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The width of the Big Salmon river where it issues from the last lake is about sixty feet, and is very shallow, with a stony bottom. At the time of the exploration this section of the river was a succession of rapids with a drop of one to three feet in short distances and separated by intervals of still-water. At many places the depth of water was less than six inches and the canvas boats had to be partly unloaded before we could get them over the bars.

Below the lake the country on both sides of the river continues low and marshy, but it changes its aspect three miles farther on, where it receives its first tributary from the south. This stream flows through a wide and thickly wooded valley; close to its headwaters, another stream rises which flows in the opposite direction and finally enters the Big Salmon river at its second bend. After receiving this tributary the river winds in innumerable and complicated bends from one side of the valley to the other. Its banks for some distance below the lake are low, but rise gradually from a few feet to escarpments reaching an altitude of two hundred feet above the river. These cut-banks are generally composed of gravel and sand, but cliffs are also noticed at different points where the river in its sinuosities strikes the foot of the mountain. The only remarkable change of direction which takes place in the course of the Big Salmon river, occurs at a distance of nearly sixty miles from the last lake. The river, which had been running north-west since its egress from that lake, is suddenly confronted in its course by bold mountains, and is deflected at a sharp angle towards the south-west. This causes the first bend, where three mountain streams, flowing through as many valleys, converge and add their waters to the river.

On the northern side of the valley the mountains may be said to begin with Tower Peak, a lofty mountain which rises abruptly from the northern shore of the second lake, and whose southern slope is so steep that no sign of vegetation is apparent on its surface. Its altitude is 3,140 feet above the lake. From a distance it resembles a high ridge with a knife-edge crest, its summit is capped by a cliff resembling a tower, which peculiarity led to its appellation of Tower Peak. It is one of the triangulation stations. Along both sides of the river there are high mountains rising to an altitude of 4,500 feet above the valley; within ten miles of the first bend these converge and thus contract the valley. Their forest clad sides often end abruptly at the river, which is reduced in width; the current at these places increases in velocity, while at other places the channel is, owing to the vicinity of the mountains, full of boulders and required our utmost attention to be successfully navigated. Beyond this swift section, which is not over three miles long, the river bed widens again, but its channel is frequently impeded by sand bars, formed by the silt which is being continually washed from the high cut-banks and deposited in its bed at places where the current is slack.

At the first bend the left bank of the river is formed by high gravel benches cut by deep ravines, while on the opposite shore the country is low, with some lakes which act as reservoirs for two large creeks flowing from the north-west in two nearly parallel valleys.

Three miles below the first bend the river divides into two branches, the wider one flows along the foot of the mountains to the left of the valley; two miles and a half farther the branches reunite, and the river continues to flow in one stream towards the south-west a farther distance of eighteen miles. After receiving another stream from the south-east it turns sharply to the right and resumes a north-westerly direction; this point is called the second bend.

About half way between the first and second bends, I decided to attempt to make the ascent of some of the mountains in the range west of the valley.

I left camp at daylight on October 6, and after having with some difficulty crossed the river, which at this date was already covered with floating ice, I instructed the cook to take the boat back to camp and haul it high and dry out of the reach of the ice. Accompanied by one man I started for the mountains. After travelling over frozen marshes, we entered the foothills by the valley of a creek which we followed for several hours. We soon found ourselves hedged in between two walls, and to avoid being altogether blocked, we left the bed of the creek and climbed on to a long ridge heavily timbered with spruce. The ridge led us to a pinnacle towering at least 800 feet above our heads and which seemed inaccessible from where we stood. After a good deal of