Fish Lakes," and made our camp among the pines and firs. We were tired but happy, glad that we got there without a mishap of any kind. We worked till after the stars came out making our camp comfortable, and Lightfoot found an abundance of feed for the horses about a mile above us. So we turned in that night tired but contented, happy in the anticipation of the sport that we hoped awaited us.

It devolved upon Lightfoot and myself to do most of the cooking, while Crow carried water and rustled wood, and the women folks looked after the children and did a thousand other things that there was no use in doing. Next morning we got up early, and after a hurried breakfast, we rigged up our fishing tackle and went down to the placid lake that invited us to cast into its still waters, and we cast from rocks, old logs, and sandy beach till noon; our catch totaled one bull trout and three white fish. Somewhat discouraged, we went back to camp to hear the derisive remarks of women and to answer about four hundred questions asked by my son, Robert, aged four. While we were eating, a sheep man came along, and told us that the best fishing was not in the lake, but above it if we wanted to get red fish, or below it if we wanted to get trout. He also told us that it was about time the fish were running up the stream, as they always did so about the fourth day of August, and that when they did start up, that we could get all of them we wanted. This was good news, and we asked him what kind

of bait was the best to catch them with. He informed us that the red fish would not take any kind of bait or fly. Crow said, "Oh, I see; we are supposed to get into the water and run them down," and added that he never was much of a race horse in water, especially if he had to hurdle a drift every thirty feet. We laughed, and the sheep man showed us how to lash a large hook on to the end of a pole, and said when a lot of the fish were passing, all we had to do was to place the end of the pole on the bottom of the creek near the opposite bank, and when they came along to yank and we could get one nearly every time.

That afternoon we went down below the lake, and had the pleasure of landing thirty-eight mountain trout. That evening we came into camp amid the chattering of children and the approving smiles of women. That night when the children were in bed Lightfoot entertained us with stories of woodcraft and hunts till long after the stars came out and the moon turned the still waters of the lake into liquid silver. Lightfoot had been in the west since '78, and knew every angle to game getting, and he was a rare good storyteller; and under the magic of the moonlit lake and the glow of the campfire under the shadowy pines, with Lightfoot recounting his interesting adventures, I forgot my patients with typhoid in the valley of the snake, whom I had left in the care of a brother physician, and that night I slept the sleep that is found nowhere but in the mountains, and was awakened by Lightfoot yelling, "All out for the red fish." Crow and I were out in a very few moments, and while we were getting breakfast, we heard a rippling and splashing sound in the stream above the lake and not over forty yards from camp. Lightfoot said that that sounded suspicious, and winked at me and told Crow to go and see what it was that was making that noise. At first I did not catch on to what he meant by winking at me, but

I did later. Crow went down to the water, and after looking up and down the stream for a moment, he tore up the bank at the rate of sixty miles an hour, stopped abruptly, and after gazing a moment into the water, he let out a yell that woke up the children, and then shouted for us to come there quick; and we went, I working in the lead by several feet, and when I got there, Crow said, "Man, man, look there!" and I looked and beheld four or five hundred shining red fish swimming and leaping upstream. The women folks had heard the commotion, and shouted to us to know what we had gone crazy about. Crow yelled, "Nothing much; only about a million fish in one bunch." The rippling and splashing we heard was the fish going over a ripple in the creek. We hurried back, and while Lightfoot and I got breakfast, Crow lashed the large hooks on the poles, as the sheep man had shown us, and in a few moments we were after the fish. Now this method of fishing might not be very sportsmanlike to the angler, but it was the only way to catch red fish except with a net, and I doubt if any angler ever had more fun than we did for the next two hours. We stood on the bank and yanked them out for a few moments, then plunged bodily into the water, and went at them in earnest. We had a fish in the air all the time, and when they would hit the ground, the women and children would shout and scramble after them, and put them in gunny sacks that we carried along. At the end of two hours we had three hundred and four red fish and one bull trout. We went to camp, and Crow said that the next time he went fishing, he was going where there were some fish. We ate what we wanted, and gave away a few to some campers who had just come, salted away the rest, and brought them home with us so we could back up our fish yarns with the goods.

That night Lightfoot told us of adventures in Texas, Utah, Idaho, and

the "Jackson hole country," which held Crow and I in rapt attention, while the women lent a listening ear. The moon came up and flooded the canyon with light, while the mountains and dark forest were outlined against the night sky. Below us the moonlight mirrored the lake, while above, the pines showed darkly in the shadow of the mountains. Far into the night we talked, then went to bed. A hoot owl called to his mate in the pines above and was answered by a coyote far down the lake side. The wind sang a lullaby in the pines around, and sleep came from its shadows and held us till dawn came and chased the shadows away.

The next day we took the women and children for a raft ride to the lower end of the lake, where we had lunch and caught thirty or forty trout, then rowed back while the sun sank behind the mountains in the West, and the shadows began to form in the valley below and creep up the mountain-side. Again the campfire blazed and the wind murmured a song in the pines around, while the moon filled the valley below with light, and the shadows clung to the trees on the mountain-side.

The next morning we packed up and came home, regretting that we could not stay longer by the lake in the mountains.

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## SOME OF OUR FEATHERED KINDRED

By ROBERT PAGE LINCOLN

**T**HOUGH generally scoffed at in the other seasons, the crow comes in for his share of welcome in the spring, when we wait with eagerness for the return of the birds from the South to stay with us and make glad upon the quietudes of Nature. Some look upon the crow as an impossible thief, and think it should be relegated to the oblivion where all transgressors belong; but then, though the bird has undeniably his bad points, there are some qualities that are usually overlooked in the summing up of his character. We are prone to seize first upon the bad qualities and give scant consideration of the good. It is a well-known fact that the crow is a robber of birds' nests and a destroyer of the young when they have broken through the shell. Early in the morning before the farmer is out of his bed the crow is busy, flying from covert to covert, raiding the chicken nests and killing the fledglings, and has vanished before the first rays of light have gilded the east. Thus, finding that some enemy has been abroad, the farmer generally

puts the blame on the hawk, and registers a vow that every hawk that crosses his path in the future shall come down with a charge of birdshot thrown from the muzzle of a shotgun. It is well that the farmer looks into these matters, for it is no more than fair to the birds themselves. I find that certain hawks do less damage than the crow, as far as killing chickens is concerned; just what they do in the line of destroying game birds I have not been able to ascertain, but it is evident that a good many go as food for both the hawk and the crow. Still, I wonder if all this is as great as men have painted it out to be.

It is true that while the crow kills his share of birds, he is known to be a foe of various types of vermin, and were the stomachs of a certain number of crows to be investigated, I believe it would be found that the contents would reveal the presence of much injurious vermin. We often note the crows in great flocks out on the new-plowed fields. Perhaps there is no greater foe of the common grub-worm than the crow, for